



Frequently Asked Questions

Establishment of the National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

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Seeking Support

Where can I get support?

- If you need immediate emotional support, please contact:
 - In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)
 - [Lifeline](#) 13 11 14
 - [Beyond Blue](#) 1300 224 636
 - [Mensline](#) 1300 78 99 78
 - [Suicide Call Back Service](#) 1300 659 467
 - [1800 RESPECT](#) 1800 737 732

Support Services

- For specialised support services, available during specific times, contact:
 - [Redress Support Services](#) on 1800 737 377 – available 8am to 5pm weekdays (AEST)
 - [Survivors & Mates Support Network](#) on 1800 472 676 – available 9am to 5pm weekdays (AEST)
 - [Find and Connect Support Services](#) on 1800 16 11 09 – available 9am to 5pm weekdays (AEST)
 - [Forced Adoption Support Services](#) on 1800 21 03 13 – available 9am to 5pm weekdays (AEST)

Information about Memorial

- More information on the progress of the National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Memorial) is available on the [Department of Social Services website](#).

Key Messages

- In February 2022, following a design competition, the Australian Government announced ‘*Transparency and Truth*’ as the selected design for the Memorial.
- The National Capital Authority, on behalf of the Government, subsequently undertook a feasibility assessment process of the Memorial’s design and determined the design had unacceptable technical risks.
- Following consultations with the National Capital Authority, the National Memorial Advisory Group, and Hon Peter McClellan AM KC (Chair of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and Chair of the Memorial's Design Competition Jury), the Government has decided to terminate the selected Memorial design, and to commence a new design selection process, in partnership with victims and survivors and their families.
- The Department of Social Services (the Department) and the National Capital Authority will work closely with the National Memorial Advisory Group and Mr McClellan to ensure the new Memorial design selection process delivers a feasible design that:
 - Delivers a feasible design that also has durable structural features, and
 - genuinely reflects the voices and experiences of victims and survivors.

- The new design process will commence in early 2024, with construction to commence in 2025. The Memorial is expected to be complete in 2026.
- More information on the new design process will be available in March 2024.

Questions and Answers

New Memorial Design

Why has the Government decided to terminate the selected design and commence a new design selection process?

- Assessments of the selected design concept '*Transparency and Truth*', by architects Jessica Spresser and Peter Besley, identified complex technical challenges due to the unique and innovative use of glass in the design.
- The Department and the National Capital Authority worked closely to explore options to resolve the design challenges and engaged with the National Memorial Advisory Group on these options. This consultation determined the selected design had unacceptable technical risks and a protracted timeframe.
- In accordance with the competition guidelines, the Government decided to terminate the selected design due to the unacceptable risks, and to proceed with a new design selection process.

The National Site of Recognition for Thalidomide Survivors and their Families has successfully been built using glass. Why can't the glass design for this Memorial also be built?

- While the Thalidomide memorial was also made of glass, the design was technically less complex, with the glass blocks laid in a conventional manner, using known techniques to construct.

Why can't the selected design be modified to make it feasible?

- The Department, National Capital Authority and National Memorial Advisory Group explored a number of options to resolve the challenges with the Memorial design, including remodelling the Memorial design. This option did not align with the Rules that govern Commonwealth Procurement processes.

Why weren't the challenges to design implementation picked up during the design selection process?

- After the design '*Transparency and Truth*' was selected in late 2021, the National Capital Authority, on behalf of the Australian Government, undertook an extensive feasibility assessment process of the Memorial's design. This assessment determined the design had unacceptable technical risks, and a protracted and uncertain timeframe.
- In addition, the assessment was unable to determine whether the design would have long-term durability in Canberra's climate.
- With the new design selection process, submissions will be independently assessed by professionals for feasibility *prior* to final selection by a panel which will include victim and survivor representatives.

How will a new design reflect the voices of victims and survivors?

- The Department is working with the National Memorial Advisory Group comprising lived experience advocates and experts, and Mr McClellan to ensure victims and survivors continue to have a voice in the new design selection process.
- The National Memorial Advisory Group and Mr McClellan will participate in the new process, including ensuring the new design brief reflects what is important for victim-survivors, the vetting of applicants, and the final design selection.
- The design brief for the new process will continue to reflect the Memorial's original commemorative intent established through a national consultation process in late 2020.

Will the new design be based on the previous design?

- The Design Brief for the new process will reflect the Memorial's original commemorative intent established through a national consultation process in late 2020.
- The Memorial design '*Transparency and Truth*' is the intellectual property of the designers, Jessica Spresser and Peter Besley. A new design must not be substantially similar or based on the original design.

Why isn't one of the other designs from the original competition being used instead of undertaking a new design process?

- The Department, National Capital Authority and National Memorial Advisory Group explored a number of options to resolve the challenges with the Memorial design, including reverting to other designs from the design competition in 2021.
- This option was excluded as it was not consistent with the Procurement Rules for the Australian Government and a new process was considered the fairest way to proceed.
- High risks remain around buildability, durability, timeframe and budget for the other designs as they have not been further tested.

What will the new design selection process involve? Will it be another competition?

- The new design selection process will not involve a design competition. It will be a two stage procurement process.
 - Stage 1 will seek expression of interests, with submissions screened to ensure applicants have the required skills and experience to design and deliver a Memorial.
 - Stage 2 shortlisted applicants will be invited to provide a detailed design submission that will be independently assessed for compliance by professionals, prior to final selection by a panel.
- The National Capital Authority will lead the process with increased oversight from the department including:
 - agreed evaluation criteria for design submissions
 - technical assessments of design proposals to inform construction buildability, durability, timeframes and costs
 - Approval of the new design by Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC).
- The National Memorial Advisory Group and Mr McClellan will be involved in each stage of the selection process to ensure that the voices of victim-survivors are represented.

What checks and balances will be in place to ensure only a feasible new design is selected?

- The new design selection process will involve a customised, two stage process. In Stage 1, submissions will be screened to ensure applicants have the required skills and experience to design and deliver a Memorial, and in Stage 2 shortlisted applicants will provide a detailed design submission that will be independently assessed for compliance (buildability, durability, timeframe, cost) by professionals, prior to final selection by a panel.

What is the budget for the new design, and for the construction and launch of the Memorial?

- Funding of \$6.7 million over 4 years was committed as part of the 2020-21 Federal Budget to establish a national memorial in Canberra.
- The Memorial construction budget of \$3.7 million (GST exclusive) for the new design is equal to the original design budget reflected in the Design Competition Brief of 2021.
- The remaining budget contributes towards administration expenses including design development, project management, website development, a dedication event, and ongoing memorial and website maintenance.

When will a new design be constructed?

- A new design selection process is expected to take 6 months, commencing from early 2024. Once a new design is selected, procurement processes for the Memorial's construction will be undertaken.
- Construction is expected to commence in 2025, for completion in 2026.
- Updates on the progress of establishing the Memorial will be provided on the department's website www.dss.gov.au.

Will the Memorial still be located on Acton Peninsula?

- The Memorial will still be located on Acton Peninsula in Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory, within the National Capital Estate designated for memorials of national significance, near the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

About the National Memorial

What is the role of the National Memorial?

- The Memorial will provide people with lived experience of institutional child sexual abuse and their families, supporters and allies a place of remembrance, reflection, truth, healing and hope.
- It will also recognise the courage of all people with lived experience, and those who spoke up to fight for justice and to be believed.
- For the broader community, the Memorial will raise awareness of historical and contemporary institutional child sexual abuse in Australia and serve as a reminder of the continued responsibility we all share for protecting children.

Why is the National Memorial being built?

- The National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (National Memorial) was a recommendation (17.6) of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).

- **Recommendation 17.6** ([Final Report: Recommendations](#), p. 62)

‘A national memorial should be commissioned by the Australian Government for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Victims and survivors should be consulted on the memorial design and it should be located in Canberra.’

What was announced in the 2020-21 Budget?

- In the 2020-21 Federal Budget, the Australian Government committed \$6.7 million from 2020-21 towards the development of the National Memorial. This funding is for the entire Memorial project, including its development, construction, launch, and ongoing maintenance.
- The Government stated the National Memorial would provide a place for healing, reflection and recognition of victims, survivors and others affected by institutional child sexual abuse.
- A budget Fact Sheet on the department’s website committed to further consultation on the scope and purpose of the National Memorial. You can find the National Memorial Fact Sheet [here](#).

Who is developing the National Memorial?

- The Department is responsible for the development of the National Memorial, partnering with the National Capital Authority and establishing a National Memorial Advisory Group to provide advice on the development of the National Memorial in Canberra.
- The National Capital Authority is a Commonwealth statutory authority that oversees the design and construction of all national memorials in Canberra, they will conduct the design selection and procurement process and manage construction of the Memorial.
- The National Memorial Advisory Group, which includes people who represent those with lived experience of institutional child sexual abuse, their families, and advocates, and other relevant experts, will inform key stages of the development of the National Memorial.
- Key decisions during the development of the National Memorial will require the approval of the Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC), which is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Stakeholder Consultations

Who is being consulted on the National Memorial?

- The Department will continue working with the National Capital Authority, in consultation with the National Memorial Advisory Group and Mr McClellan, to develop and conduct a new design procurement and selection process.
- In October 2020, the National Memorial Advisory Group was appointed, comprising lived experience advocates and experts, to assist the Department and the National Capital Authority to establish the Memorial, including ensuring the design brief reflects what is important for survivors.
- In November 2020, the department undertook a national consultation process via an online survey to give all Australians, particularly people with lived experience of institutional and other forms of child sexual abuse, an opportunity to share their views on the National Memorial ([Consultation Summary Report](#)).

Construction and delivery

Why is the Government spending money on building a National Memorial and not on support services for survivors?

- The Government's commitment to establishing the National Memorial is in addition to support services for victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse such as the National Redress Scheme. For further information on the National Redress Scheme, please visit www.nationalredress.gov.au.
- The Royal Commission specifically recommended the Government establish a national memorial in Canberra in consultation with victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse (recommendation 17.6).

Can survivors apply to design and/or build the National Memorial?

- The new design procurement process will be open to artists and design professionals with the skills to meet the requirements outlined in the design brief. Survivors and people with lived experience will be able to participate in the design competition so long as they meet these requirements and specifications.
- Designers will be expected to demonstrate their capability to include the voices of survivors.
- The procurement to select the builder will be open to potential suppliers with the skills required to meet the brief.

When will the National Memorial be delivered?

- The new design selection process will commence in the first half of 2024, with construction to commence in 2025. The Memorial is expected to be completed in 2026.
- The department will provide further updates on the [National Memorial webpage](#) on the department's website.

Who is responsible for maintaining the National Memorial?

- The National Capital Authority is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the National Memorial to ensure the site is appropriately maintained.

The Department of Social Services would like to extend its sincere thanks and appreciation to the National Memorial Advisory Group and the Hon Mr Peter McClellan for their work on the Memorial and their continued work and commitment in this next stage of the project.