

On Monday March 13, 2023, the City of Sydney voted in favour of a resolution put forward by Councillor Linda Scott to work with the city's Public Art Advisory Panel, stakeholders, and the community to enable the delivery of at least three new statues depicting women.

The City of Sydney also resolved to work with the panel to identify new opportunities within the City of Sydney projects, programs and capital works to support increased equality of gender, First Nations and cultural diversity within the public realm, including the installation of statues and art held in storage.

And, finally, the City agreed to collaborate with A Monument of One's Own (AMOO) to undertake research into the scale of gender inequity among Sydney's statues.

The motion came about as a direct result of A Monument of One's Own (AMOO) research, which explored the gender and Indigenous representation among statues and public art in major Australian capital cities.

The recent AMOO research looked at the gender representation of statues in six cities, finding that 85.5 percent were men and 95 percent were non-Indigenous. The City of Sydney was one of two capital city councils that declined to participate in that study.

The City of Sydney's decision to tackle its' monument inequality reflects growing momentum internationally and here in Australia to redress the historical imbalance of women among statues and public art.

A statue of Millicent Fawcett was unveiled in London's Parliament Square in 2018, Central Park saw the installation in 2020 of its' first statue featuring three women, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Sojourner Truth, and earlier this month a statue of Dame Enid Lyons and Dame Dorothy Tangney, the first women elected to Australia's federal parliament, was unveiled in Canberra.

Also in response to AMOO research, in late 2022 the City of Melbourne fast tracked three new statues of women to redress its statue gender imbalance. In, "Chain Reaction", a bronze sculpture of the legendary equal pay campaigner Zelda D'Aprano's iconic 1969 Melbourne protest, has been commissioned by Victorian Trades Hall Council and A *Monument of One's Own* with support from the Victorian Government new Women's Public Art Program, which was announced in 2022. It will be unveiled later this year.

Professor Clare Wright, La Trobe University historian and the co-convenor of AMOO, said:

"The cultural infrastructure of a city sends strong messages about who is important, who is valued and who belongs in the civic landscape.

In the 19th century settler colonial context, statues denote power, control and authority.

But in the modern context, the absence of women in our commemorative terrain perpetuates the myth that women have neither done anything of historical significance nor do they continue to merit public space and spending.

Linda Scott and the City of Sydney are to be commended for challenging these twin fallacies and committing to address the respect gap in civic commemorative practices”.

Kristine Ziwica, a journalist, author and women’s advocate and co—convenor of AMOO, said:

“Feminists, myself included, are fond of saying, ‘we stand on the shoulders of giants’. I am delighted more and more cities, country towns and regions in Australia are increasingly honouring these ‘giants’ from history and their achievements.

They serve as timely inspiration for a new generation, and in many cases they remind us of some unfinished business we can turn our collective minds and talents to tackling.”