

## Senate Estimates

### Opening Statement: Australian War Memorial

I'm pleased to advise the Committee that since our last appearance, the Australian War Memorial Development Project has marked several significant milestones. On 24 September, during the busy Floriade period, we officially re-opened the Commemorative Entrance to the public and raised the flags.

We remain on track to achieve practical completion of both the Southern Entrance and the Research Centre by the end of the year.

The Memorial's geothermal system, which we understand to be one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, was officially turned on by Ministers Keogh and Bowen on 8 October. Importantly, by harnessing our natural resources onsite, it is estimated this geothermal system will save the Memorial up to \$1 million each year compared to the energy costs of a conventional system and the project will also eliminate the production of the equivalent of up to a thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

We were honoured of course to be included in the Royal visit program on 21 October. The King and Queen were accompanied by the Governor-General and hosted by the Minister for Veterans Affairs and the Chairman of Council. They laid a wreath in the Hall of Memory, they placed poppies on the Roll of Honour and visited the For Our Country Memorial. During a walk through the Memorial's sculpture gardens they were welcomed by thousands of visitors.

On 31 October, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra performed Kaddish: A Holocaust Memorial Concert. It is the fourth performance curated by the musical Artist in Residence. The work marks 80 years since the liberation of the first concentration camps, and the deaths of Jewish composers, musicians and artists.

The Memorial has received Best of the Best rating for 2024 from Trip Advisor, placing it in the top one percent of more than 1.6 million listings globally.