

Tena koutou  
tena koutou  
tena koutou katoa  
Ngā mihi mahana kia koutou katoa

Zeer geachte aanwezigen

Gavirotahi, verabotahi shalom

Deputy Prime minister, Ambassadors, Distinguished guests,

Good afternoon, thank you everyone for your interest and joining us today.  
Thank you Boudewijn for your kind introduction

Firstly I would like to acknowledge mana whenua of this space. It is in your rohe where this event is held, and with your goodwill and blessing this particular memorial could be located here. I hope that everyone can share my appreciation for your generosity.

I will speak briefly to give you some insight in the background of this Memorial and how it came about.

As I worked on the project, some people asked: Why here? Is an Anne Frank memorial in New Zealand not a little bit far-fetched?

Let me explain. The Holocaust, or Sho'a was a uniquely and distinctly gruesome historic event. It was a precisely managed and documented genocide. I am mindful that the facts and the consequences of the Holocaust should never be minimised or used in misguided comparisons. Considering that, there are some thematic connections with this part of the world and I will share some of my thoughts this question: Why have it here?

One answer, and I speak from experience, is that when I talk about stories of the Holocaust with Māori, I immediately find a great interest and the discussion goes right down to the depth of matters that underly prejudice, racism and suppression of identity.

The Holocaust Centre of New Zealand (is a non-political group of volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds, who) work hard to connect lessons from the past with current matters of concern. Among these matters is bullying.

Toxic in many ways, bullying is not a simple topic. In the class or staffroom we may stick assertive slogans about zero tolerance towards bullying. But the matter is much more complex and warrants an honest look at everyone's part in it. It points to a structure or culture that requires courage to revisit its values, tikanga or integrated ways to resolve relationship issues.

Another connecting topic is prejudice. Think of a common scenario where mum and dad make the difficult decision to replace their ancient, Indigenous family name with an English-sounding name, because none of the prospective landlords or employers would answer their application. This kind of identity suppression asks for an honest search for uncomfortable facts about racism, colonialism, privilege, and exclusion.

Director of Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Garance Reus-Deelder speaks about this relevance in the Dutch newspaper Trouw, where she states: 'It is badly needed to keep telling the story of Anne Frank's family well. It starts with prejudice, and excluding people from society. Anne Frank was born in a democracy and fifteen years later died in the largest barbarity. It can happen - that quickly.'

I now give you a brief insight how this memorial design came about: When Boudewijn, along with volunteers of the Rotary club had planted the 90 trees to commemorate Anne Frank's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, rather than putting in a standard park bench we thought we could design something that spoke more about Anne Frank's history.

Anne Frank and family were in hiding in Het Achterhuis (Dutch for the back house, or annex). On 4 August 1944, after 761 days the police raided the house. First they made everyone hand in their valuables. The Nazi officer in charge took the briefcase of Anne's father, Otto Frank, which contained Anne's diary papers. The officer emptied the briefcase out to put the loot in. The diary papers fell to the floor. The family was deported and the house was ransacked. When Otto Frank returned in 1945, finding his family was the only thing on his mind. An agonising search period followed before he learned that he was the only survivor.

After publishing Anne's diary, Otto helped to form the Anne Frank Foundation. When the house was to become a historic place, Otto resisted refurbishment, as he wanted to keep Het Achterhuis exactly as the police had left it.

The chairs you see on this commemorative seating **are not the Frank's chairs**. After discussion with the Anne Frank Foundation, we could only come to a likely approximation of chairs that may **still be out there** somewhere in the world.

Unlike a bench in the park, none of the seats offers the expected privilege of a view over the valley. Instead, they engage in a simple object theatre. Visitors who will come after us will walk up the path and may wonder if someone has left some chairs behind. That is the unassuming way in which the memorial will introduce itself to visitors.

The surfaces of the Memorial will season over time. Nothing has been painted. The steel is a special kind of steel that, once a rust layer has formed, this seals itself from deeper rusting. This process is expected to take a few months. We will gradually see streaks of rust run over the concrete floors.

Contact surfaces that you sit on and lean against are made from Replas, a proprietary material used in public seating, and made from recycled plastic. You all have contributed to this with handing in your soft plastic bags. The material is warmer to the touch than steel, and the surface is expected to season, by sitting on it.

This project has been a labour of love for many people.

I would like to thank some of the people who contributed to its development and realisation:

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Chris Logan and his team from Outsiders

Aaron Whiteman

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And finally Boudewijn Klap, for an inspiring collaboration. This has been an inspiring project.

*Kia kua rawa e wareware, kia hapahapai anō hoki i te aroha me te mana mō te katoa.*

*To never forget and to promote love and human rights for all.*