

# COMMUNIQUE

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## National Site of Recognition for thalidomide survivors and their families Steering Committee Meeting #5 – 10 July 2023

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The Australian Government is establishing a National Site of Recognition for thalidomide survivors and their families, as part of the broader package of support under the Australian Thalidomide Survivors Support Program.

The project is being led by the Department of Health and Aged Care in collaboration with the National Capital Authority (NCA). A Steering Committee, comprised of four (4) thalidomide survivors and a carer/partner representative, was formed in October 2021, to provide advice relating to the location and design of the National Site of Recognition for thalidomide survivors and their families, as well as its official dedication (opening).

The Steering Committee, chaired by Ms Carita Davis, Assistant Secretary, Preventive Health and Food Policy Branch, is managed by the Australian Thalidomide Survivors Support Program Team.

The Steering Committee met for the fifth time on 10 July 2023 via video/teleconference.

### MEETING #5 – DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Steering Committee was provided an update on the progress of the National Site of Recognition, including technical issues experienced during construction of the glass brick structure, and an outline of the proposed design adaptations.

The Committee was informed that since the last meeting in March 2023, work at the Site of Recognition had continued with construction of some of the main elements now complete, including the concrete works, conduiting in preparation for installation of electrical services, installation of some soft landscaping and sampling of the timeline set out.

The NCA talked through the design concept features, including a glass brick structure with elements to help convey the significance, impact and history of the thalidomide tragedy in Australia. The NCA explained to members that during the initial phase of construction of the glass brick structure some technical issues had arisen requiring further investigation and redesign.

The NCA outlined the research and investigation undertaken to resolve these technical issues and presented the proposed design adjustments for consideration by members. The main design adjustments included:

- changes to the overall footprint of the glass brick structure to address transparency concerns;
- movement of the words depicting the survivor experience to be part of the central walkway through the glass brick structure; and
- creating the ripple effect on the primary surfaces of the structure utilising glass brick frosting.

Members considered the technical issues and proposed design adaptations and supported the proposed adjustments.

The Chair explained the estimated completion for construction of the Site of Recognition was originally scheduled for mid-2023, however due to the technical issues experienced, it is now estimated construction will be completed in late-2023.

### NEXT STEPS

The following next steps were agreed:

- The NCA will direct the contractor to recommence construction of the glass brick structure at the Site of Recognition, incorporating the proposed design adjustments.