



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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PUBLIC SERVANTS TO MARK THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO CANBERRA

Whether it is with a fun run, an online picture gallery, an art exhibition or just a mass get together in a park, the Australian Public Service is planning an event to mark its considerable contribution to the shaping of Canberra during this year's Centenary of Canberra celebrations.

Professor Jane Halton, Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing, together with other departmental heads and the Public Service Commissioner are encouraging Canberra's public servants past and present to showcase the work they have done in public service and within the development of the ACT community.

Professor Halton, who became a public servant not long after graduating from ANU, said it was important during this historic centenary year to recognise the contribution of those public servants who have worked, lived, volunteered and contributed in so many personal ways to the life of Canberra.

"When Canberra was first established as a permanent home for the Australian parliament the majority of people who lived, worked and developed the Canberra community were public servants," Professor Halton said.

"Up until the early 1970s many public servants came to Canberra on a short term basis - to do a specific job, and then to return to other states. In fact, some government departments did not complete their relocation to Canberra until around the end of the decade.

"However, many stayed on, inspired by the beauty and lifestyle in the "bush capital" including my father, Charles Halton, who was recruited from Canada to be the Secretary of Transport in the 1970s. Like my parents, many others decided to stay and bring up their children in Canberra which has now become home to subsequent generations.

"From the beginnings of Canberra it was known as a government town and while more than 50 per cent of businesses are now in the private sector, many of those provide goods and services to the public service and its employees.

"So it is important for public servants past and present to contribute to the Centenary celebrations with memories, stories and photos that add to the history of the nation's capital."

Professor Halton said that she and her colleagues on the Secretaries Board will be asking public servants to suggest the type of contribution they think would be the most appropriate to signify the role of the Australian Public Service in developing Canberra through an on-line ideas survey.

Options could include:

- A pictorial exhibition about the social, economic and charitable contribution of the members of the APS to Canberra.
- An open online archive of the history of the APS in Canberra. Stories and photos would be sourced from across the APS, revealing the untold stories, and recognising the unsung heroes of the APS.
- An exhibition to highlight the evolution of the APS workplace in Canberra. The exhibition would include a focus on interesting architecture of government buildings in the city and town centres.
- A prize for art work that represents aspects of the APS's history and role in Canberra life.
- An event or gathering open to the whole APS community. For example a fun run, fete or sports day.

"Once the survey result is known, staff will be invited to contribute story ideas and experiences of APS life in Canberra," Professor Halton said.

"In reflecting on and recognising the APS's contribution to Canberra, there will also be an opportunity to support the Boundless Canberra initiative, which is raising funds to build an all-abilities children's playground".

People can make their suggestions at:

<http://www.apscentenaryofcanberra.com>

The survey will be open until 4:00pm on 3 May 2013

For further information email: apscentenaryofcanberra@health.gov.au.

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