



Johanna McBride conducting the Women's Choir outside Garema Place. Picture by James Croucher

## Canberra choir sings out for Brittany Higgins

**Lanie Tindale**

A CANBERRA choir with a long activist history has sung out in support of Brittany Higgins in Garema Place.

A Chorus of Women gathered on Friday afternoon to sing a new song, called Blessings for Brittany, "to stand shoulder to shoulder" with Ms Higgins.

Ms Higgins has alleged her former colleague Bruce Lehrmann raped her in Parliament House in 2019, an allegation Mr Lehrmann has consistently denied. A high profile trial was abandoned early this month.

Conductor Johanna

McBride said the gathering was just to "sing in compassion with Brittany whose suffering is clear, and also in solidarity with all women who suffer gendered violence and who suffer from our adversarial justice system."

Ms McBride said the group was not "making any statement about anyone's guilt, or not", but wanted to see the ACT's justice system change when it came to sexual assault and rape.

Canberra feminist activist and speaker Biff McBride said the past decade had seen a cultural revolution when it came to allegations

of rape, which she realised during the March to Justice protest in 2021.

"I did not think I would live to see this day," she said.

"Generally most people in our society, and most of the media now, their default position is to believe [women] and that is complete

revolution."

Speaker Di Lucas said the entire ACT justice and service system was tipped against people reporting assault. She was a member of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Committee which handed down recommendations to the government in 2021.

"There's a whole attrition that happens," she said.

"Very few women report [assault] in the first place. But then from from that point, they just drop off."

The ACT government is considering changes regarding sexual assault evidence laws.



Biff Ward, Di Lucas and Avan Daruwalla.