

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition Number: 9327
Petition Sponsored by: Ann-Marie Hermans
Directed to: Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Tabled on: 29 July 2025

Petition Grievance:

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the unilateral changing of the name of Berwick Springs Lake by the Minister for Planning. This name change creates division within our multifaith community, ignores the historical significance of the name. and was done with no community consultation with either local residents or property owners.

The petitioners are aggrieved by the failure to consult with the local community on this significant name change and the disrespect it demonstrates. The petitioners are also aggrieved by the division created in our multifaith community by a decision that appears to privilege one faith over others. Finally, the petitioners are aggrieved by the complete disregard for the historical significance of the name Berwick Springs. The name originates from 1855 when William Clarke named his property 'The Springs' after the natural springs in the area. Edward Greaves continued this heritage in 1903. maintaining the name for his homestead on Stockyard Drive. This significant documented history, confirmed in a 1993 heritage study, has been disregarded by this decision.

Petition Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to revoke the unilateral renaming of Berwick Springs Lake, implement proper local community consultation regarding any future naming decision regarding the lake found in the Berwick Springs Reserve and investigate the processes which led to the unilateral approval by the Minister for Planning.

Reply:

I thank the Member for sponsoring this petition.

The naming of this lake delivers on a commitment made in 2018 to name a permanent landmark in Victoria in honour of the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

This commitment was made by the former Premier and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. While this matter predominantly sits with the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I am able to advise the following:

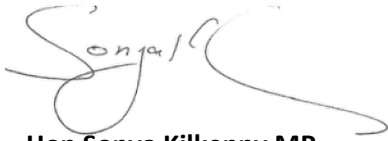
The lake in question had never been officially named prior to this year. 'Guru Nanak Lake' highlights and supports Victoria's vibrant and diverse communities.

I can confirm that the name 'Berwick Springs' has not been removed: that it is still the commonly used name of the overall area. As this name is currently unregistered, the community can raise the formal naming of 'Berwick Springs' with Melbourne Water who are the relevant naming authority for waterways in this area.

I understand that 'Guru Nanak Lake' is just one of the many lakes in the 'Berwick Springs' area. There are more than 20 lakes and other unnamed features in this area. A proposal to name any of these can be made to Melbourne Water. I have provided a map of the 'Berwick Springs' area for your information. You will see that there are several unnamed lakes and features in the 'Berwick Springs' and immediately adjacent area that could be formally named.

Please also note that targeted consultation was undertaken by Multicultural Affairs Victoria.

I know that the Narre Warren South and the Berwick Springs residents will continue to support our diverse communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sonya / CC', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Hon Sonya Kilkeny MP
Minister for Planning

28/08/2025

Encl: Map of 'Berwick Springs'