

# INTERSECTIONS IN PLACE

## A Finding Her Guideline for Intersectional & Inclusive Place Naming and Commemoration

For councils, developers, naming authorities and community organisations

Her Place Women's Museum · Finding Her

**Intersections in Place** is the first guideline for intersectional, gender-inclusive place naming and commemoration tailored for use in Victoria. It is designed to help government bodies, councils, developers and community organisations ensure that public places are named and commemorated in ways that advance gender equity and honour the contributions of diverse women.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* establishes obligations for public sector organisations, including consideration of intersectional gender impacts. Intersecting attributes could include race, culture, ability, sexuality, class and other identities.

With the Victorian Government setting a bold target to name **70% of all new public places after women by 2027**, councils, developers and naming authorities are required to consider women of all backgrounds, abilities and identities – not just women as a monolithic group.

## 1 Purpose and scope

This guideline supports community-centred approaches to naming public places and commemorating people, histories and cultures in Victoria that explicitly acknowledge gender inequality and celebrate women's contributions across intersecting identities.

It provides practical guidance, strategic principles and recommended partnerships to help organisations:

- ◆ Address historical imbalances in how women, and particularly women from underrepresented communities, appear in the names of public places and public artworks
- ◆ Honour women whose contributions have been overlooked, marginalised or erased because of intersecting disadvantages
- ◆ Ensure a transparent, equitable, culturally safe and inclusive place-making process that communities can rely on

This guideline sits alongside the broader Finding Her document suite and is designed to be used with the GNV Submission Readiness Checklist, the Finding Her Nomination Submission Form, Finding Her Cultural Protocols Framework (for First Nations women) and the Finding Her Place – Guide to Commemoration.

The accompanying Intersections in Place Checklist provides a practical working tool for applying this guideline at each stage of a naming project.

## 2 Six principles of intersectional, gender-inclusive place naming

All place naming and commemoration decisions should be grounded in these principles. You can use these as an orientation to inform every stage of a project.

<b>1</b>	<b>Intersectionality</b>	Recognise how gender intersects with race, culture, ability, sexuality, class and other identities. 'Women' is not a single, uniform group. Inclusive naming reflects the full diversity of women's experiences and contributions.
<b>2</b>	<b>Community Leadership</b>	Empower local communities, especially those most affected by historical exclusion, to lead decision-making. The communities whose histories are being commemorated should have genuine agency over how those histories are represented.
<b>3</b>	<b>Cultural Safety and Self-Determination</b>	Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignty and cultural protocols. Indigenous naming processes have their own authority, timelines and requirements. These must be honoured, not compressed to fit external project timelines.
<b>4</b>	<b>Transparency and Accountability</b>	Establish clear criteria, open consultation processes, and public reporting. Communities should be able to see how decisions were made and by whom.
<b>5</b>	<b>Equity of Representation</b>	Actively seek names that redress historic exclusions and amplify diverse women's stories, particularly women whose contributions have been sustained and community-facing rather than formally recognised.
<b>6</b>	<b>Education and Context</b>	Provide interpretive materials that explain why names were chosen and the stories behind them. A name without context does little to restore memory or change understanding.

### 3 Guidance by community – who to engage and how

Each community group below has distinct histories, cultural protocols and engagement needs. This section provides specific guidance for each. These are not separate silos and many women's lives cross multiple categories. The most powerful nominations will reflect that complexity.

#### ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

- Leadership and protocol**
- ◆ Begin with respectful engagement, partnering with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), local Elders and community representatives to identify women's stories that are meaningful to family
  - ◆ Recognise that place naming in Indigenous contexts may have spiritual and cultural significance – seek free, prior and informed consent according to community protocols before any public steps are taken
  - ◆ Support community-led research to surface stories associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's leadership, kinship, care, land stewardship and creative resilience
  - ◆ Ensure interpretive signage and public education reflect community voices and language – not external interpretations of those stories

**Finding Her Cultural Protocols Framework:** Use this resource to provide a deeper understanding of cultural naming practices beyond these brief considerations.

**Partner organisations:** Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), Aboriginal Victoria, Registered Aboriginal Party bodies, Local Aboriginal community organisations and women’s cultural leadership groups, Relevant land councils and community arts collectives, families and descendants.

## ◆ Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds

### Cultural diversity and migration histories

- ◆ Work with CALD women’s groups to identify historical figures and contemporary leaders whose stories resonate in local contexts
- ◆ Use multilingual and culturally appropriate engagement strategies to ensure broad participation – not just through existing formal community channels
- ◆ Use plain language and minimise the use of academic and government jargon.
- ◆ Recognise that a single cultural community may have diverse histories, including migration, labour, activism, family and community care
- ◆ Provide capacity-building, translation, facilitation and accessible forums so voices that are less likely to reach formal processes are genuinely heard

**Partner organisations:** Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health, Local CALD community councils, Settlement services, Cultural community centres, Migrant resource centres

## ◆ LGBTIQ+ Women and Gender Diverse People

### Visibility and intersectional storytelling

- ◆ Support LGBTIQ+ community groups to identify women who have been central to queer history, advocacy, culture and rights movements in Victoria
- ◆ Recognise how gender identity, race, disability and cultural background intersect within LGBTIQ+ communities. People whose identities overlap in multiple ways may experience greater exclusion. For example, a queer woman of colour, or a lesbian living with a disability.
- ◆ Facilitate consultation in spaces that affirm identities and histories that may not be widely known or visible
- ◆ Consider inclusive plaques, murals, artworks and community-chosen symbols alongside formal place naming as creative and appropriate forms of commemoration
- ◆ Do not make assumptions about the way in which individuals may have identified themselves or their relationships. Seek confirmation where possible and consult historians working in this section.

**Partner organisations:** Australian Queer Archives, Switchboard Victoria, Victorian Pride Centre, Minus18, Queer women’s groups, Lesbian feminist archives and history projects

## ◆ Women with Disabilities

### Accessibility first, leadership always

- ◆ Ensure consultation, nomination and decision-making processes are fully accessible – physical spaces, digital platforms, and materials in alternative formats

- ◆ Partner with disability advocacy groups to identify women whose lives and work have impacted disability rights, accessibility, education and community inclusion
- ◆ Acknowledge the ways disability intersects with gender, race, sexuality and socio-economic status – many women in this space hold multiply marginalised identities
- ◆ Co-design signage, art and wayfinding so that the commemoration itself is universally accessible and informed by people with disability

**Partner organisations:** Women With Disabilities Victoria, Disability advocacy and self-advocacy organisations, Allied service providers, Independent living networks

## ◆ Women from Diverse Socio-Economic Backgrounds

### Labour, care and community histories

- ◆ Consider stories of women in labour movements, community organising, care work, local enterprise, housing justice and grassroots activism – contributions that have often been sustained and community-facing without formal recognition, along with everyday women making a community impact.
- ◆ Reach out to community groups representing low-income neighbourhoods, housing cooperatives, union affiliates and informal labour networks
- ◆ Name places after women whose work has sustained families, communities and regional economies but has been historically unacknowledged

**Partner organisations:** Trade unions with gender equity programs, Worker centres, Community legal centres, Neighbourhood houses, Social justice coalitions

## 4 Implementation strategies

These strategies translate the principles and community guidance into concrete organisational actions. They apply to councils, developers, naming authorities and community organisations.

1	<b>Set targets</b>	Establish clear, publicly stated goals for increasing the proportion of public places named after women from diverse backgrounds – aligned with the Victorian Government’s current 70% commemorative naming target and the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> .
2	<b>Publish transparent criteria</b>	Make selection criteria publicly available before nominations open. Criteria should prioritise gender diversity, intersectionality, community impact, cultural relevance and consent. Communities deserve to know the rules before they invest in nominating.
3	<b>Open nominations with active support</b>	Accept public nominations and provide active support, including translation, facilitation and capacity-building, for communities that may need help preparing submissions. Passive open calls exclude the groups you most need to reach.
4	<b>Form diverse advisory panels</b>	Establish advisory panels that include representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, CALD women, LGBTIQ+ women, women with disabilities, and socio-economic diversity advocates – not as token consultees, but as genuine decision-makers.

<b>5</b>	<b>Monitor and report publicly</b>	Track progress and publicly report on place naming outcomes, including demographic data about who is being named and community feedback about the process. Accountability requires visibility.
<b>6</b>	<b>Develop education and outreach</b>	Create interpretive materials and programs in schools, libraries and community centres that explain the importance of inclusive place naming – and the stories of the women being commemorated.
<b>7</b>	<b>Build a commemorative ecosystem</b>	Consider naming alongside artworks, storytelling installations, public performances and digital archives. A name on a street sign is a beginning – a richer ecosystem of commemoration creates lasting change in how communities understand their own history.

## 5 Evaluation and continuous improvement

Intersectional, inclusive place naming requires ongoing commitment, learning and adaptation. Organisations should embed the following practices:

<b>Regular review</b>	Periodically evaluate the guideline’s effectiveness, incorporating community feedback and evolving best practices. What worked? Who was reached? Whose voices were still missing?
<b>Feedback mechanisms</b>	Establish clear, accessible channels for communities to raise concerns, propose additions or share stories, including channels that do not require formal written submissions.
<b>Capacity building</b>	Invest in ongoing training for staff, elected members and councils on gender equity, cultural competency, accessibility and intersectional engagement. This work requires sustained skill-building, not a single workshop.
<b>Transparent reporting</b>	Publish outcomes data regularly, including the names chosen, the demographic profile of those named, the communities consulted, the objections received and how they were resolved.

**Her Place Women’s Museum – support and partnership**

Her Place Women’s Museum is available to support councils, developers and community organisations implementing this guideline. We offer research, consultation support, community connections, and expertise in intersectional women’s history.

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**Related documents:** Intersections in Place Checklist · Finding Her Place – Guide to Commemoration · GNV Submission Readiness Checklist · Finding Her Nomination Submission Form · Cultural Protocols Framework