

# Lake Alice Hospital water tower going back on the market after owners reject government offer to turn it into memorial

By [Finn Williams](#)

11 Oct, 2023 05:00 AM ⌚ 3 mins to read

The former water tower for the Lake Alice Psychiatric Hospital is set to be put back on the market after two offers from the Government to buy the tower were not accepted.

The tower and its water pump station, originally across the road from the hospital, are now its only remnants as it was closed in 1999 and later demolished, with the land it stood on now used as farmland.

Whanganui couple Scott Phillips and Trudy Reeves currently own the tower and put it on sale in December 2022 at a price of \$150,000.

In January of this year, the tower was taken off the market as the couple were contacted by the Crown Response Unit for the hospital.

A report by the Abuse in Care Royal Commission into the hospital's Child and Adolescent Unit found abuse was widespread throughout the facility and treatments used on children in the 1970s amounted to torture.

The report recommended the Government build regionalised memorials as a way of recognising the hospital's victims.

Crown Response Unit director Isaac Carlson said when the tower was listed for sale the unit was approached by representatives of survivors of the Child and Adolescent Unit.

"[The representatives] asked us to explore the possibility of the government purchasing the tower to use either it or its site for a memorial to the former patients.

"Because of its significance to the people who were abused at the Lake Alice psychiatric hospital the government made an initial offer," Carlson said.

12/8/23, 12:53 PM

Lake Alice Hospital water tower going back on the market after owners reject government offer to turn it into memorial - NZ Herald

This initial offer was based on a desktop valuation, which didn't require a valuer to visit the property in person, and was not accepted by Phillips and Reeves.

Carlson said following this the unit requested a full independent valuation to be carried out, after which they submitted a second offer based on this valuation.

“That has also not been accepted by the owners.”

Phillips said the couple were gutted by the outcome.

“After 10 months of working together, we could not reach a settlement with the [Crown Response Unit],” he said.

Now the tower was set to be put back on the market.

However, Phillips said there was clearly a want for it to become a memorial and he and Reeves hoped it could still happen somehow.

**Finn Williams is a multimedia journalist for the *Whanganui Chronicle*. He joined the Chronicle in early 2022 and regularly covers stories about business, events and emergencies. He also enjoys writing opinion columns on whatever interests him.**