

# HAVE YOUR SAY: THE FUTURE OF THE ROBE OBELISK

For almost 170 years, the Robe Obelisk has stood at Cape Dombey as a navigation marker, a welcome home, and one of South Australia's most recognisable coastal landmarks.

Ongoing coastal erosion threatens the headland it stands on. In response, Council has worked with the community to carefully and transparently consider how best to honour the Obelisk, its stories and its setting into the future.

## How we got here

In 2024, the District Council of Robe established the Robe Obelisk Working Party, made up of community representatives, Council Members and supported by the Chief Executive Officer, to:

- investigate options to preserve, relocate or replicate the Obelisk, and
- provide clear recommendations to Council on a safe, respectful and achievable way forward.

Over the past year the Working Party has:

- reviewed engineering, heritage and coastal hazard advice;
- explored preservation and relocation options with specialist contractors and agencies, and
- assessed siting, construction methods, safety, environmental impact, cost and heritage implications.

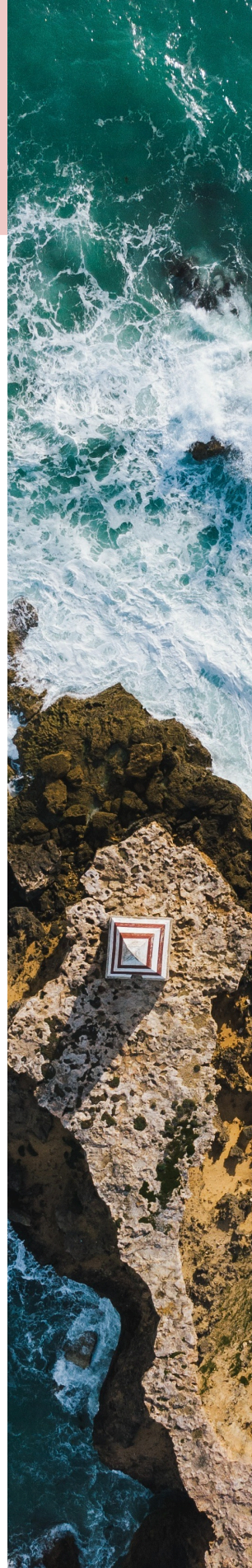
This work concluded that:

- actively "holding" the existing Obelisk in place is not practical or responsible,
- relocating the original structure is technically complex, high risk and unlikely to be successful,
- a new structure that commemorates the Obelisk, on more stable land, provides the best pathway to protect its legacy, and
- doing nothing isn't an option.

Council has since resolved to focus on a replica/memorial option and has progressed investigations on a new site on Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) land opposite the Old Gaol. This location:

- is elevated and set back from the eroding cliff line,
- remains visually connected to the existing Obelisk, coastline and township, and
- can likely be secured through a lease arrangement for public, civic use.

At this point, as no final decision has been made, lease approval is not yet confirmed until such time as a concept for the site has been determined.



# Three Concept Directions – One Preferred Site

All three options shown below will be located on the same preferred DIT site (adjacent the Old Gaol marked with ). Each represents a different way of answering one key question:

*“How should Robe choose to remember and represent the Obelisk for the next 100 years?”*



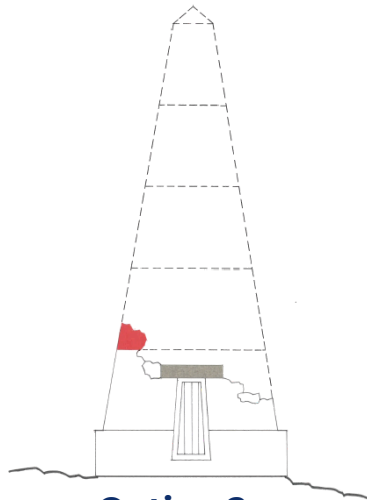
**Option 1 –  
Build a full replica now**

A faithful, full-height replica of the Obelisk, is constructed in the near future.

Key features:

- Same scale and profile as the existing Obelisk.
- Constructed using contemporary, durable materials (such as pre-cast/self-supporting concrete panels) to reduce maintenance and extend lifespan.
- Painted in the familiar red and white bands, clearly recognisable from town, sea and the coastal walk.
- Integrated with low-scale interpretive signage sharing maritime history, coastal processes and First Nations stories.

This option provides an immediate, iconic “Obelisk” for Robe that will remain safe from cliff failure, even while the original continues its natural journey on Cape Dombey.



**Option 2 –  
Stage it: some form of a one-dimensional marker now, full outcome later**

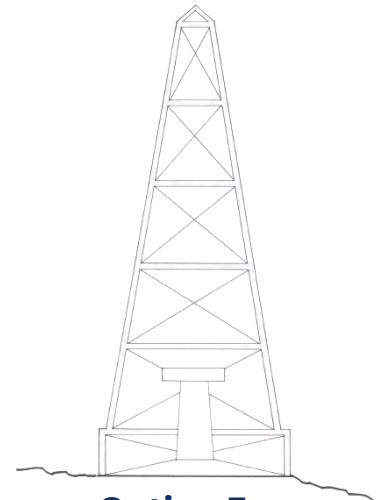
A simple, one-dimensional representation (or “future marker”) of the Obelisk is installed now to:

- mark the agreed future location, and
- signal Council and community intent to honour the Obelisk at this location.

Key features:

- Respectfully avoids having “two Obelisks” at once.
- Provides a clear visual cue and story point for visitors in the interim.
- Defers major construction costs until the natural life of the original Obelisk has ended.

A more complete replica or structure on this footprint would only be constructed after the original Obelisk is lost.



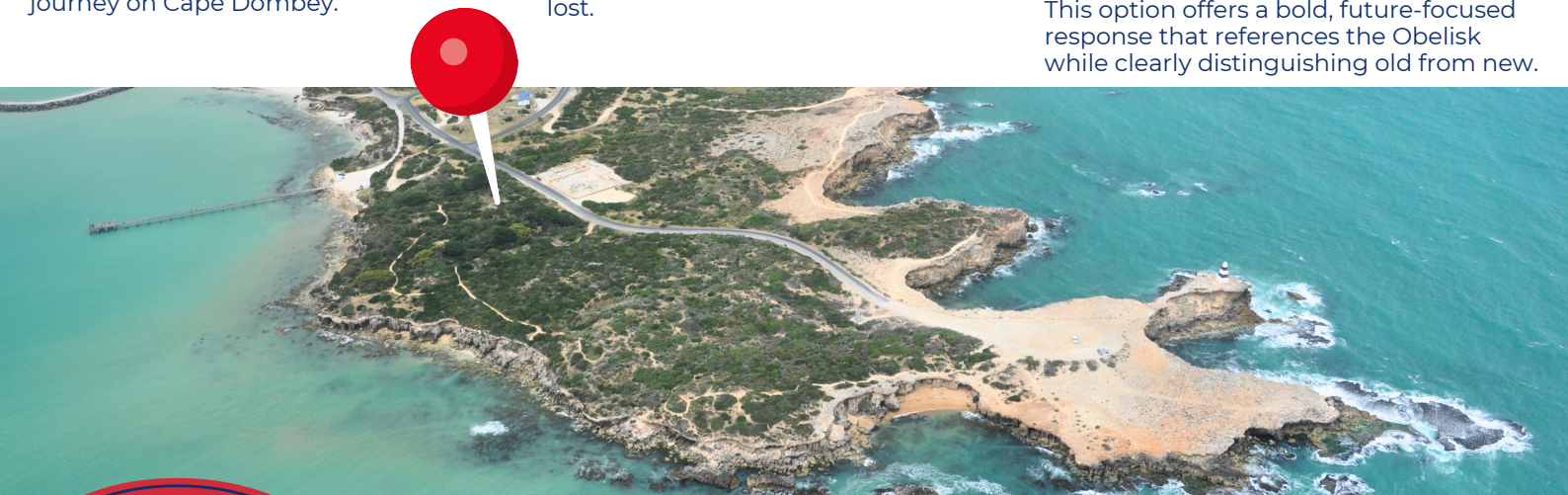
**Option 3 –  
Contemporary silhouette, same dimensions, potential for lighting**

A modern, sculptural silhouette is built, matching the height and proportions of the existing Obelisk, but expressed as an open, structural frame rather than a solid tower.

Key features:

- Same overall dimensions as the Obelisk to retain its visual presence on the headland.
- Contemporary architectural treatment (silhouette/outline) that “traces” the Obelisk form against the sky.
- Opportunities for subtle lighting and interpretive elements that tell the story of navigation, coastline change and the community’s connection to the site.
- Lower bulk and visual weight, allowing the natural landscape to remain the hero.

This option offers a bold, future-focused response that references the Obelisk while clearly distinguishing old from new.



**YOUR VOICE  
MATTERS**

You are invited to:

- Complete the short survey to indicate your preferred option (1, 2 or 3), and
- Share any comments on design, timing, storytelling, heritage and cultural recognition

**CLICK HERE** 