

Memorial Redevelopment Program



Frequently asked questions

Below are a series of frequently asked questions pertaining to the Australian War Memorial redevelopment program. Should further details be sought, enquiries can be emailed through to redvelopment@awm.gov.au.

Q: Why does the Memorial feel this redevelopment is necessary?

A: The Memorial currently does not have the gallery space to properly tell the stories of the Australian experience of recent conflicts and peacekeeping and humanitarian operations such as those in East Timor, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Q: How will the visitor experience be improved through the redevelopments?

A: The Memorial's redevelopment will improve existing commemorative, exhibition, and visitor amenity needs. The planned redevelopment will see an expansion of visitor and gallery areas of 83 per cent or around 10,000 square metres. This will increase our exhibition, visitor, and public program space, which is currently at capacity and insufficient for current needs.

Q: Will the iconic Memorial building be affected?

A: The Memorial's original heritage buildings, including the Hall of Memory, will not be affected by the redevelopment. The traditional external façade and front vista will remain unaltered by the redevelopment.

Q: What is the Memorial's response to the "open letter" opposing the redevelopment?

A: The Australian War Memorial is a beloved and sacred institution that belongs to all Australians. As such, they are entitled to their opinion. We encourage anyone who seeks to understand more about why the Memorial needs to be redeveloped to go to the Memorial's [website and find the wide range of information and content](#) which addresses the relevant points made in the letter.

Q: Why was the decision made to demolish the ANZAC Hall as part of the upcoming works? How can you justify demolishing Anzac Hall when it was only built in 2001 and cost more than \$10m?

A: Anzac Hall as it currently stands does not meet the expanding needs of the Memorial, nor does it accommodate our future plans. A comprehensive study of possible solutions was undertaken and the study demonstrated that the most appropriate land on the site for the redevelopment is to the immediate rear of the main building.

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Memorial visitor surveys show that around half of visitors make it into Anzac Hall, and of that group only 30 per cent make it to the lower ground level. An Architectural Design Competition has been initiated to provide the opportunity to create an atrium at ground level between the Anzac Hall location and the rear of the Main Building which will add excellent links and better integrate the complete facility.

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The Memorial conducted a rigorous analysis of several alternatives. Other options identified were found unsuitable with regard to heritage restrictions, the impact on visitor experience and/or prohibitive costs. The Design Competition does not instruct Designers to demolish Anzac Hall but does require them to provide a Value for Money solution. The solution must remain within the approved project budget, manage heritage related risks and, by connecting the Main Building to the new hall through a glazed atrium, provide an enhanced visitor experience by ensuring connection of the larger gallery space to the commemorative heart of the Memorial - the Hall of Memory and the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier.

Q: What consultation did the Memorial undertake in the development of its plans?

A: An eight week stakeholder consultation period was held commencing 2 August 2018 and concluding 26 September 2018. A series of sessions were held both by invitation and open to the public in Canberra, Sydney, Darwin, Townsville and Brisbane with information promulgated on the Memorial's website and social media channels, through the media and via letters were sent to local and interested communities.

Additionally, open information stakeholder events were held at the Australian War Memorial for architecture and building contractors to attend and ask any questions they may have about the plans.

Q: What approvals have been given by the National Capital Authority and/or the Parliamentary Public Works Committee for the design and demolition of Anzac Hall?

A: The Memorial is working closely with the National Capital Authority and is committed to meeting all approval requirements when the appropriate point in the process arrives.

Q: Has there been a referral under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 to ensure that the proposed use does not have a significant impact on heritage values?

A: We are very aware of the heritage status of the original main building of the Australian War Memorial, and ensuring the original structure and façade are maintained is of utmost importance. The project team, including engineers, architects and builders will be working closely with the National Capital Authority to ensure heritage standards are met.

As part of normal business and heritage compliance, the Memorial has ongoing strategies in place to monitor the building for any change in state or degeneration to the building which could be caused by future construction activities.

Q: What is the timeline for the construction process?

A: Recruitment of an Executive Project Director has been finalised, with [Mr Wayne Hitches](#) taking up the role from 8 April 2019. Tender and procurement processes are currently under way, and expressions of interest for architectural services and engineering consulting published on AusTender. We are now in the tendering phase with short-listed applicants. It is expected that the first major construction activity will commence in late 2020.

Q: Why is the Memorial proposing to build a car park at the base of Mt Ainslie?

A: The Memorial has considered a variety of options for contractor facilities, including parking, to support the Memorial Redevelopment Project. Whilst one of the early proposals considered was for the use of a modest parcel of land at the base of Mt Ainslie in the Remembrance Park site for car parking and contractor facilities. The intention was to leave the car parking for permanent use for visitors to the Memorial, Remembrance Park

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and for the Mt Ainslie summit walk. The Memorial has also examined, and continues to pursue its preference to locate these facilities on the Memorial's own grounds.

Q: Wouldn't this money be better spent on funding veterans' support?

A: The Prime Minister, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and Director of the Memorial have reaffirmed that the funding for the Memorial's redevelopment will not come at the expense of spending on veteran welfare. The redevelopment project funding is less than one per cent of the Department of Veterans' Affairs budget and even less of the overall Defence budget. This is not a matter of one or the other, but a commitment to both. It's important to note that this decision received bi-partisan support from the Australian parliament.