



National War Memorial Park and Underpass

Monday a big day for Home of Compassion Crèche

- Hydraulic rams will pull the crèche 16.5 metres to the rear of its site.
- Works progressing from Monday 19 May to Wednesday 21 May.
- The crèche slides on Teflon plates over stainless steel runners laid on a concrete base.



*Above: The strengthened crèche ready to move.
Right: One of the hydraulic rams installed for the move.*

The historic Home of Compassion Crèche begins a short journey from the front of its site to the rear during the week starting Monday 19 May.

The crèche will be pulled carefully and very slowly by hydraulic rams and will slide smoothly on Teflon plates on a stainless steel runner laid over a concrete base. It will take about a day and a half to complete the move to the rear of the site.

In preparation for the move, the crèche has been strengthened internally and externally and has been stripped down to basics, including the removal of its back veranda.

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Three stages to relocate the crèche

The Monday to Wednesday move is the first in a three-stage relocation that will bring the Home of Compassion Crèche further into the National War Memorial Park where it will be restored and will become a feature of the park.

The second and third moves will take place in June and July. The crèche will be lifted 3.2 metres, followed by a move 15 metres west to its permanent site.

The restoration of the crèche will include landscaping evoking its original garden earlier last century. The future use of the building has yet to be decided.

Experienced structural engineering consultants Dunning Thornton have designed the move. Managing director Adam Thornton is well known for moving the Museum Hotel in 1993 from one side of the road to the other to make room for Te Papa National Museum on the Wellington waterfront.

For more information on the crèche, please read the *Crèche Relocation–Heritage Management Plan 1–7* on the Memorial Park webpages, <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/memorial-park/docs/crhm-plan-1-7.pdf>.



Significance of the crèche in NZ history

The Home of Compassion Crèche is registered as a Category 1 Historic Place. This small building has played a significant role in New Zealand's history.

- The crèche is a physical reminder of the life and beliefs of the nun Mother Suzanne Aubert who is renowned for her pioneering social work in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century. She is being considered by the Vatican to become New Zealand's first Catholic saint.
- The crèche building was the first of its kind in New Zealand – built specifically to care for children while their low-income mothers were at work. It was built in 1914 to continue the childcare service that Mother Aubert founded in 1903 and was used as a childcare centre until 1973.
- The crèche marked the start of a gradual change in society's attitudes to working mothers – from disapproval to acceptance – and laid the groundwork for other childcare centres.
- The architectural significance of the building comes from its design by prominent Wellington architect John Sydney Swan as a domestic version of the Gothic style often used for churches.
- The crèche is the last remnant of the Catholic precinct that developed from the late 19th Century on the land north of the Basin Reserve which included St Anthony's Soup Kitchen, St Joseph's Home for the Incurables, both founded by Mother Aubert. The early St Joseph's Church and St Patrick's College were also here.
- The crèche is one of the few remaining examples of the early institutions run by the Sisters of Compassion which was founded by Mother Aubert and was the first home-grown Catholic order in New Zealand.

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