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21.04.2026

Christchurch City Council,  
Jake McLellan,  
Councillor for Central Ward,  
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New Zealand.

Via email: [jake.mclellan@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:jake.mclellan@ccc.govt.nz)

**RE: Proposed location of National Erebus Memorial in Christchurch**

Dear Jake,

I understand that councillors voted on recommending potential sites for the National Erebus Memorial in Christchurch and were unanimously in agreement except for yourself who voted against the recommendation. I am writing to support your decision and provide additional information.

Some background, I served on the design selection panel for the memorial representing Erebus family and operation overdue members one of two elected at the request of family members and authorised by the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern.

Since then, I have worked tirelessly to support the Ministry of Culture and Heritage in the memorial creation process and one supporting role that I am actively involved with at present is as a moderator on the 'Erebus Family' Facebook page. It's worth noting that there have been very little positive posts on this page recently and whenever there is a post they often come with disillusionment and negative comments or replies. At the end of this letter I have attached a post on the Facebook page from an Erebus Family Member that expresses deep feelings of grief and despair. I am also actively working with a researcher/investigator, separate from the memorial with respect to the actual accident and the proceedings that followed. Significant new and damning information has been found that will have far reaching consequences.

With respect to the memorial, other self-appointed individuals had forced me to the sidelines where I continued to work quietly and diligently to support the memorial creation. Also, and most concerning to me is the indifference that I have felt from ministry officials. My communications to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage regarding the sites in Christchurch have been met with intransigence and what we are currently presented with from the ministry can only be described as a 'comfortable illusion'.

It is of paramount importance to those directly affected that the loss of 257 lives is remembered and that the proposed memorial is readily accessible to them. Also important is accessibility to the memorial for all New Zealanders and the international community. The inception and the creation of the memorial is with the very best of intentions, but it has proceeded in a manner nothing short of shameful and feelings once again amongst Erebus family members of being shafted.

In August 2025 I wrote to the Christchurch Mayor Phil Mauer introducing myself and confirming

- my experience in civil engineering, land development, building design and work with the global infrastructure consulting firm AECOM, actively working in the Canterbury Region and nationwide.
- I have visited and surveyed all the proposed sites in Auckland and provided information, feedback, assistance and a brief appraisal for each site for Erebus family members.
- A reply to my communication with Phil Mauer was received and is attached.
- The Christchurch City Councillors responsible for consenting the memorial in Christchurch were not provided a copy of my communication to Phil Mauer prior to casting their vote. As such they could not make an informed decision.
- There was also no Erebus Family representative at this council meeting that I am aware of. It was however attended by Richard Waugh who has not only promoted Christchurch as a location for the memorial, but he has also involved in leading family members away from Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland.
- We were requested by the ministry to attend a hui and provide our views with respect to locating the memorial in Christchurch. There was not one person in our group who spoke in favour of this proposal, and it was made clear that it was not an option. This group inclusive of flight crew families had always supported the ministry during the difficult stages of this saga and in this instance our views were disregarded. Richard Waugh was present with us at this hui so for him to turn around and promote Christchurch at the council meeting without Erebus family members approval was unacceptable.

The Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage the Hon Paul Goldsmith communicated to me that the Ministry for Culture and Heritage has kept Air New Zealand closely informed of this project. On the 46th anniversary of Erebus on the 28th of November 2025 I had an impromptu (informal) discussion with Nikhil Ravishankar, at Air New Zealand House (annual Erebus commemoration service).

We discussed the city of Auckland disrespectfully rejecting the National Memorial and family members being treated as outcasts. Fifty potential sites with nothing to show for it, what total nonsense. Nikhil said that he was very much aware of how family members felt about this and confirmed this was not at all in the airline's interest to have them treated in such a manner. He also conveyed his disbelief as to how the airline acted in 1979 which is comforting to me. We know that the vast majority of those that the memorial is for cannot without significant cost travel to Christchurch, and particularly the elderly and sick will not be able to make the trip. We discussed the Auckland Mayors callous lack of empathy and lack of support for the memorial being in Auckland. Nikhil confirmed that he had a meeting with the Auckland Mayor scheduled to discuss this totally unacceptable situation. I asked for land in Auckland or a contribution for such to locate the memorial which he was positively receptive to, but this needed to be carefully considered by others in Air New Zealand before any commitment could be made. I have since followed this up and are waiting for a reply.

Attached are five separate comprehensive assessments that I intended to publish (or part thereof) in the media. These independent overview assessments related to the memorial that I have provided have been sent to the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Christopher Luxon and other ministers including the Hon Paul Goldsmith and Air New Zealand executives. I expect the assessments will provide a clearer picture for those directly affected and the general public's perception. These documents were sent to journalist Mike White at the end of January 2026 and to date have not been released. Mike White has been regularly covering the Erebus National Memorial in the media.

1. Dove Myer Robinson Park: discusses Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland.
2. Erebus National Memorial Auckland: discusses Auckland as the location for the Erebus National Memorial.
3. Site Cacroft Reserve-Cashmere Hill Lookout, Christchurch discusses this site assessment in Christchurch as the location for the Erebus National Memorial.
4. Site Avon Riverbanks near Scott statue\_Amundsen, Christchurch discusses this alternative site assessment in Christchurch as the location for the Erebus National Memorial.
5. Proposed location of National Erebus Memorial in Christchurch discusses Christchurch as the city chosen by the ministry for the Erebus National Memorial.

Also attached is my feedback to the ministry on the 'First Concept Design' of the memorial and letter from the Hon Paul Goldsmith which I would like to share with you.

- 260318 MCH\_Memorial\_Cacroft Reserve
- 260325 Letter from Hon Paul Goldsmith to Dan Moloney

Sincerely

Dan Moloney

Son of Nick Moloney, crew Flight Engineer, TE901

*Post on Erebus Families Facebook page November 28 2025, by Andrew Jones*

I sat today on the edge of the Manukau, below the exact flight path that fateful flight took, gazing across at the airport from where they departed.

My feelings and emotions rock from one extreme to another. I smile and laugh one minute as ever-present memories of my dear uncle and friends lost at Erebus sweep over me, such joy, happiness and love. The next minute rage and anger push the joy to one side as I contemplate why those lives and all the others were lost and how their memory and the families have been both tarnished and disrespected. I contemplate how so many used the term "an event and tragedy that touched all New Zealanders" and I think as things now stand that statement is utter BS. This country and its leaders actually abandoned both those lost and those left behind.

My emotions swing again as I remember hearing the first report as I studied for my school cert (that went out the window pretty quickly) and having to take my father outside to tell him so we could work out how to tell my mother that her beloved brother and some friends were gone. I remember her piercing cries of grief (and watched her life collapse around her over the years to come until she passed with a truly broken heart). I remember thinking of my amazing aunt and cousins, oh their loss was insurmountable. I remember every minute to this day as it's burnt into my soul.

My emotions swing back and I once again bathe in joyous memories, the interactions, the fun and laughter, I remember families complete.

The only constant thru this are the tears, the craving for true and meaningful solace and realization because of yesterday's news I will never be able to travel to the proposed memorial and that place of deep reflection, connection and solace will never be availed to me. I feel shame at my anger; this should be a day of wonderful memories of those lost. I cry some more and look to the heavens and say out loud, "To those I loved and cared about and lost, I will always carry you next to my heart until we meet again".

*Reference: The yesterday's news being the announcement from the ministry that the memorial will be located in Christchurch.*

## **Proposed location of National Erebus Memorial in Christchurch**

This was New Zealand's worst peace time disaster and the death of the 257 passengers and crew that died on Mount Erebus on the 28th of November 1979. It was a pivotal point in New Zealand's history, and the memorial design and accessible location must reflect the national disasters significant impact on all those affected in New Zealand and worldwide.

In retrospect and with reference to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2018, Colmar Brunton survey to family and operation overdue members. The responses provided were used by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage as guidance for the design and location of the National Erebus Memorial.

The words Antarctica/Antarctic were mentioned many times for different reasons in the responses by the family and operation overdue members.

*Antarctica had been reflected in each and every design proposal and was significantly included in the winning design, 'Sky Song' at Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland. Connections with Antarctica also include The Bay of Islands, Port Chalmers, Godley Head and Oamaru Harbour.*

A welcoming place/location was mentioned a couple of times in the survey responses by the family members and there was one mention by an operation overdue member, but the word welcoming referred to the memorial itself and not the location.

*The location should be a welcoming place that everyone wants to go to and take their family to, but it needs to be readily accessible. How can Erebus family members afford to take their children and grandchildren to a memorial located in Christchurch and how can the elderly, now many frail, safely travel to this destination?*

Christchurch as a preferred location in the survey responses by family members was mentioned a little more than a handful of times. It was not clear how many of these responses were from members of the same family or the protestors at Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland. Christchurch as a preferred location in the survey responses by operation overdue members was mentioned only once.

*The Ministry confirmed that the most important aspect in a memorial design from their experience is for those affected to be able to see and touch the names of those they have lost on the memorial. Accessibility is therefore critically important.*

*In 1979 flying in New Zealand was expensive and generally considered a real treat. TE901 was a luxurious experience so it made good sense for some passengers to take the opportunity to disembark in Christchurch to catch up with relatives, do some sightseeing and then return home to Auckland or another destination. There were only four passengers on the flight from Christchurch.*

*In summary the digression by the Ministry for Culture from the 2018 Colmar Brunton survey responses used for guidance is more than questionable.*

With reference to.

'National Erebus Memorial-Refined Site Selection Criteria' independently reviewed by Jacky Bowring, the academic advisor to the Ministry for the Erebus National Memorial.

In functionality the criteria highlight Accessible, Flexible and Safe. With respect to.

#### Accessible

The criteria highlights that the location and site must be accessible so that people can easily get to it. It ranks accessibility highly and confirms under Criteria Weighting that it is a significant concern. It goes on to say that there are aspects which can be overcome by design.

*That is not the case however for Christchurch. There were only four passengers on the flight from Christchurch which means 98.5% of the passengers and crew were from elsewhere. How can Erebus family and overdue members access a memorial located in Christchurch without significant cost or difficulty? And what about the majority of the New Zealand public and overseas visitors?*

#### Safe

Avoidance of threats and perceived threats from adjacent structures or landforms with **particular attention paid to geotechnical stability.**

*Google 'probability of an earthquake in Christchurch NZ' and the AI generated response is that Christchurch faces a significant earthquake risk. Engineers can design foundations for a memorial, but they cannot protect the surrounding infrastructure, and this is a concern. When the surrounding infrastructure/environment is damaged, there will no longer be access to the memorial and the area can be closed to the public for years if not indefinitely which was the case in the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquakes.*

*Google 'SSSHA zones NZ seismic' and AI overview assesses Christchurch along with Wellington in the high seismic risk area as defined by the Building Act 2004.*

*At a Hui on the 31st of May 2023 the Ministry highlighted to Erebus members the 'approach to site selection' and under the heading of Enduring: Site must allow for an enduring memorial: security of tenure, geotechnically stable and be embraced by the relevant iwi/hapu.*

*In geotechnical design 'Enduring' is for a period of 100 years. The chances of a major earthquake in Christchurch and or the surrounding area (alpine fault) in this period is highly probable so it would be sensible to allow for that scenario. Erebus members need to weigh up their risk tolerance and better still not put themselves in this inevitable situation. The Ministry was quick to walk away from Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland with the reason that it was not safe. Safety was not the reason but an excuse and politically driven from the protests. The Ministry have walked away once so nothing is stopping them doing it again and it is doubtful that Erebus members have the patience to deal with any more disappointment.*

*In the Ministries continued hunt to find a suitable location they are conveniently ignoring their own advice and putting aside the advice of their consultants.*

## Passengers

The NZ Herald published a full-page list of those on flight TE901 and where they were from on the 30th of November 1979.

### OVERSEAS PASSENGERS 57 (22% of total)

Japan 24, Australia 2, USA 21, Great Britain 6, Canada 2, France 1, Switzerland 1

### NEW ZEALAND PASSENGERS AND CREW 200

North Island: 189 including 8 from Wellington and 128 from Auckland (50%), 73.5% of total

South Island: 11 including 4 from Christchurch (1.5%) and 2 from Dunedin, 4.3% of total

67% of New Zealand passengers and crew were from the Auckland region and upper North Island. Auckland is the gateway to New Zealand so combining this percentage with the overseas passengers accounts for 89% of the passengers and crew.

### Christchurch site assessment survey provided by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage

The three sites provided were not of the same standard as Dove Myer Robinson Park or any of the other preferred sites in Auckland. There was also not enough time to visit the site locations in person to be able to make a considered assessment as to their suitability for the Erebus National Memorial.

I travelled from Auckland to Christchurch on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2025 with the purpose of making an independent assessment of each site and sharing this with Erebus family, Operation Overdue members, the Christchurch Mayor and the public.

My connection with Christchurch is that I was born there, it is where my parents first met and where my father started his employment with National Airways Corporation on the 6th of August 1956. My father worked from hangar number two which was located at the airport in Harewood Road. After returning to Auckland our family would regularly visit my grandmother and cousins in Christchurch.

I love Christchurch, it is a beautiful city in New Zealand but its suitability to locate the Erebus National Memorial is more than questionable.

Dan Moloney

Son of (Nick) Nicholas John Moloney, Flight Engineer, TE901

Erebus family representative on the Design Selection Judging Panel for the memorial

## Site: Cacroft Reserve- Cashmere Hill Lookout, Christchurch

Day: Sunday

Date: 21.09.25

Weather: fine but severe Canterbury wind forecast

Time: late morning

Author: Dan Moloney

### Purpose

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage requested Erebus members vote on this site for the Erebus National memorial from information that they have provided. The vast majority have not or are not able to go to the site to make a considered assessment and the amount of information that was provided has been a lot to digest in a limited amount of time.

I communicated to the Christchurch City Council Mayor, Phil Mauger, that there had not been enough time to visit the site in person to be able to make a considered assessment as to its suitability for the Memorial. The mayor has acknowledged this by allowing more time and providing the opportunity to any individual who wants to visit and reflect on the site.

This independent account provides additional personal visual observations, insights and comments made during a day trip from Auckland to the site by an Erebus family member and a road map for others to consider.

### Site Location

The proposed site on the outskirts of Christchurch is close to amenities and located at the intersection of Dyers Pass Road and Hackthorne Road at the 'Sign of the Takahe'. Barker and Associates highlight three potential locations of the memorial within the site. One of those locations is the primary site and there are two other alternative sites for consideration. The proposed site is surrounded by a low-density housing area.

The location is frequented by tour buses as it is a popular sightseeing stop for viewing the Christchurch area and surrounds. Cruise ship shore excursions and city tours include the 'Sign of the Takahe' as part of their itinerary.

### Existing Building in close proximity- 'Sign of the Takahe'

- The 'Sign of the Takahe' is a good venue for events with catering, shelter and toilets. The grass outside area is flat, enclosed, landscaped with established trees, seating and paved paths.
- The venue is very popular with groups, families, mountain bikers, walkers, runners, sightseers, and tour buses. At the viewing time it was very busy with people visiting and noisy with motorbikes and vehicles. Quite overwhelming and certainly not serene at the viewing time.
- There is a public bus service and bus stop with shelter adjacent on Hackthorne Road.
- It was a busy and noisy trafficked area at viewing time.
- The footpath paving appears well maintained around the 'Sign of the Takahe'.
- The 'Sign of the Takahe' gardens are very well presented and maintained.
- There is no designated off-street parking area and there is a limited amount of parking on the road. There are no-stopping lines on the opposite side of Hackthorne Road.

## Site 1-The Primary Site

- Adjacent to Cashmere Hill Lookout to the northeast.
- There are a number of crisscrossing paths to the site.
- There are separate outside public toilets on Hackthorne Road at the start of the track to Cashmere Hill lookout.
- There are paved steps up to the lookout that are not wheelchair or elderly friendly.
- The paving stone track up to the outlook starts outside the public toilets on Hackthorne Road. There is a lower metal path which loops back to the public toilets from the lookout and this path would need to be paved for wheelchair and elderly access.
- The walk up to the proposed memorial site is overgrown, scrubby, not well maintained and a potential fire risk. It appears that weed spray is used to control weeds and lower-level fauna which is unsightly and messy. There are no established native trees or formal gardens.
- The area is primarily unkept long Kikuyu grass with scattered boulders in serious need of additional landscaping and maintenance.
- It is not a parklike setting.
- The lookout area at the top of the track is above a large water tank.
- To the southeast there is a larger water tank behind the lookout area and partially obscured by foliage. More planting is required to cover the water tank which would be regularly accessed by maintenance staff. Vehicular access may also be required from time to time.
- More screen planting is required to cover the water tank below the public outlook.
- It was quiet at the viewing time with only one other sightseer.
- Directly to the northwest and adjacent to the site is the Cashmere Scout Group building that currently uses the site for their activities. The building is obscured by low level foliage.
- There are expansive views over suburban residential houses to the city with the sea, Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps in the distance. The adjacent houses are obscured by low level trees.
- This is a dog-friendly area and frequented by locals for dog walking.
- There is no apparent security from vandalism. The site is rather remote and currently not closed off at night.
- Observed four pedestrian access points to tracks that crisscross each other at the water tank outlook. There is a fifth track that leads to the Cashmere Scout Group Building from Hackthorne Road, and I assume it carries on up to the lookout area.
- The outlook is North, East to West. The southerly outlook is obscured by trees.
- The reserve is divided into separate parcels of land and the lot around the water tanks is referenced as Lot 2 DP 25223. The primary site is included within this lot, and any restrictive covenants would need to be confirmed.
- There is a watermain from the lookout water tank to Hackthorne Road.

### Site 2 – Alternative Site

- This site is to the west of the Cashmere Hill Lookout.
- The sloping contour is at a much lower level than the lookout and the access to the site is sloping.
- Directly borders residential homes.
- The area is semiprivate except for residential properties on the north and west boundary.
- Overgrown, grassed open area with scattered boulders on the eastern perimeter.
- There are no garden seats in this area which raises questions.
- Views are limited from the northwest to southwest over rural and suburban areas.
- Established trees.
- The view directly to the northwest is obscured by a two-story house at 21B Dyers Pass Road.
- It is further from the busy Dyers Pass Road than site three but between the road and the site there are residential houses.
- As you walk from site 2 to site 3 there is an unformed service track from Dyers Pass Road up to several water valves above the path. This track accommodates maintenance vehicles and is quite steep.
- The path from the 'Sign of the Takahe' to this site is unsealed.
- Paths are used by dog walkers.
- Additional low-level vegetation would be required to obscure properties but low enough to not obstruct the view.
- This is the least accessible site and furthest away from the 'Sign of the Takahe'.
- The existing unsealed path would need to be sealed and extended to the proposed site.

### Site 3 – Alternative Site

- To the south of the Cashmere Hill Lookout and directly bordering the northwest grass area boundary of the 'Sign of the Takahe'.
- The slightly sloping contour is at a much lower level than the lookout and slightly lower than the grass area at the 'Sign of the Takahe'.
- Access is slightly sloping.
- There is easy and convenient access from an unformed path beginning at the public toilets on Hackthorne Road. There is also single gated access from the enclosed lawn area at the 'Sign of the Takahe'.
- This is the most private site except for the south aspect road boundary.
- The site is meters from a very noisy and busy Dyers Pass Road.
- Overgrown.
- mainly low-level trees with the odd established tree.
- A short distance to 'Sign of the Takahe'.
- Views are limited from the south to west.
- Overlooks Dyers Pass Road, residential houses and farmland beyond with hills in the distance.
- Flat grass open area.
- One garden seat orientated northwest.
- Paths used by dog walkers.
-

### Proposed Erebus National Memorial

- Erebus family would have sightseers looking over them from above so it would not be private. If trees were used to screen, then the outlook would lose the view?
- An alternative and potential site for the 'Sky Song design' with the view, horizon, sea, outlook and journey. 'Sky Song' was the memorial design specifically chosen for a site in Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland. It was not the design chosen for this site.
- Surrounding sites in the immediate area have a similar outlook.
- The proposed Erebus National Memorial would need to share the area with another larger water tank at the lookout area that is partially obscured by foliage. More planting is required to cover the water tank.
- The site does not support any other memorials, statues or monuments.

### Summary

- The site is a water utility infrastructure site serving Christchurch City and suburbs.
- The site is nowhere near the standard of Bastion Point, Mont Ceclia Park, The Domain or Cornwall Park in Auckland.
- The lookout will challenge any sort of intimate setting, quiet contemplation and solace. As a destination for tour buses, it would get busy with sightseers.
- The area sustained damage in the Canterbury earthquakes.
- The proposed memorial may become overgrown and seldomly visited by Erebus members.
- The suitability of the site for national memorial status is more than questionable.

### References

- National Erebus Memorial Long list assessments of potential Christchurch sites - Christchurch City Council report made available on the Ministry of Culture and Heritage web site.
- Detailed site assessments provided by Barker and Associates in their draft site selection report.
- Promotional YouTube channel footage of the site provided by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

## Site: Avon Riverbanks near Scott statue/Amundsen, Christchurch

Day: Sunday

Date: 21.09.25

Weather: fine but severe Canterbury wind forecast

Time: afternoon

Author: Dan Moloney

### Purpose

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage requested Erebus members vote on this site for the Erebus National memorial from information that they have provided. The vast majority have not or are not able to go to the site to make a considered assessment and the amount of information that was provided has been a lot to digest in a limited amount of time.

I communicated to the Christchurch City Council Mayor, Phil Mauer, that there had not been enough time to visit the site location in person to be able to make a considered assessment as to its suitability for the Memorial. The mayor has acknowledged this by allowing more time and providing the opportunity to any individual who wants to visit and reflect on the site.

This independent account provides additional personal visual observations, insights and comments made during a day trip from Auckland to the site by an Erebus family member and a road map for others to consider.

### Site Location

The central city site is located between four roads:

Worcester Boulevard and bridge to the north.

- The city tour tram passes over the Worcester Boulevard bridge.
- There was a Beggar on bridge at the viewing time causing some discomfort.

Hereford Street and bridge to the south.

- The road was heavily trafficked and noisy.

Cambridge Terrace to the west.

- The road was heavily trafficked and noisy. The wide path next to the proposed location of the Erebus National Memorial is shared by pedestrians and cyclists.

Oxford Terrace to the east. Oxford Terrace is

- Paved.
- a shared zone for pedestrians, bikes, vehicles and trams.
- lightly trafficked.
- The city tour tram goes down Oxford Terrace.
- There is a speed limit sign of 10 km/hour.

The Avon River adjoins the site, which is relatively flat, grassed and lined with mature, established trees and good seating. There are unsealed paths within the site on either side.

It is an accessible urbanized location and close to amenities.

There is limited street parking available, and it is hard to find free parking even on a Sunday.

There is a lot of vehicle and foot traffic.

It was not a quiet, private or peaceful place but rather noisy at the viewing time.

The site is located on the corner of two very busy streets, Hereford Street and Cambridge Terrace.

There is well developed river level seating on the right side of the bank. This side of the river appeared to be marginally quieter and a little more peaceful at the viewing time. However, a protest march further down Oxford Terrace contradicted this observation.

The site is sheltered from wind by the surrounding buildings.

#### Existing Buildings and development sites in close proximity

On the northeast corner of Oxford Terrace and Worcester Boulevard there is a large construction site called Project ARK. This is the refurbishment of the 14-storey Noah's Hotel that will become the new Sheraton Hotel. Noah's Hotel was significantly damaged by the 2011 earthquakes leaving it derelict and broken since.

On the southeast corner of Oxford Terrace and Worcester Boulevard there is a one-level car park and prime redevelopment site. This was the site of a building damaged in the earthquakes and subsequently demolished.

On the northwest corner of Oxford Terrace and Worcester Boulevard there is the heritage and historic old Municipal Chambers. This building was damaged in the earthquakes and refurbished.

Across the Worcester Boulevard bridge and on the northwest corner of Cambridge Terrace and Worcester Boulevard, there is an earthquake damaged and derelict building with the name Harley on the facade. In 2018 it was planned to build a 150-room hotel with eight levels, including a basement.

On the opposite southwest corner of Cambridge Terrace and Worcester Boulevard is a historic two-story timber building with car parking. This is a prime redevelopment site.

On the northwest corner of Cambridge Terrace and Hereford Street there is a new multistorey building being constructed. In the '*potential location of the memorial within the site*' provided by the Ministry this site is shown as an empty car park. This was the site of a building damaged in the earthquakes and subsequently demolished.

When all these multistorey buildings surrounding the site are fully redeveloped, they will completely overshadow the proposed memorial. Similar buildings in Oxford Terrace have busy and noisy hotels/restaurants on the ground floor with outdoor seating. There was noticeable loud live band music coming from the top floor of one of these buildings at the viewing time.

More intensive redevelopment brings more traffic and noise making the site less appealing than it currently is.

The site is in a zone that was severely damaged during the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 in the Canterbury region. Areas of the Avon River suffered widespread and severe ground failure due to the process of liquefaction.

The Christchurch City Council liquefaction vulnerability map shows this site to have the highest liquification-induced damage vulnerability in Christchurch.

### Adjacent statues and sculptures

On the right-hand bank of the river facing downstream and looking towards the Worcester Boulevard bridge is

- The Scott statue that connects with Antarctica. The statue faces North.
- A 'Woven Mat of welcome'.
- A small pond with a plaque approximately 15 metres directly south of Scott statue.
  
- On the other side of the river is a sculpture by Brett Graham that recognizes the journey of Roald Amundsen in the Antarctic.

### Flooding

The Avon River flows to the north from Hereford Street towards Worcester Boulevard.

The site is in a flood hazard zone which will restrict the ability of the designers to provide a unique design for the Erebus National Memorial and in particular transpose the 'Sky Song' design. I can see a linear design or copycat version of the Christchurch Earthquake Memorial Wall being presented which would not be authentic. I doubt if a memorial design that blocks overland flow and causes additional flooding to upstream and downstream property would be granted Resource Consent by the Christchurch City Council.

Additionally, future rainfall of a 3.8-degree Celsius Climate Change increase in temperature will affect flood flows. My understanding is that present flood flows are based on a 2.1-degree Celsius Climate Change but I am referencing Auckland Council GIS so I stand to be corrected on Christchurch City Council map data if available. First impressions from a desktop assessment were that if flood flows increase then the proposed memorial would be pushed further away from the Avon River and into the less desirable perimeter extremities.

On visiting the site and getting a better feel for scale I can see that the memorial would be located in a flat area and its proposed location constrained.

The Scott Memorial high up on the grassed area on the true right side has foundations with a plinth which are an obstruction to flood flow. It is assumed that the proposed memorial foundations of 'Sky Song' are of a similar dimension.

The invert level of the Hereford Street Bridge supports spanning bank to bank appear to be lower than the foundations to the new memorial.

The Christchurch City Council flood information maps show this entire site and beyond the perimeter roads susceptible to flooding in a 1 in 50-year flood event. The increased extent of flooding in a 1 in 100-year flood event and an allowance for Climate Change is not clear. My concerns need further investigation and confirmation.

### Proposed Erebus National Memorial

An example of the potential location of the memorial within the site was provided by the Ministry. It is shown on the corner of the very busy Hereford Street and Cambridge Terrace. If the memorial direction faces south in this location, it will point directly into large and established deciduous trees. There were no leaves on the trees at the viewing time. If the memorial direction faces north it will point towards the 14-storey Sheraton Hotel being refurbished to the Northeast.

The site supports other memorials and sculptures.

The contour in this area is flat, grass and approximately 1.5 metres above river level. A 150mm diameter underground uPVC stormwater pipe traverses through the middle of the site.

The memorial 'Sky Song' was designed specifically for Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland and it is proposed that it will be transposed to this site. The Avon River site has no horizon, journey, sea, or sky aspect that the memorial 'Sky Song' is all about. This is a completely different environment.

I question the context of the memorial in its present form being located here, the site and its compact constraints and question if it is a good area for commemoration services.

### Summary

It's hard to get your head around how this site works. It's noisy, busy, very public and certainly a challenging place for quiet contemplation and solace. It is also not of the same standard/type as those sites considered in Auckland.

Additional challenges include ongoing intensive redevelopment, ground liquefaction and flooding.

### References

- National Erebus Memorial Long list assessments of potential Christchurch sites - Christchurch City Council report made available on the Ministry of Culture and Heritage web site.
- Detailed site assessments provided by Barker and Associates in their draft site selection report.
- Promotional YouTube channel footage of the site provided by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

## **Erebus National Memorial Auckland**

The Ministry has confirmed that they have explored fifty different sites for the Erebus National Memorial in the greater Auckland area since walking away from Dove Myer Robinson Park. Despite this, and after two years, no viable and/or supported site has been identified in Auckland.

Passengers on flight TE901 gathered and departed from Auckland and all the Air New Zealand crew were based in Auckland. This is also the destination point where most passengers intended to disembark and the majority of the affected family members of the victims are based in the Auckland region. Auckland remains the number one location for the Erebus National Memorial because of tourist access and the biggest population in New Zealand so the greatest patronage from public, school children and the elderly. 64% of New Zealand passengers and crew were from Auckland and the surrounding region, 22% from overseas. A combined total of 89% of passengers and crew were from the upper north island and overseas. There was only a total of 4 passengers from Christchurch. Furthermore, the majority of the onerous tasks carried out after the accident were conducted from or in Auckland. The city is the main gateway for overseas visitors.

Considering the high expectations that Erebus Family had for a superior location in Auckland to locate the memorial we have been brought to the realisation that we are faced with a feeling of resounding rejection. Auckland has turned its back and not opened its heart to us. It seems that those responsible for granting consent are either very apprehensive or too scared due to the well-publicized protest at Dove Myer Robinson Park. On the other hand, those individuals that have been openly warm and welcoming to Erebus Family have become bogged down with their own board's bureaucracy. This appears to be the conundrum.

Fifty potential sites investigated with nothing to show for it, a totally unacceptable situation and a retraumatisation to those affected. The City of Auckland has rejected the memorial and treated those affected as outcasts. How can Auckland expect to justify future national memorials or any other national status if fails in its civic duty as it has done in this instance? National memorial creation is the need to acknowledge a national loss, on behalf of all New Zealanders.

The ministry has chosen to progress with site selection alone and without their main stakeholder Auckland Council who have been absent throughout the process. Communications from the ministry have stated that Auckland Council were too busy to be involved. If so, why weren't external consultants employed by Auckland Council that could have been engaged to generate a list of potential sites? They completed extensive site selection in the past so using their services to eliminate unsuitable sites and promote the best sites would make good sense. Not only is sensitive consultation required but it is important to follow good process which needs to be inclusive and respectful of the views of the families and all stakeholders which is a key element in a positive reception for the memorial.

The Auckland Mayor had campaigned in the mayoral race to not support the memorial, and he has made more than a number of objectional and distressful remarks in the media during his tenure. Also, absent is Air New Zealand who were told by the ministry to stand aside because of their involvement in the accident in 1979 and the enquiry afterwards. Air New Zealand executives and staff are acutely aware of another disaster unfolding and I am sure they would be keen to assist. Air New Zealand should be given the opportunity to show what they can offer if receptive.

In a Radio New Zealand News feature on the 27th of November 2024, the ministries Glenis Philip-Barbara confirmed and communicated to Checkpoint that 'the Ministry of Heritage and Culture are asking for a 100-year site commitment, and this is something many landowners in Auckland are not willing to make'.

The purpose of the proposal to establish a National Erebus Monument by the Rev. Dr Richard Waugh and Captain Allan Boyce is that it would offer surviving family members of those killed in the disaster a place to "gather for contemplation, prayer and reflection". In 50 years' time all surviving parents, spouses including their children will be deceased, so the purpose would then be obsolete and no longer relevant.

Another approach and compromise so that sites in Auckland that were rejected and that could be reconsidered would be to explore a 50-year commitment. Additionally, consideration could then be on existing use rights under the Resource Management Act 1991\_section 10. At the end of the 50-year period 'existing use rights' could possibly be used to extend the life of the memorial for a further 50 years.

Where is the moral justice in this?

The memorial commemorates New Zealand's worst peace time disaster and the death of the 257 passengers and crew that died on that fateful day of 28th November 1979. The subsequent enquiry raised questions of blame and integrity that have never been resolved, and the unintended consequences of this protracted and insensitive saga could very well be the refocus on these unanswered questions.

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## Dove Myer Robinson Park

On the day before the 46th anniversary of the Erebus tragedy, Thursday the 27th of November 2025, the Secretary and Chief Executive of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Leauanae Laulu Mac Leauanae announced to Erebus and Operation Overdue members that he had been advised by the Chair of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei that Takaparawhau in Auckland could no longer be a potential site for the Erebus National Memorial. In a double blow he further announced the site for the memorial would be Cracroft Reserve in Cashmere, Christchurch.

After reading and hearing very distressing feedback from Erebus family members regarding the announcement, questions need to be asked.

The proposed site for the Erebus National Memorial was originally planned for Dove Myer Robinson Park in Auckland, but this was scrapped by the ministry because they said it was now unsafe. Or was it, what was the real reason?

Beginning on Friday, 27th January 2023, regions across the upper North Island of New Zealand experienced widespread catastrophic floods caused by heavy rainfall, with Auckland being the most significantly affected (an estimated 1 in 250-year event). Three cliff face landslips occurred at Dove Myer Robinson Park after this extreme rain and one near the planned Erebus Memorial site. This event caused the adjacent cliff path closure and led to the eventual scrapping of the memorial at this location due to the perceived safety risks from ongoing instability.

Geotechnical Consulting Engineers, ENGEO were engaged to provide professional engineering services for the proposed Erebus National Memorial at Dove Myer Robinson Park.

- In the 2019 Geotechnical Report it noted that
  - the Design life was not stated
  - the geotechnical investigation hand augured holes found no ground water so it was assumed that the ground water would be at a greater depth.
  - The transient (highest anticipated) ground water level was assumed to be at approximately 3 metres below ground level.
  - The site was expected to experience a maximum ground acceleration of 0.11 times the acceleration due to gravity (g), which is associated with an earthquake event that has a 1 in 150-year return period.
  - The structure was strong enough to withstand its expected load with an adequate safety margin.
- In the 2023 Geotechnical Report addendum after the floods, it noted that
  - Slip 1 which is downslope of the memorial there was a one metre assumed horizontal regression (there was no survey provided due to safety concerns)
  - The transient (highest anticipated) ground water level was now at ground level.
  - The required design life was increased to 100 years (this was previously not stated).
  - The Seismic increased to 0.19g (almost double the 2019 report due to a revision of Module 1 – Earthquake Geotechnical Engineering Guideline in 2021).
  - The memorial structure was now not strong enough to withstand its expected load with an adequate safety margin. This however would be mitigated if the foundation was piled.
  - Stability was reassessed with the addition of a proposed palisade wall which then met the required factor of safety. The cost of the palisade wall was estimated by the Ministry to be

eleven million dollars and unaffordable. It is not clear if the engineers or the ministry promoted the palisade wall.

In summary the criteria that the proposed memorial was assessed against changed, the land itself changed (regression from slips downslope), and the observed groundwater was now higher than previously assumed due to the extreme weather events.

ENGEO did not consider cases if the memorial was modified or moved to a different location in the park because the ministry made it clear that this was not an option.

On the other hand, an alternative, much cheaper remedy that could have been considered/explored by experts in their respective fields would be to

- Provide geotechnical protection to the exposed slip cliff faces.
- Provide adequate surface drains to capture the overland flow by way of catchpits and swale drains connected to a stormwater system.
- Provide subsoil drains connected to a stormwater system that lower the ground water level.
- Provide better stormwater management.
- Maintain the root systems of the mature and heavy trees on the cliff face with best arborical practise. With root systems of adjoining heavy trees interlocking others the collapse of one tree on the cliff face could bring all trees down in a domino effect.
- Maintain the trees by trimming a percentage of the foliage thus reducing the overall weight.
- Piling the foundation of the 'Sky Song' memorial would be good practice for the type of cantilevered design structure irrespective of changes to seismic parameters.
- Move the memorial to an alternative location within the park not affected by the slips and/or not requiring an expensive palisade wall.

Following the storm events, the first site visit by geotechnical engineers was on the 9th of February 2023 and a subsequent visit on the 18th of February 2023. On the 29th of April 2023, Leauanae Laulu Mac Leauanae announced his decision to seek a new site for the Erebus National Memorial. Concerning is the amount of time that was taken to make this announcement, eleven weeks. From personal experience of working as a team leader with consulting chartered professional geotechnical and structural engineers on the Christchurch earthquake remediation, the assessment/remediation and recommendations for that project were known within days of site investigation and at the latest several weeks if additional information was required. Also, during this extended eleven-week period, the ministry was probing the feelings of unsuspecting and vulnerable family members about whether they would consider an alternative site for the memorial.

When Leauanae Laulu Mac Leauanae announced on the 29th of April 2023 that a new site for the memorial would be sought, Takaparawhau/Bastion Point in Auckland was touted as an alternative site in the media. Located next to Michael Joseph Savage Memorial, this is a world class site and the most ideal for the memorial with easy access, stunning views and beautiful well-kept gardens. Many family members were lured to believe that this would be the new location for the memorial, and they had certainly been made most welcome by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. Most disappointingly approval by the iwi has now been withdrawn without giving a reason.

In 2021 a prominent local Architect voluntarily attempted to break the deadlock between protestors and the ministry by assessing alternative locations within Dove Myer Robinson Park for the memorial. The reaching out of an independent Architect to explain and defend the reasoning for the park and memorial was intended in part to demystify the ministry's process and help connect design intention with public perception. The Architects' argument was that this site had strong Mana which

should be shared with the Erebus families through the inception of a memorial. Through a process of dialogue, a good design, sympathetic to the park and working in tandem with its energy this offered the best possible chance of a reflective and contemplative space.

“The families have been circling for more than 40 years, time to let them land”.

In summary, this has left those personally impacted by the tragedy and the public in the dark about all the facts which only a few were aware of and without transparency there is scope for false speculation and misunderstanding. With clear lack of consultation, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage never gave the family members personally affected an opportunity to explore alternate locations within Dove Myer Robinson Park even though they had been clearly identified and were available. The ministry has however taken the original ‘Sky Song’ design and attempted to dump it with modifications on any number of sites in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

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