

# Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

12 September 2023

### **Waramanga, and the history of the ACT saying ‘Yes’.**

Dr Paterson states: “In a time when there is fierce public debate leading up to the current referendum for a Voice to parliament, I think it is constructive to engage with our heritage here in the ACT. In May 1967, Australians overwhelmingly voted to change the constitution so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would be counted as part of the population. Literally a year later (June 1968), the suburb of Waramanga was gazetted, and the suburb and streets were named after Aboriginal Tribal groups, predominately in the Northern Territory. I would suggest that the naming of Waramanga was very much riding on the national momentum for change, for recognition and equality.

On 12th September 2023, ACT Labor MLA Dr. Marisa Paterson, will table in the ACT Legislative Assembly with a motion which will address a gap in our publicly accessible records and aims at promoting the recognition and celebration of First Nation’s heritage in place names within Weston Creek and the ACT more broadly.

Dr. Paterson stated “While ACTmapi offers valuable information about street names and their themes in the ACT, there is a notable discrepancy in the level of detail provided for the suburb of Waramanga, Weston Creek. There is an obvious administrative oversight that I would like to correct. Waramanga streets are named after Aboriginal tribal groups, however, unlike other suburbs street names in ACTmapi, there is a lack of comprehensive detail and descriptions for Waramanga street names.”

The names of suburbs, streets, and places in the ACT pay tribute to Australia's remarkable people, geography, heritage, and history. These names honor a diverse array of individuals, both well-known figures and those whose achievements might have been less publicised. They collectively embody some of our Indigenous heritage, national leaders in all fields, and captivating stories, which are beautifully reflected in the names of our national capital.

Dr. Paterson underscored the importance of community involvement, stating, "Sharing information about street names can inspire community involvement in preserving and celebrating our suburbs, in this case Waramanga's, rich and progressive history. By improving understanding and accessibility to information, hopefully local residents become more engaged in their understandings of their local heritage, and in Canberra, this allows us to connect more broadly with our Australian heritage."

Further Dr Paterson states: “While this motion is small in its calls’ on to the ACT Government, it highlights the importance of these moments in our history, we see from the Yes vote in the 1967 referendum, the flow on positive effects of embracing constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. And today, as we embrace another referendum its worth amplifying our rich ACT heritage, and how it sits alongside and embraces our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and how a Yes vote can make the most quiet and subtle of differences for grassroots change.”

**Statement ends**

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