

# Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP  
Premier



Friday, 6 February 2026

## SCULPTURE HONOURS BENDIGO LOCAL AND CRICKET TRAILBLAZER

Bendigo local and women's cricket trailblazer Barbara Rae has been immortalised in bronze, with a new sculpture in her honour revealed as part of the Allan Labor Government's *Victorian Women's Public Art Program*.

Premier and Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan and Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards today joined sculptor Lis Johnson and members of Barbara Rae's family to unveil the new artwork at its permanent home at Queen Elizabeth Oval.

The sculpture's location is also significant, with the oval home to the first women's cricket match held in Australia in 1874 between the 'Blues' and 'Reds' at the Easter Fair.

At just 19 years of age, she captained the winning team and was the top scorer on the 'Blues team' – breaking ground in the sport at a time when women required permission to play what was considered a 'male only' game.

Barbara was pivotal in staging the historic match, recruiting other women to play and holding coaching sessions.

Now, 152 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 projects being delivered as part of the Labor Government's program to address the lack of women being represented in statues, sculptures and other art in Victoria's public spaces.

Supported by the McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery, the program honours 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.

Workers' rights advocates Agnes Chambers, Agnes Doig and the Wonthaggi Miners Women's Auxiliary will also be recognised in Wonthaggi, as well as the nine women who were the driving force behind the Montsalvat Artists Community will be celebrated with an artwork in Eltham.

### Quote attributable to Premier and Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

*"The sculpture of Barbara Rae is a powerful tribute to a much-loved Bendigo local who has left an enduring legacy in Australian cricket history and advancing the equality of women in sport."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

*"It is such a pleasure to play a part in unveiling this permanent memorial recognising Barbara Rae at the birthplace of women's cricket right here in Bendigo to inspire the next generation of female sportswomen."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Women Mary-Anne Thomas

*"The achievements of Victorian women should be celebrated and acknowledged – Barbara Rae was a trailblazer in her field, and this sculpture is a lasting memorial to her legacy."*

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**Quote attributable to Greater Bendigo Council Mayor Thomas Prince**

*“This is the first sculpture to honour a female cricketer in Victoria and only the second in Australia. Barbara Rae paved the way for women’s cricket in Australia, and it happened right here in Greater Bendigo.”*

**Quote attributable to Barbara Rae’s great-granddaughter Diane Robertson**

*“It has been such a thrill for my family to see my great grandmother’s contribution immortalised in this way. Barbara was a trailblazer who set a wonderful example for so many women and girls in sport.”*