



National Memorial for Victims & Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

JURY REPORT January 2022



Australian Government
Department of Social Services
National Capital Authority



The Memorial will provide people with
lived experience, their families, supporters, and allies,
a place of remembrance, reflection, truth,
healing and hope.

Design Competition Brief



All images contained in this document
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MEMORIAL INTENT

The Memorial will mean different things to different people. To be true to its purpose it must balance sometimes opposing ideas: it must reflect the vulnerability of children, and the strength and resilience of so many of those who were abused as children and young people.

It will acknowledge the movement for justice, those who have fought the battle for recognition and retribution, the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and their friends, families and allies, and also recognise lives lost. The Memorial will be an acknowledgment of the progress that has been made while reminding people that we must remain ever vigilant to prevent this from happening again.

Design Competition Brief, 2021

NATIONAL MEMORIAL SITE



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CONTENT WARNING

This Jury Report contains references to institutional child sexual abuse. The document may contain themes and information that people, particularly those with lived experience of institutional and other forms of child sexual abuse, may find confronting and distressing. If you need support at any time please contact:

- In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)
- **Lifeline**
visit www.lifeline.org.au
or call 13 11 14
- **Beyond Blue**
visit www.beyondblue.org.au
or call 1300 224 636
- **Mensline**
visit <https://mensline.org.au>
or call 1300 789 978
- **Suicide Call Back Service**
visit www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
or call 1300 659 467
- **1800 RESPECT**
visit www.1800respect.org.au
or call 1800 737 732

PART 1

DESIGN COMPETITION

On 12 April 2021 the Australian Government launched an open and anonymous single stage competition to select a preferred design for the National Memorial for Victims & Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

The design competition was a direct outcome of a recommendation by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.¹

*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.*²

The competition closed on 21 May 2021 with 35 entries received from across Australia.

The intent and design parameters for the competition required a sensitive and respectful response to a complex brief – ‘a creative and trauma informed design’ that would ‘acknowledge the movement for justice...(and) ...the progress that has been made while reminding people that we must remain vigilant to prevent this from happening again’.³

The Memorial is different from traditional memorials that generally commemorate past events:

*‘This Memorial must share with the community the reality that child sexual abuse is not a matter of the past but continues into the present and will continue into the future unless we act’.*⁴

The challenge for entrants necessitated a balanced response to sometimes seemingly opposing ideas such as reflecting vulnerability and grief with resilience and strength together with healing and recovery. The design was also required to support inclusive and accessible visitor access and comfort, periodic ceremonies and to be empathetic to the existing site character.

1 The Royal Commission was established in 2013 and issued its final report in 2017

2 Royal Commission Final Report 2017 – Recommendation 17.6

3 Design Competition Brief 4.1 Memorial Intent

4 Design Competition Brief 4.1 Memorial Intent – National Memorial Advisory Group.



PART 2

JURY DELIBERATIONS



2.1 Jury deliberations

The meeting of the Jury scheduled for June 2021 was delayed by COVID lockdowns and travel restrictions. The Jury contemplated meeting remotely and virtually but unanimously committed to wait until all could meet face-to-face in Canberra to visit the site and be able to share their diverse knowledge and experiences in a collaborative and meaningful way.

The Jury met in Canberra on
4 – 6 November 2021.

At that meeting the Jury was generally pleased with the quality and range of the design proposals and agreed that the conduct of the competition had contributed, as was intended, to a raising of awareness of the significance of the Memorial and of its value to the past, present and future.

However, whilst noting that the brief presented many challenges for the Entrants the Jury were unanimous that at this stage they could not select any entry as ‘preferred’ and that to do so would not be in the best interests of the Memorial.⁵

The Jury unanimously exercised its discretion to select three entries for commendation as these schemes most successfully met the requirements of the brief:

- Converging Voices (No. 145)
- Transparency and Truth (No. 17)
- Remembrances, Reflection, Healing and Hope (No. 221)

The Jury requested that these Entrants be given the opportunity to respond to their discrete considerations of the proposals and develop their concepts for further Jury deliberation. The Professional Adviser agreed and varied the conditions to enable a second stage in the competition process.⁶

The three Entrants were subsequently invited to participate in a Stage 2 design development. An addendum to the competition brief, agreed by the Jury, was provided to each Entrant.

The Stage 2 competition closed on Sunday 19 December.

The Jury reconvened in Canberra on 20 – 21 December. Each Entrant presented their proposal to the Jury at interview on 21 December 2021.

The Jury unanimously agreed to refer Transparency and Truth as the ‘preferred design’ to the Canberra National Memorials Committee for approval.⁷

⁵ Design Competition Brief Part 8.2 – Jury Obligations

⁶ Competition Brief Part 6.11 – Right to Vary Conditions.

⁷ Approval for the location and character of National Memorials resides with the Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC) established under the *National Memorials Ordinance 1928*.



PART 3

PREFERRED DESIGN



3.1 ENTRANT 17

TRANSPARENCY AND TRUTH

Jessica Spresser

Peter Besley

The proposal successfully seeks to establish a memorial which will be

'a celebration of resilience and vitality on the one hand, and a solemn reminder of trauma and loss on the other ... (the) ... non-institutional 'open' design will resonate, as will its transparency, literal and metaphoric, and engagement of landscape both as regenerative nature and as of Country'.

This is a beautiful and sensitive response to the Brief. The Jury unanimously agreed that this proposal delivered on the Memorial intent interpreted in this design as a place with *'a profound sense of peaceful equilibrium and a compelling vitality ... regenerative life'*.

The composition creates a multivalent visitor experience that extends beyond a solely object-based encounter. The design has *'no hidden chambers, walls or dark corners'* and is wholly engaged with the wider landscape setting. The glass block catenary arches signifying load and strength, as well as a particular fragile beauty, resonated with the Jury as a place of substance imbued with hope. The Jury considered that the openness of the delicate yet strong glass block arches and the overall curvilinear composition matched the designer's intent to juxtapose *'fragility and great resilience in recognition of the survivors ... (with the catenary curves) ... representative of a collective'*.

The permeability of the Memorial with the landscape passing through it to signify *'transparency and truth'* was recognised by the Jury as a subtle response to the Memorial brief. The embracing environment and diversity of pathway journeys will involve and engage the individual and groups in many ways and forms .

The garden of perennial grasses and wildflowers was particularly evocative of tranquility, reflection, and hope. The Jury felt that there was significant potential for a child or children to be represented sympathetically within the entire work. The somewhat *'ethereal'* and nuanced lighting proposed for the arches serves to further reinforce notions around transparency, fragility, strength and hope in times of darkness, signalling the Memorial as a distinctive and poignant place on the foreshore, both by day and night.

The Jury is confident that this proposal will provide for Victims and Survivors, as well as for the public, a place to acknowledge the suffering of so many, and commit to a constructive and positive future. The Jury believe that the proposal will make a significant contribution toward the healing for those who have suffered and provide a place that people would likely visit more than once, with each visit deepening their personal understanding.





Summer

Celmisia tomentella (Snow Daisy)
Epacris celata (Cryptic Heath)
Aciphylla glacialis (Mountain Celery)
Epilobium billardierianum (Willowherb)
Lachnagrostis filiformis (Common Blown Grass)
Lythrum salicaria (Purple Loosestrife)
Utricularia dichotoma (Fairy Aprons)
Veronica gracilis (Speedwell)



Autumn

Hypoxis hygrometrica (Golden Weather-grass)
Banksia ericifolia (Heath Leaved Banksia)
Anigozanthos hybrid (Velvet Kangaroo Paw)
Anigozanthos hybrid (Everlasting Gold)
Grevillea rhyolitica x juniperina (Cherry Cluster)



Winter

Leucopogon attenuatus (Small Leafed Beard Heath)
Luzula meridionalis (Woodrush)
Grevillea whiteana (Grevillea Moonlight)
Westringia hybrid (Blue Gum)
Lomandra filiformis (Savannah Blue)
Imperata cylindrica (Yalpa)



Spring

Acacia dealbata (Silver Wattle)
Indigofera australis (Australian Indigo)
Ajapa australis (Austral Bugloss)
Hypoxis hygrometrica (Golden Weather-grass)
Leptorhynchus squamatus (Squally Buttons)
Melaleuca parviflora (Small Flowered Myrtle)
Cassinia longifolia (Cauliflower Bush)



PART 4

COMMENDED DESIGNS

4.1 ENTRANT 145

CONVERGING VOICES

Paul Sawyer

Ben Juckes

Kieran Ward

‘This memorial should be a healing device...a place where people can gather ...(to).... share their voice and be heard’ as well as an educative place for people to ‘come to listen ... to walk alongside victims and survivors’.

The Jury commended this proposal for its bold presence in the landscape and at the edge of Lake Burley Griffin demanding public attention to institutional child sexual abuse. The concept of the Memorial being ‘*commemorative and archival as well as dynamic and participatory*’ and representing the ‘*singular voice as a catalyst for the collective*’ resonated with the Jury. The spatial composition derived from concepts of reflection, learning, and gathering is complemented in form by the sweeping fins with subtle filigree messages, and internal pause and rest spaces and canopies for individuals or groups. The engagement by the designers with survivors in the development of the proposal was appreciated by the Jury.



4.2 ENTRANT 221

REMEMBRANCES, REFLECTION, HEALING AND HOPE

MORQ

'The Memorial exists as a public sculptural presence on the foreshore that frames the Lake and offers meaningful yet different experiences to different users with different levels of personal engagement'.

The Jury commended this proposal as a highly resolved and elegant architectural and landscape composition that '*symbolises acts of nurturing and protecting and promotes a sense of collective healing*'. The Jury considered the proposal to have a timeless and memorable quality that derived from the purity of its geometry and positioning within the landscape setting. The emergence of the Memorial from the ground presents as symbolic and reminiscent of coming out from the abuse, with the inner garden offering an alluring and nurturing place of beauty for people to reflect singularly or to come together as a group. The design skillfully juxtaposes monument with intimacy within its composition, materiality and form.



PART 5

THE COMPETITION JURY



Competition Jury. From left to right, Front row: Rob Tindal, Chrissie Forster, Caroline Carroll, Yhonnie Scarce. Back row: Robert House, Elizabeth Mossop, Craig Hughes Cashmore, Peter McClellan, Peter Tonkin.

5.1 The Jury

- **The Hon Peter McClellan AM QC**
Jury Chair (and Chairman of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse)
- **Ms Caroline Carroll OAM**
Member, Advisory Group
- **Ms Chrissie Foster AM**
Member, Advisory Group
- **Mr Robert House**
Member, Advisory Group
- **Mr Craig Hughes-Cashmore**
Member, Advisory Group
- **Professor Elizabeth Mossop**
Landscape Architect
- **Ms Yhonnie Scarce**
Artist
- **Mr Rob Tindal**
National Capital Authority, professional staff member.
- **Dr Peter Tonkin**
Architect

The Design Competition Brief was prepared by the National Capital Authority in consultations with the National Memorial Advisory Group⁸ and the Department of Social Services and was reviewed by the Professional Adviser.

The competition was endorsed by the Australian Institute of Architects and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and was widely promoted.

Competition Sponsor: Australian Government through the Department of Social Services

Competition Client: National Capital Authority

Competition Professional Adviser: Annabelle Pegrum AM LFRAIA.

Competition Registrar: Natalie Joy, National Capital Authority, professional staff member

Probity Advisers: Maddocks.

Hon Peter McClellan AM QC
Chairman of the Jury

⁸ Established in 2021 a National Memorial Advisory Group provided guidance and oversight for the Memorial including the suitability of a location for its installation, the development of the competition brief, provision of members to sit on the competition Jury and will oversee the project through to the dedication of the Memorial.



