

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Government Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



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HONOURING AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WOMEN'S CRICKET LEGEND

Bendigo local, women's cricket trailblazer and primary school teacher, Barbara Rae, is set to be immortalised in bronze, as part of the Allan Labor Government's *Victorian Women's Public Art Program*.

Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins today announced the statue will have a permanent home in Bendigo – the home of the first women's cricket match to be held in Australia in 1874 between the 'Blues' and 'Reds' at the Easter Fair.

The winning captain and top scorer of the 'Blues team' at just 19 years old, Barbara Rae broke ground in the sport at a time when women required permission to play what was considered a 'male only' game.

Playing a significant role in organising the match, she recruited other women to join the teams and ran coaching sessions at local cricket grounds.

Now, 151 years since that first match, her leadership and legacy lives on as women's cricket in Australia thrives, with record-breaking crowds and participation levels.

The sculpture of Barbara Rae is the first of six successful projects set to be made permanent as part of the public art program, honouring the legacies of those who have forged a path for all Victorian women – reflecting diversity, and highlighting leadership, excellence and service to the community across a range of fields.

The program aims to address the under-representation of women in public art and women artists, as well as address gendered stereotypes about women's achievements.

More than 10,000 votes were sent in by Victorians across the state, with the \$1.2 million Labor Government program supported by the expertise of McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery.

In 2023, six new public art works were unveiled across the state, celebrating women such as journalist, comedian and disability rights advocate Stella Young and equal pay campaigner Zelda D'Aprano.

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Barbara Rae was a trailblazer in her time, and I can think of no better place than Bendigo – the birthplace of women's cricket – to immortalise her in bronze to recognise her achievements and legacy in women's sport."

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

"Women's achievements deserve to be seen and celebrated in our public spaces and this sculpture of Barbara Rae will honour her legacy and inspire generations to come."

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

"The next generation of Bendigo's girls should be able to dream big. This statue of Barbara Rae will give them an inspirational role model as well as celebrating a great chapter of our city's history."

Quote attributable to City of Greater Bendigo Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf

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“This is fantastic news for Greater Bendigo and a wonderful way to honour Barbara Rae who played a pivotal role in the evolution of women’s cricket despite facing much hostility and discrimination.”