



Parramatta Girls' Home Memorial Consultation Summary Report

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NSW Department of Family & Community Services

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Contents

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2	CONSULTATION PROCESS	5
3	OUTCOMES	8
3.1	Memorial	8
3.1.1	Recommended options for the memorial	11
3.1.2	Next steps in developing the memorial	11
3.2	Ideas raised about the future use of Parramatta Girls' Home buildings and site	11
4	WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU	13

1 Executive Summary

In November 2014 the NSW Minister for Family and Community Services and the NSW Attorney General announced a number of measures as an interim response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. These measures included a memorial to recognise and pay tribute to those people who were abused as children in the Parramatta Girls' Home. The memorial at Parramatta Girls is one of the early responses to the Royal Commission which work can start while the longer term initiatives such as redress and civil litigation are explored.

Following the announcement about the memorial at Parramatta Girls the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) began to seek ideas for a memorial from former residents and their family members. FACS contracted Elton Consulting to conduct consultations from December 2014 to February 2015. This report outlines the purpose of the consultation and the process used to gather thoughts and ideas.

Some of the strong messages heard during the consultation were: dignity, respect, recognition, ensuring the women and what they experienced are never forgotten and that it never happens again. Details of the ideas and thoughts shared are outlined in this report and recommendations for further consideration are included.

Although not the intention of this consultation, valuable feedback about the future use of the buildings was heard. Overwhelmingly we heard that the buildings should be used for something constructive and positive for the community. This recommendation has been included in this report along with how this feedback will be used to inform the future planning for the site.

The report also outlines the next steps in developing the memorial and how to keep informed.

We would like to sincerely thank all the former residents and their families for taking time to share their thoughts and ideas for a memorial at the Parramatta Girls' Home site. We acknowledge that this may have been a difficult process for many of the women and their families and greatly appreciate their participation in the consultation.

A number of consistent themes were identified during the consultations and we have tried to capture and honour as many of these as possible. In good faith we have tried to reach everyone throughout the consultation process; however if former residents or their family members are reading about the memorial for the first time in this report, an opportunity to provide feedback is on page 13 of this report.

2 Consultation process

The consultation process was designed to provide an opportunity for participants to consider and share their ideas about how memories and experiences of Parramatta Girls' Home could be represented in a memorial.

The process aimed to provide an inclusive and sensitive engagement program that would allow all stakeholders to be involved. It is important to note that this engagement process has not been about discovering and documenting individual experiences, but rather to identify ways in which the full range of experiences at Parramatta Girls might be appropriately recognised and remembered.

Summary of consultation activities

» Discussion groups

- > Monday 15 December 2014 – 10.30am to 12.30pm
- > Friday, 16 January 2015 – 10.30am to 12.30pm
- > Wednesday, 28 January 2015 – 10.30am to 12.30pm
- > Thursday, 12 February 2015 – 10.30am to 12.30pm

» Drop-in sessions

- > Wednesday, 10 December 2014 – 10am to 4pm
- > Thursday, 18 December 2014 – 10am to 4pm
- > Tuesday, 20 January 2015 – 11am to 5pm
- > Thursday 29 January 2015 – 10am to 4pm

» Site visit

- > Friday, 6 February 11am to 1pm

» Telephone, email and mail

- > Friday 31 October 2014 to present.

Former residents unable to or choosing not to come along to the discussion groups or drop-in sessions had the opportunity to have their say by telephone, email or mail.

Communications

The consultation activities were promoted through a number of channels, including:

- » newsletters distributed via Wattle Place (Relationships Australia), Alliance for Forgotten Australians, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA), Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA), Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN) and Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation
- » flyers provided for Wattle Place visitors

- > newspaper advertisements in The Sun Herald, The Sunday Telegraph, Koori Mail, Blacktown Sun, Parramatta Advertiser, Liverpool Leader, Central Coast Express Advocate, Dubbo Photo News and the Illawarra Mercury
- > a dedicated email address parramattagirlsmemorial@facs.nsw.gov.au and free call telephone number 1800 773 412, and
- > word of mouth, with women and their family members telling others about the consultations.

Discussion groups

Discussion group sessions were held at Parramatta Library to talk about ideas and review options. All sessions were open to all former residents and their family members. It was not a requirement to attend all the sessions. Counsellors were available to provide support if required.

The **first discussion group session** was held on 15 December 2014 with former residents of Parramatta Girls' Home. The background 'why propose a memorial' and the other opportunities to share their ideas and thoughts were outlined. Aims of the session included: agreeing to processes for working together; considering the nature of a memorial; and identifying important messages. At the conclusion of this session participants had developed a list of words that had meaning to them and reflected the message they wanted a memorial to express.

A **second group session** was held on Friday 16 January 2015. The aim of the session was to gather ideas about the type of memorial and agree on which ideas to explore further. The session opened with a summary of the ideas and thoughts heard to date.

Examples of a range of memorials from Australia and around the world were shown to help generate ideas, and feedback was gathered to inform the development of options.

The memorial and Parramatta Girls site was also discussed in the context of the Parramatta North Urban Transformation project and future redevelopment. Discussion included the location of the memorial within the site and the proposed longer term restoration plans for the buildings and surrounds.

The **third discussion group session** on Wednesday 28 January 2015 aimed to refine the identified options.

An updated version of the examples of memorials was shown which incorporated feedback heard from all the consultations to date. Further feedback was gathered. Features with widespread support came out of this process and they were captured to inform the development of options.

Representatives from UrbanGrowth NSW (project manager for the Parramatta North Urban Transformation project) attended some of the session to brief participants about the longer term plans for the buildings and the site. Participants were reassured that feedback heard during the memorial consultations about the longer term plans for the Parramatta Girls' Home site had been captured and communicated to UrbanGrowth NSW for consideration in planning. UrbanGrowth NSW confirmed that there would be future consultations about the site use as planning progressed.

The **fourth discussion group session** on Thursday 12 February 2015 aimed to confirm the key themes that had emerged during consultation prior to the development of a number of options for consideration.

An updated presentation of examples of memorials reflecting the themes and ideas that had emerged during earlier consultation was shown. Participants, including a number of former residents who had not previously provided feedback, shared their ideas.

It was agreed that a number of ideas and recommendations would be developed for consideration. These would be included in a summary report to be provided to all the participants who had provided contact details and wished to receive the report. The summary report would also enable all

participants to learn about the range of ideas proposed throughout the consultations. A newsletter would also be distributed to provide information about how to keep up to date about the memorial.

Drop-in sessions

Drop-in sessions were held for people wanting to share their ideas and thoughts in a one-on-one conversation rather than or as well as attending the group discussions. The sessions were informal and conducted by Elton Consulting at Wattle Place on 10 and 18 December 2014, and 20 and 29 January 2015. Former residents and their families discussed their ideas for the memorial and also shared their thoughts about the future use of the buildings. Counsellors were available to provide support if required.

Site visit

In response to feedback from the consultations asking for the opportunity to visit the site and buildings, FACS arranged a site visit on Friday 6 February 2015. Counsellors came along to provide support as required.

The main purpose of the visit was to provide former residents and their family and friends an opportunity to visit the site and the buildings. During the visit there were also informal opportunities to share ideas about a memorial and future use of the site.

Around 60 women and their families and friends attended. Many women took the opportunity to walk through the main building; however other buildings were not safe to access.

Telephone, email and mail

A number of former residents and their family members also chose to share their ideas about a memorial by contacting FACS directly via telephone or email. On 31 October 2014 FACS established a dedicated free call telephone number which operated from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. People could also share their ideas via email to the dedicated email address parramattagirlsmemorial@facs.nsw.gov.au

Elton Consulting have incorporated the ideas shared by telephone and email into this report. No feedback was received by mail.

3 Outcomes

During the consultation process 16 women attended one or more of the group discussions, 13 women took the opportunity to share their ideas and thoughts in one-on-one discussions during the drop in sessions, and 52 women made contact in relation to the memorial and future use of the site via the dedicated email address or 1800 telephone number.

3.1 Memorial

What should the memorial reflect?

As each experience is individual, not all themes identified had the same significance to all the women who shared their thoughts and ideas. The consultations identified words and themes which expressed messages that the women felt the memorial should express.

Thoughts were shared about what the memorial might represent and the following words were consistently identified as being important:

- » remember – never again and never forgotten
- » recognition
- » dignity and pride – no shame
- » respect
- » courage and strength
- » resilience and determination (however respectfully noting that some girls were overcome by their experiences)
- » truth and transparency - bringing it out into the open
- » trust
- » hope
- » healing
- » peace, and
- » reflective.

The women shared their ideas about what a memorial might be, and these included:

- » a place that is living
- » a place for children
- » a welcoming place – peaceful, safe and comfortable
- » a safe and reflective space
- » a place with plants and water - reflecting renewal and seasons, healing, growth, hardiness and longevity, fragility and innocence
- » a place representing the opposite of what Parramatta Girls once was, for example: a garden requiring care and nurture; looked after not abused; open walls/doors; privacy; bright beautiful and safe; and reflecting then and now (the 'now' being more compassionate and understanding)

- » a place for everyone but also a quiet space for girls and families
- » a place to reflect on peace, hope, healing and renewal
- » a catalyst to bring people together
- » protected from vandals and well maintained (a lack of maintenance shows disrespect)
- » not a place for voyeurs or "sticky beaks"
- » reservations about a memorial, rather the focus should be on practical support for the women, and
- » no memorial at all, would rather forget.

Ideas for what a memorial might look like

Ideas for what the memorial might look like were gathered during the discussion groups, drop-in sessions and by phone and email contact. Former residents and family members put forward a number of suggestions.

Sculpture

- » A young girl scrubbing, a lock, a scrubbing brush, buckets, numbers or the acronyms and 'graffiti' which girls created at Parramatta Girls' Home.
- » A large piece of dark marble or stone with a plaque.
- » An installation where the isolation blocks were once located, with doors marked with girls' graffiti, water and lighting.
- » Issues to consider:
 - > more women would identify with a sculpture made of objects rather than a sculpture of a person, and
 - > the sculpture could reflect the fighting spirit of the girls, freedom, and that there is now more compassion and care for children.

Plaque

- » A plaque with a dedication.
- » A plaque or wall with the words from a poem written by one of the former residents.
- » Suggestions for words on a plaque included:
 - > *Never to happen to children again*
 - > *Never again*
 - > *Let no child walk this path again*
 - *Be proud, always remember*
 - *In remembrance of life in the notorious Parramatta Girls' Home*
 - *Dedicated to the girls who have gone through Parramatta Girls' Home*
 - *Courage, strength, survival*
 - *To the girls who have been and passed and those that are still here'*
 - *In memory of the convict women, orphans and girls institutionalised at this site between (include dates). May the future not condemn them as they were victims of the time. Bless them all.*

- » Issues to consider:
 - > include formal acknowledgement of country somewhere on the site.

Garden

- » Children's playground.
- » Child-friendly garden with water and a bridge.
- » Garden with a fish pond and Aboriginal art of the dreamtime people.
- » Issues to consider:
 - > include spaces to sit perhaps with a statue or plaque, for example a long seat in remembrance of the children and girls who have gone
 - > include indigenous plants in gardens, and
 - > use water with its calming and reflective properties. Water also relates to the nearby Parramatta River and the girls' work in the laundry and scrubbing.

Locations for a memorial

- » Near the Fleet Street (main) entry of the site.
- » Where the isolation blocks were located.
- » Between the remaining Parramatta Girls Home buildings (Bethel House and the main building).
- » Issues to consider:
 - > accessibility, future planning and works to be undertaken on the site. Participants did not want the memorial to be moved at a later date, and
 - > the memorial could be installed in stages to fit in with future development e.g. a sculpture or plaque first, a garden later.

Other suggestions

- » Mark the outline of missing buildings on the ground.
- » No memorial.
- » Include a place for girls to leave their ashes.
- » Rather than calling it a "memorial" , identify it as a "place of active remembrance".

3.1.1 Recommended options for the memorial

After hearing many thoughts and ideas as outlined in this report, it became clear that there were a number of ideas and themes that many of the women felt strongly about.

The ideas that were heard most often are the basis for these suggestions for the memorial:

- » a sculpture
- » a water feature, or
- » a growing garden.

Whatever type of memorial is installed, it should include:

- » a message either on a plaque or word wall, and
- » some seating nearby.

As planning for the memorial progresses consideration will need to be given to the overall heritage plans to ensure the memorial has a permanent and protected place. Heritage plans are currently being developed within the Parramatta North Urban Transformation project.

We would like to hear your feedback on these suggestions.

A feedback form is on page 13 of this report.

3.1.2 Next steps in developing the memorial

Once an option for a memorial is agreed upon, the following steps can be taken:

- » commission an artist, designer or architect to design the memorial based on all the words, themes and ideas from the consultations, and
- » keep former residents and their families up to date on the memorial and the future plans for the site.

There will be further opportunities for people to provide input as the memorial progresses.

3.2 Ideas raised about the future use of Parramatta Girls' Home buildings and site

Although the consultations were aimed at gathering ideas for a memorial, it was clear that people had strong feelings about the future use of the buildings and site. These thoughts and ideas were gathered and have been passed on to UrbanGrowth NSW for consideration in its planning processes. Representatives from UrbanGrowth NSW addressed one of the group sessions and have made a commitment to carry out consultations as planning progresses.

Many women would like the buildings to be restored out of respect for the long standing history and social significance of the site. Accessibility to the public was also important to them. It was also suggested that the main building should have a plaque explaining the history of the site and building.

The key message about the future use of the buildings and surrounds was to provide something positive and useful for the community.

Thoughts and ideas included:

- » a place that supports women and/or children, providing
 - > support services for women and children in need
 - > accommodation for women in need
 - > aged care for former residents of Parramatta Girls' Home
 - > resources for mentoring young girls and women
- » active and compatible community uses that bring the place alive such as a learning centre or a community centre
- » archival use and a place to display historic objects so future generations can learn about past events and understand the notion of "never again" (Any archive would need to respect individuals' desire for privacy.)
- » a garden weaving through the site incorporating a remembrance wall, Aboriginal art, fountains, ponds and installations
- » a large installation located where the isolation blocks were to be included as part of a landscape master plan
- » retain Keller House, and
- » long term accommodation for the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project.
- » Issues to consider:
 - > add a plaque to the main building which explains the history of the site and building
 - > include markers/symbols for buildings that have been removed e.g. isolation blocks
 - > protect the graffiti created by former residents in the buildings
 - > create a safe place for children
 - > need to consider provisions for ongoing maintenance of garden and/or water features, and
 - > maintain the buildings while the Parramatta North Urban Transformation work progresses through its various stages.

4 We would like to hear from you

Please give us your feedback. What kind of memorial do you want at the Parramatta Girls' Home?

This summary report will be sent to people who participated in the consultations and gave us their contact details. If you participated in the consultations, please tell us which ideas for a memorial you prefer.

If you are a former resident of Parramatta Girls' Home or a family member, and you have not heard about the memorial, we would also like to hear from you.

The main ideas for a memorial are listed below. These ideas kept coming up during the consultations.

Please tell us which ideas are the most important to you **by putting a number from 1 to 5 next to each idea below. Number 1 being the most important to you and 5 the least important.**

Idea for memorial	Number 1= most important 5 = least important
The memorial should be a plaque	
The memorial should be a sculpture (with a plaque and bench)	
The memorial should be a water feature (with a plaque and bench)	
The memorial should be a garden (with a plaque and bench)	
There should be no memorial	

*Some pictures of memorials, sculptures, water features and gardens have been included on the following pages. **These are examples only** which may help you to imagine what a memorial could look like.*

Comments (please attach additional pages if needed)

How do I give my feedback? You can give us your feedback by:

- Filling in this feedback form and returning it by mail* or email
- Sending an email or letter* or calling with your ideas

Telephone (free call) 1800 054 495 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Email memorial@elton.com.au

Mail Elton Consulting
PO Box 1488
Bondi Junction NSW 1355

** Ring the 1800 telephone number and ask for a Reply Paid envelope to be sent to you.*

**The last day to give your feedback is Friday 25 September 2015.
Thank you.**

Examples of memorials (From Alliance for Forgotten Australians' website
<http://www.forgottenaustralians.org.au/monuments.html>)

There are a number of memorials established by state governments to acknowledge people with similar experiences to those who were at Parramatta Girls' Home, such as people who grew up in institutional care – also known as Forgotten Australians - and child migrants.

Here are some examples of memorials for Forgotten Australians and child migrants.

Memorial for child migrants from the United Kingdom and Malta

Location – National Maritime Museum, Sydney, NSW

Date unveiled – 23 March 2006



Plaque - This memorial is dedicated to child migrants from the United Kingdom and Malta who had to leave their families and country of birth during the years 1912-1967. After arriving by ship, these children faced an unknown future in New South Wales. Many endured personal hardships, some experienced great suffering. They and their families have made and continue to make a valuable contribution to their communities and to Australia.

Memorial for Forgotten Australians

Location – Southbank Promenade, Melbourne, VIC

Date unveiled – 25 October 2010



Plaque - *World within, world without* (2010) Helen Bodycomb. This artwork reflects the constellations above Victoria at 11am on 16 November 2009, when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made his national apology to the 'Forgotten Australians'. Wattle blossoms represent the one thousand most visible stars and planets, one for every one hundred children who were in Victorian state care. Here we remember those thousands of children who were separated from their families and grew up or spent time in Victorian orphanages, children's homes and foster homes last century. Many were frightened, abused and neglected. We acknowledge the many shattered lives and the courage and strength of those who survived. Unveiled 25th October 2010 and developed with the support of the Australian and Victorian Governments and the City of Melbourne.

Memorial for Forgotten Australians

Location – Emma Miller Place, Brisbane, QLD

Date unveiled – 1 December 2004



Plaque - *In memory of all the children who suffered and of those who did not survive abuse in Church and State Children's institutions' and homes in Queensland. "For there is nothing hidden, except that it should be made known; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light."*

Memorial for Forgotten Australians

Location – Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney, NSW

Date unveiled – 19 September 2009



Plaque - *For Forgotten Australians. In this place, we remember the many thousands of NSW children who grew up in care in the decades leading up to the 1990s – in orphanages, in Children's Homes and foster homes, in institutions.*

We remember the lonely, the frightened, the lost, the abused - those who never knew the joy of a loving family, who suffered too often at the hands of a system meant to provide for their safety and wellbeing. We rejoice in their courage and strength.

This corner of the Gardens is dedicated to their memory. Erected by the Australian and NSW Governments 19 September 2009.

Memorial for Forgotten Australians

Location – Western Australian Museum, Perth, WA

Date unveiled – 10 December 2010



Plaque - *This memorial is jointly funded by the Western Australian and Commonwealth Governments and is dedicated to all Western Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children.*

This memorial brings the "Forgotten Australians" out of the shadows and into the light. Their most enduring legacy will be that the people now and in the future will know their stories and build upon them a platform for better care.

There is a strong thread that links the way a child is raised with the person they become in adulthood. This memorial stands as a reminder of that thread to all who create policies that affect children.



Memorial for Forgotten Australians

Location – Peace Park, Adelaide, SA

Date unveiled – 17 June 2010

Plaque - *In honour of children who suffered abuse in institutional and out of home care. We have grown through awareness and unity. We celebrate our courage, strength and resilience. We are no longer forgotten. Dedicated to the future protection and nurturing of all children. 17 June 2010.*

Examples of sculptures

Some women told us they would like a sculpture or statue as a memorial. Ideas included a young girl scrubbing, a lock, a scrubbing brush and buckets.

Here are just a few examples of sculptures to give you some ideas.



Large Key Sculpture



Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine at Hyde Park Barracks



Bonnets Installation - Cascades Female Factory - Tasmania



Faucet with water drop and bucket



Clothesline Installation - Cascades Female Factory - Tasmania



Child in fountain

Examples of gardens

Some women told us they would like a garden as a memorial. A garden would be a living and peaceful place with plants and flowers that reflected growth, renewal and seasons, and fragility and innocence.

Here are just a few examples of gardens to give you some ideas.



Janet Laurence - Ghost Glasshouse



Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial - Hyde Park, London



Keukenhof Gardens, The Netherlands



Shaded Alley



Beechgrove Garden, Aberdeen



Garden path

Examples of water features

Some women told us they would like a memorial that included a water feature because water was calming and reflective. Water also related to the nearby Parramatta River and the work they used to do in the laundry and scrubbing.

Here are just a few examples of water features to give you some ideas.



Custom Water Feature at a Denver School Courtyard



Custom Water Feature, Portland



Fountain in garden



The Memorial to the Sinti' and Roma of Europe, Berlin



Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial - Hyde Park, London



Methodist Ladies' College fountain





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