

COMMUNIQUE

National Site of Recognition for thalidomide survivors and their families Steering Committee Meeting #2 – 9 December 2021

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 in collaboration with the National Capital Authority (NCA), to identify an appropriate location and design for the National Site of Recognition in Canberra.

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 Tiali Goodchild, Assistant Secretary, Preventive Health Policy Branch, is managed by the Australian Thalidomide Survivors Support Program Team within the Department of Health.

The Steering Committee met for the second time on 9 December 2021 via video/teleconference.

MEETING #2 – DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATIONS

The main area for discussion at the second meeting of the Steering Committee related to the design of the National Site of Recognition, and the required selection and procurement process to be undertaken.

To commence the meeting, the Steering Committee was provided with an update on the outcome of the Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC) meeting, held on 1 December 2021. The Steering Committee was informed that at the CNMC meeting the National Site of Recognition Project, including the preferred location in Canberra, was considered, and agreed by the CNMC.

Discussion then moved to the design of the National Site of Recognition. The Steering Committee was informed that a National Site of Recognition Design Brief was being developed by the NCA to inform the select call for proposals and concept designs for the Site of Recognition. The Committee was informed that discussions from the meeting would be used to inform the Design Brief.

The Steering Committee discussed the consultation survey, undertaken in April 2021 to help develop an understanding of survivor's views about the design of the National Site of Recognition. The Committee discussed the key themes that were identified through the consultation survey and how these themes could be translated to inform the National Site of Recognition Design Brief. The key design aspects that were discussed by the Committee were the visitor experience, the intended message, the audience, the design and environment, and the depiction of thalidomide injuries.

The main concepts that were highlighted as part of the discussion were that the design of the National Site of Recognition should:

- Represent the dignity and strength demonstrated by all of those impacted by thalidomide (i.e. the survivors themselves, as well as their parents, families, carers and friends).
- Reflect positively on the “warrior spirit” of survivors.
- Raise awareness and educate about the thalidomide story (i.e. the history) in Australia, including the subsequent changes to drug regulation.
- Create a visitor experience that evokes curiosity and intrigue.
- Incorporate a seating aspect to allow for contemplation and reflection.
- Remember and honour those lost in an enduring way.

The Steering Committee was advised that the NCA will release the select call for submissions in early-mid December and it is then expected that suitable submissions will be used to inform a Design Aspects Survey, with all survivors, and any family, carers or friends to be conducted in mid-January 2022.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps were agreed:

- A Design Aspects Survey will be undertaken with all survivors, and any family, carers or friends in mid-January 2022.
- The Steering Committee will meet again in late January 2022 to discuss the outcomes of the Design Aspects Survey.