

The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial



Background

The objective of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project (APMP) is to build a national Memorial in Canberra to commemorate Australian Peacekeeping and to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of Australian peacekeepers. The Memorial will represent all Australian peacekeepers, military, police and civilians, who have been deployed by the Australian Government to international peace operations around the world. By bronze plaques on a Commemorative Beam, the Memorial will honour national commitment to peacekeeping operations in the past, the present and the future and thus will be a “living memorial” in that it will be periodically updated to include all such operations.

The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project Committee (APMPC) is developing the Memorial Project. This is a volunteer Committee comprising mainly Peacekeeping veterans and representatives from a wide range of national organizations. This representative spectrum includes the Australian Defence Force, the Federal and State Police forces, the Returned and Services League (RSL), the United Nations Association of Australia, the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association and the United Nations Police Association of Australia.

The APMPC was formed in 2004 in response to a movement amongst peacekeeping veterans and their families who strongly felt that there was insufficient recognition and understanding of the service and challenges that had been faced by Australian peacekeepers. The supporters believed it was important that a national memorial should be built which would acknowledge the wide range of difficult and dangerous missions undertaken by over 66,000 Australians in more than 50 missions since 1947 when Australian first deployed civilian and military observers to the UN Good Offices Mission in Indonesia. In these missions Australians have died, been wounded or suffered trauma.

The initial target date for completion of the Memorial was September 2012 to coincide with the 65th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping but funding constraints have delayed the actual construction. Nevertheless, it has always been considered important that this Memorial be dedicated before the Centenary of Anzac Day in 2015 as the Memorial will reflect the service and sacrifice that many Australians have contributed to world peace over the last century.

Project Design and Construction

In November 2007, the Canberra National Memorials Committee granted approval for the allocation of a site for a national Australian Peacekeeping Memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra. This approval has since been extended to the 31st December 2012, and the APMP Committee intends to apply for a further extension on this site to cover the extended development and fundraising period.

Following allocation of the site, the APMPC, with support from the National Capital Authority (NCA), conducted a national two-stage design competition for the Peacekeeping Memorial with the winning concept being announced by the then Minister of Veterans Affairs at Parliament House on 19th December 2008. The winning architect and consultants have since developed the chosen concept design into a final, fully detailed design and documentation package. As part of that process, works approval was given by the NCA in June 2009.

In 2010, the APMPC undertook an extensive assessment process to select a construction contractor. An Assessment Panel confirmed four potential construction contractors, based in Canberra and with experience of projects similar to the Memorial, as having sufficient capability and financial competence to be considered. After detailed interviews and review, in June 2010 the Panel identified the preferred contractor to be Manteena Pty Ltd and recommended a contract be executed with them. The APMPC accepted this recommendation and a two-stage contract for a Prototype Programme and then Memorial Construction, conditional upon funding availability, was signed.

Earlier this year, Manteena successfully completed Stage 1, involving a complete review of the design of the Memorial to assess its buildability and to conduct full size prototype testing of various construction materials and components. The APMPC is now in a position to start construction immediately, having used quantity surveyors in conjunction with the construction contractor to revise and confirm a remaining construction budget of \$2.9M.

Throughout this process, the APMPC has been fortunate to have been supported and guided on a pro-bono basis by several nationally recognized companies and individuals skilled in the development of management of major civil construction projects. These people have variously provided office facilities, project management, and professional advice.

Public Profile and Fundraising

The NCA originally indicated that the cost of construction of an appropriate Memorial on Anzac Parade would be about \$3M. Accordingly the total Project budget was \$3.5-4M depending upon the start date of construction. In July 2006 the APMPC received a \$200,000 Grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, which enabled the Project to initiate its various activities.

To support fund raising, the APMPC applied for and was granted Designated Gift Recipient (DGR) status in April 2007 with an initial expiry date of December 2008. The APMPC applied for an extension in 2009, 2010, 2011 and again earlier this year, but has had no official response to any these requests from the Assistant Treasurer or the Australian Taxation Office. The lack of DGR status has seriously affected fund raising efforts because no organization has been prepared to consider a large donation to the APMP without a tax concession. This fund raising problem has been further aggravated by the global financial crisis.

The APMPC commenced fund raising in the third quarter of 2007 with an approach to a wide range of Corporate businesses in Australia, particularly companies that benefitted from contracts associated with Defence and Police deployments on peace operations. Several medium size donations in excess of \$25,000 and one of \$200, 000 were obtained in 2007 and 2008. Since then only minor donations in the order of up to \$5000 have been received from well meaning supporters and service companies. These donors are all identified and appropriately acknowledged on the APMP website at www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au To support these fund raising activities the APMPC has developed a scale model, banners, brochures and advertising materials. In all a total of over \$670,000 has been raised by the APMPC.

The funds that have been donated to the APMP have been used to undertake the necessary activities to develop the project to its current status ready for construction. These project activities include preparation, conduct and selection of the winning design concept (\$130,480), preparation of the detailed design and documentation (\$211,444) and the Stage 1 Construction Prototype programme (\$154,430). The remaining funds remain invested with some \$130,000 earmarked to buy onyx stone that is the longest lead-time material.

Over the last five years, the APMPC has conducted a number of events to raise the Project profile and seek donations. These events have included a cocktail party at Admiralty House Sydney hosted by the Governor General in October 2007, an information forum and lunch at the AFP International Deployment Group at Majura ACT in April 2008, an AFL promotion in Melbourne in August 2008, an Industry Dinner at Parliament House in September 2008, and an information stall at Defence Industry Exhibitions in Avalon and Brisbane in January 2011 and November 2011 respectively. To mark Australian Peacekeeping Day, on 14th September 2009, 2010 and 2011, the APMPC has held a Commemorative Service on the Memorial site on Anzac Parade attended by Government and Shadow Ministers, Patrons, donors and supporting organisations. Throughout this process the APMPC has continually kept Government and all interested parties fully updated on the progress of the Project's development and fund raising activities.

National Support

Since 1915 Australians have carried the Anzac tradition forward in several

wars. For the past 65 years, there has also been a new international field of activity in which the traditions established, burdens borne and honour earned in the service of their country by the original Anzacs have been upheld and extended by Australians. This field, unknown in 1915, is that of peacekeeping. In many ways the Australian peacekeepers of the past 65 years, those who serve today and those who will serve in the future, soldiers, sailors, airmen, police and civilians are proud heirs of the original Anzacs carrying forward their ideals into the 21st Century. The completion of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial on Anzac Parade will be a reminder to all that the Anzac commemoration is not only about the past but also about the present and the future.

Since the initiation of the APMP there have been a number of Government reviews that have considered the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial. In particular, in 2007 the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade reviewed Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations and recommended in their August 2008 Report that the Australian Government consider additional funding for the proposed Peacekeeping Memorial. Additionally in 2011, the National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary, which examined community views on how Australia should commemorate and recognise the Centenary of Anzac service, specifically recommended that the Peacekeeping Memorial be built

Current Status

The APMP has now been active for over eight years. The volunteer committee and supporters have worked hard during that period to build on the strong, bipartisan Parliamentary support for the construction of a national Peacekeeping Memorial. As a result, the APMP now has a site approved on Anzac Parade, a design competition has been held and a fully detailed design and documentation package completed, NCA works approval has been granted, a conditional contract has been executed with a well-respected highly competent contractor, and an extensive prototype-testing programme has been completed. The development programme to date has been executed with high professional skill and competence and as a result the normally expected design and construction risks have been almost eliminated.

At the same time, the APMPC has conducted a wide-ranging fund raising campaign supported by a number of specific events designed to raise the profile of the Project and gain donations. The Memorial is ready to commence construction immediately the remaining donations of \$2.9 become available.

The APMPC continues to develop opportunities to inform the Australian community about the need to build a national Peacekeeping Memorial and to seek corporate sponsorship. During the August and September leading up to the 65th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping, a series of publicity and fund raising events are planned in Sydney and Canberra, in association with Defence and the AFP, which include promotion at a match during Round 25 of the National Rugby League, a fundraising Peacekeeping Dinner in Sydney on 24th August and a Commemorative Service at the site on 14th September.

Despite bipartisan political support, there is now a degree of frustration and disappointment amongst the promoters and supporters of the Project at the lack of assured funding and DGR status. Reviews commissioned by the Government recommend construction of this Memorial although allocation of Government funding to complete the Peacekeeping Memorial has not been forthcoming.

Australian Governments continue to promote the outstanding achievements of the military, police and civilian peacekeepers that are the Anzacs of today and tomorrow, yet at present these Australian peacekeepers have no specific place where their service and sacrifice is appropriately acknowledged. In particular, those fallen peacekeepers whose missions were not accorded 'Warlike Service' status are not even listed on the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial. The national Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will give all Australians a place for collective or individual remembrance.

The APMPC and its supporters have worked hard to develop this project to a stage where the construction contract is ready to be let, but is unlikely to raise sufficient funds in the near term via donations to confidently start works on site. Funding of the majority of the construction cost by the Government is therefore sought as part of the Anzac Centenary programme as was recommended by the Anzac Centenary Commission. It is considered important that this Memorial be opened before 2015.

APMP Committee
20 June 2012