



COMMENT: THIS IS WHAT THEY SAID

"If we are going to recognise the conflicts, they should... recognise and honour it in the area where other veterans of this country [are], not in Reconciliation Place where I think that's a side issue."



- Glenda Humes, daughter of the first Indigenous Australian to be commissioned in the army, Captain Reginald Saunders (pictured).

"It could be commemorated in the War Memorial because the war memorial has a charter which says that it commemorates the experience of the Australian forces and you could make that an argument, that Aboriginal Warriors were fighting to defend their land in Australia against Australian forces."



- Dr John Connor, author of 'The Frontier Wars'.

"You have to accept as Australians, that those things happened, rightly or wrongly. Trying to hide things is not going to help."



- Peter Conway, director of The Canberra Institute and a campaigner for a memorial to the Frontier Wars in Canberra.

Frontier wars should be on Parade

Daughter of celebrated Aboriginal soldier backs a call for a memorial for the 'Frontier Wars' on Anzac Parade.

By Madelaine Sealey
NATIONAL

The daughter of one of only two Aboriginal war veterans to be honoured by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) has supported the call for a monument commemorating the conflict between the First Australians and European settlers.

Glenda Humes, daughter of Captain Reginald Saunders, the most senior Indigenous officer ever commissioned in the Australian Army, says that there must be formal recognition of the major wars between the white settlers and Aboriginal people.

"They've got to recognise the Frontier Wars is a part of our history that this country has been in denial about," she told *NIT*.

"[The previous government] never wanted to recognise that part of our history or that past... but this makes us a nation, this makes us who we are..."

Ms Humes said that suggestions the proposed memorial should be where what is now known as Reconciliation Place (which is situated on the other side of Lake Burley Griffin to Anzac Parade) is an inappropriate place to commemorate the historical wars.

"If we are going to recognise [the] conflicts, they should... recognise and honour it in the area where other veterans of this country [are] honoured, not in Reconciliation Place," she said.

"It shouldn't be treated as a side issue at all. Anzac parade is a respectful place and that's where it should be."

The Canberra Institute, a think-tank directed by ACT Labor Senate candidate and former Hawk government advisor Peter Conway, is heading the push for an official commemoration and said he will

continue to lobby for a memorial, on behalf of Indigenous groups.

The institute has proposed two sites where the memorial could be, one being Reconciliation Place and the other on the axis between Parliament House and the AWM at the south end.

Mr Conway said that while there is opposition from the Returned Soldiers League and authorities to memorialising colonial conflicts alongside statues and war plaques commemorating post-federation wars on Anzac Parade, there are already exceptions which exist and opposition to the proposal is 'limp'.

"If you look at the dioramas in the war memorial, we've got the Maori wars, we've got Sudan and yet nothing for [the frontier wars]. It's about accepting what happened," Mr Conway told *NIT*.

"You have to accept as Australians that those things happened, rightly or wrongly.

"Trying to hide things is not going to help."

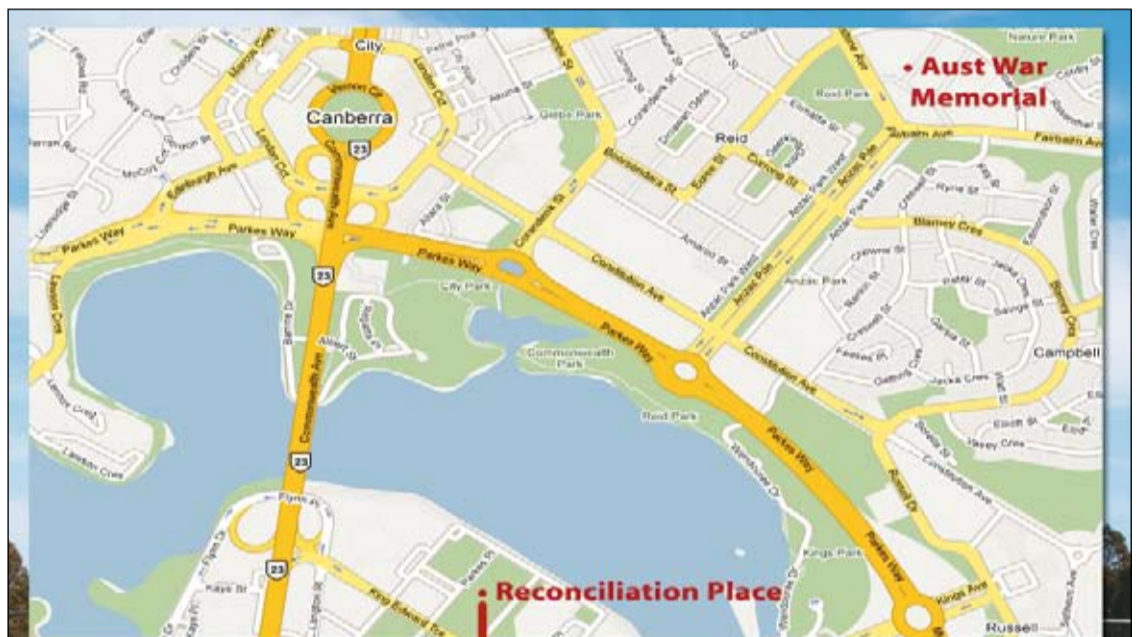
His view has been backed by former AWM historian and lecturer at ADFA, Dr John Connor who also agreed in part with Ms Humes.

"Reconciliation Place is about Reconciliation," Dr Connor told *NIT*.

"You should commemorate Frontier conflicts... in a different place, where you have displays about [those] conflicts."

The Senior lecturer for the University of New South Wales and author of *The Frontier Wars* suggested that commemorating the conflicts in the form of a diorama within the AWM would serve a greater purpose of educating people about what happened in those early days of Australia.

"There's no reason why... the Frontier Wars can't become a part of the War Memorial displays," he said.



Looking south-west from the steps of the Australian War Memorial straight down Anzac Parade towards Old Parliament House and new Parliament House. At the end of Anzac Parade is Lake Burley Griffin, and immediately across the water at the next landfall is Reconciliation Place (between the Lake and Old Parliament House).

Fast Facts on the 'Frontier Wars'

- The Frontier Wars, or Aboriginal Wars, refers to the conflicts and battles between Aboriginal groups and European settlers from the late 18th century into the early 20th century.

- The first war is recorded at Hawkesbury River, near Sydney, in 1795 and the conflict between the local Darug people and white settlers lasted for a period of over 20 years.

- Other prominent wars include the Nepean Wars (from 1790), the Black Wars of Tasmania, the Port Phillip District Wars from 1830-1859, the Kalakadoon Wars of North West

Queensland from 1870-1890 and the Western Australian Conflict of 1890-1898.

- The Myall Creek Massacre (northern NSW) is a famous example of frontier violence because it was the first time white settlers were ever convicted for the slaughter of Aboriginal people. On June 1838, at least 12 European settlers murdered 28 Aboriginal men, women and children by tying them together with a long rope and slaughtering them. Seven stockmen were hung later in the year after two trials into the massacre.

"The war memorial has a charter which says that it... commemorates the experience of the Australian forces.

"You could make that an argument that Aboriginal warriors were fighting to de-

fend their land in Australia against Australian forces.

"[The Memorial board] should go back and reconsider the issue.

Dr Connor said that consultation with the Indigenous

community was necessary in choosing where an appropriate home for a memorial might be.

The proposal is currently under consideration by the National Memorials Committee.