

Media Release  
Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October

## **BRISBANE SCHOOLBOY DESIGNS CONCEPT FOR CANBERRA MEMORIAL**



School student Mitchell Donaldson of Hillbrook Anglican School is decorating a timber pole to honour Zainab Al Battat, the four year old girl who drowned five years ago on the SIEVX refugee boat, along with 352 other children and parents. It was the biggest maritime disaster in our region for fifty years, yet few Australians know about it.

That's about to change, as a national memorial is constructed by students, church groups and service clubs, on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in the national capital. On Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>, Mitchell's pole will join with these others in a ceremony that shows the outline of an eventual permanent memorial on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra.

But Mitchell's contribution is different to anyone else's – because the Siev X Memorial is based on a design that he created. In 2003, a national schools project sought a design for the memorial, and Mitchell's was the standout concept which was adopted.

A procession of poles, forming the shape of the boat, it was beautiful, educative, and confronting at the same time according to Beth Gibbings, the project co-ordinator. "When we exhibited the designs people immediately were attracted to Mitchell's concept."

"Mitchell's design allowed us to remember each person individually and convey the terrible loss of life, while creating something beautiful and special in memory," said Steve Biddulph, the psychologist who founded the project in 2003. Landscape architect Dr SueAnne Ware of RMIT in Melbourne helped the group to develop it into the form it takes today.

At a ceremony officiated by Chief Minister of the ACT, Jon Stanhope, Mitchell's pole will stand next to those created by hundreds of other schools, church and community groups, and by those men who lost their families on the Siev X. Australia will see for the first time the shape of the memorial which will one day be made permanent on the shores of the National Capital.

The procession and raising of the poles will occur at a ceremony at 2pm on October 15<sup>th</sup> at Weston Park, Yarralumla.

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**[www.sievxmemorial.com](http://www.sievxmemorial.com)**

**A high resolution image of the proposed memorial is available on request.**