

# Statement from the Commissioner on Memorial Progress

16 January 2024

Seven years have now passed since the publication of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry Report which was a defining moment for victims and survivors who had courageously campaigned for truth and recognition and acknowledgement of the abuse they had suffered in institutions as children.

Since that time has passed, we have witnessed the implementation of several key recommendations, including a public apology by the state and the institutions responsible, as well as the establishment of a financial compensation redress scheme. A lasting memorial to victims and survivors remains an outstanding recommendation of the HIA Inquiry and the Commissioner's Office has provided detailed advice to the Executive Office. I have highlighted the importance of progressing the Inquiry recommendation with urgency, conscious that so many victims and survivors have already passed.

I have also asked the Executive Office to give due consideration to a wider memorial programme in reflection of the wide range of victims and survivors' views and to consult as widely as possible so that this range of views can be fully expressed. It is heartening to see that the Executive Office have taken this advice on board and are progressing with that work on the Inquiry recommendation, as well as consideration of a wider memorial programme.

I know from meeting with victims and survivors and their families that the legacy of trauma is experienced across families and across generations. It is a life-long legacy that does not disappear living on to have lasting impact and this needs to be acknowledged.

Memorial is about honouring the experiences of victims and survivors and ensuring that these experiences are never forgotten. We have a duty to recognise and acknowledge the experiences of victims and survivors and the trauma that was inflicted upon them as children in these institutions in a meaningful way. We have an opportunity with memorial to also ensure that in remembering the past, memorial informs the future. We must ensure that future generations, including those in government and those responsible for the care of vulnerable children and young people and older people, are informed by victims and survivors' experiences.