

Management report to Council**Agenda item 6.1****Celebrating Women in Melbourne's History – Advisory Panel recommendations****Council****Presenter:** Louise Scott, Acting General Manager Business, Economy and Activation**12 December 2023****Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the outcomes of the Advisory Panel for Celebrating Women in Melbourne's History for their nomination of a woman to be honoured in statutory form and to recommend the commissioning of a statue of Vida Goldstein.
2. In December 2022, Council resolved to create at least three new statues of significant Victorian women, in order to address the gender imbalance in the city's statues.
3. Only nine of the 580 statues located within the City of Melbourne boundary depict and celebrate women from Melbourne's history – representing less than two per cent. Five of the 25 statues on City of Melbourne land depict women.
4. To mark International Women's Day, in March 2023, Council called for public nominations for remarkable Victorian women to be commemorated. 185 individual women were nominated by just over 1000 members of the public. Women who are living, fictitious characters, or who never lived in Victoria were disqualified, leaving 102 eligible nominations.
5. An advisory panel (Panel) to be established and assessed the eligible nominations comprising the following eminent Melburnians:
 - 5.1. Professor Clare Wright OAM – (Chair) historian, author, broadcaster and public commentator
 - 5.2. Antoinette Braybrook AM – First Nations CEO of Djirra, advocate for Aboriginal women's voice, visibility and self-determination and was 2022 Melburnian of the Year joined in September.
 - 5.3. Tasneem Chopra OAM – cross-cultural consultant, speaker, broadcaster, activist
 - 5.4. Russel Howcroft – businessman, brand advisor and media personality.
 - 5.5. Carol Schwartz AO – business and community leader

Key issues

6. The Panel assessed the longlisted women's achievements against set criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Criterion 1: Historical significance of their contribution to the political, economic, social or cultural life of Melbourne or Victoria	30 per cent
Criterion 2: Leader in their community	30 per cent
Criterion 3: Represent the diversity of Melbourne's story	30 per cent
Criterion 4: Reflect the values of contemporary Melbourne (inclusive, progressive, diverse, and bold)	10 per cent

7. The Panel unanimously recommends: Vida Goldstein, a suffragist, feminist, politician as their first priority for a woman to be celebrated in figurative statue form. For a biographical information on Vida Goldstein, see her entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/goldstein-vida-jane-6418>

8. Biographical summary of Vida Goldstein:
 - 8.1. Vida Goldstein was born on 13 April 1869 at Portland, Victoria. The Goldsteins were involved with various Christian churches which encouraged a deep involvement in social welfare work. The family moved to Melbourne in 1877, where Vida later became known as a prominent suffragist, pacifist, and feminist and politician. She was also a social justice reform advocate and campaigner for equal pay.
 - 8.2. Goldstein was an active member of her local community who worked to improve the experiences of those living in Melbourne by fundraising for the Queen Victoria Women's Hospital and campaigning for greater social welfare and prison reform. She was also fundamental in the establishment of Children's Courts.
 - 8.3. Goldstein became one of the first women internationally to stand for election to a national parliament, a global landmark. She ran as an independent candidate for the Senate in 1903, campaigning tirelessly for women's suffrage. Although unsuccessful she made four more attempts: in 1910 and 1917 for the Senate and in 1913 and 1914 for the House of Representatives, always as an independent candidate.
 - 8.4. Vida Goldstein died on August 15, 1949, in South Yarra, Victoria. In 1984 a Melbourne electoral division was named the Division of Goldstein in her honor. In 2001 she was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.
9. If three statues remains Council's intended outcome, the Panel strongly recommends at least one woman be from a First Nations background and expresses its hope that Council will do further work to redress the gender inequality in civic cultural infrastructure and memorialisation practices.
10. An indicative cost per statue can be inferred from the State Government's recent project honouring six Victorian women with figurative bronze statues, for example the statue of Zelda D'Aprano at Trades Hall. This suggests each statue cost around \$200,000 to be cast and installed. A statue of Vida Goldstein could be produced for a similar sum.
11. Potential locations for a statue of Vida Goldstein will be considered in the context of her achievements, as well as any requirements of possible donors and sponsors. Management will explore prominent, publically accessible locations throughout the municipality, noting that a location in the surrounds of the Victorian Parliament would be preferable given Vida's political achievements.
12. Subject to budget allocation, foundry availability and securing of sites, the statue could be installed prior to International Women's Day, Saturday 8th March 2025

Recommendation from management

13. That Council:
 - 13.1. Having reviewed the recommendations from the Advisory Panel for Celebrating Women in Melbourne's History, endorses management commissioning a statue of Vida Goldstein.
 - 13.2. Requests management design a commissioning process that will appoint appropriately skilled artists to generate concept proposals and make the artwork, and outline this, along with a proposed budget and location of the work in a briefing paper to Councillors.
 - 13.3. Requests management develop a funding model for the artwork, which may include direct contributions from the private and public sector, along with a public subscription model and to include this in the briefing paper to Councillors.
 - 13.4. Requests management design additional means and activities to celebrate women in Melbourne's history, for example through exhibitions, creative programs and place-naming and report back to Council.
 - 13.5. Requests management communicate the outcomes of Council's endorsement of the statue to the public.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 3)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. No direct legal issues arise from the recommendation from management.

Finance

2. There is no current budget allocation for the commissioning of the statues. Funding will be sourced from external contributions. Management to develop a fundraising strategy ahead of commissioning.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

5. A public nominations process was used to generate the list of nominees. Relevant external stakeholders will be consulted as the project progresses. In particular, where any Aboriginal women are commemorated, consultation with the relevant Aboriginal families and community will take place

Relation to Council policy

6. Public Art Framework 2021–31.

Environmental sustainability

7. In commissioning the statues any relevant environmental sustainability issues or opportunities will be considered.