

# AVENUE OF HONOUR



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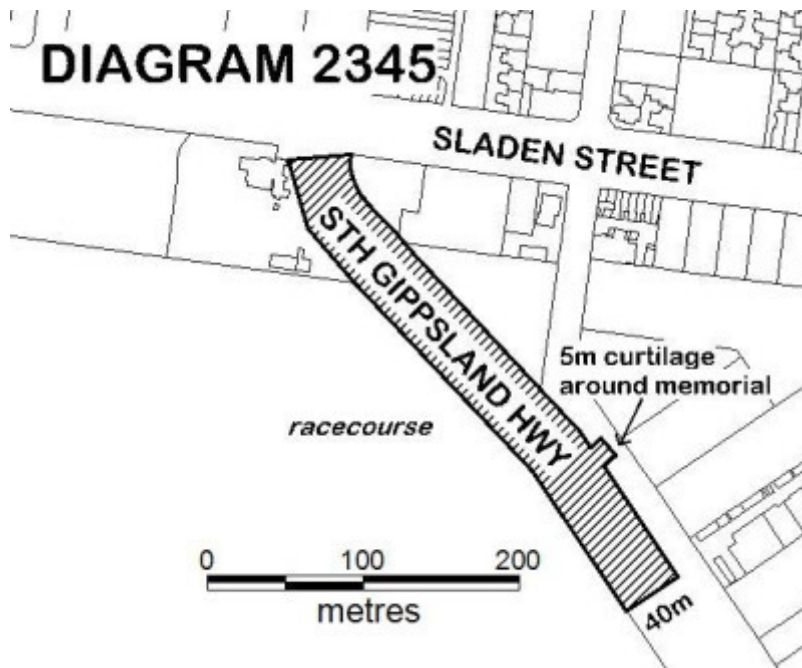


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### Location

SOUTH GIPPSLAND HIGHWAY CRANBOURNE, CASEY CITY

### Municipality

CASEY CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2345

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO142

### VHR Registration

April 9, 2015

### Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 24, 2025

Avenue of Honour is located on Bunurong Country.

## What is significant?

The original 1918-19 section of the Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne which comprises a section of the South Gippsland Highway and 65 oak trees (originally 67) which line both sides, from Sladen Street to approximately 100 metres beyond the intersection of Codrington Street, and an associated war memorial, shelter and plaques.

### *History Summary*

Since the early 1900s, commemorative avenues of trees have been planted in Australia and internationally to honour those who have served in wartime. During and after World War I avenues of honour were particularly popular in Victoria with some 218 memorial avenues planted throughout the state. Victoria has the largest number of avenues of honour of any state or territory in Australia. An avenue of honour at Cranbourne was first proposed by the Cranbourne Patriotic Association in June 1918 as both a memorial and landscape improvement for the town. After initial deferment by the Cranbourne Shire Council, an avenue of honour was planned the following year and unveiled on 9 August 1919 by the Shire of Cranbourne President Councillor D McGregor. The selected route was along the South Gippsland Highway, commencing at the Shire Hall and lining the road past the primary school (since relocated) which had been attended by many of the servicemen and women. Sixty seven commemorative trees, of various oak species, were planted to represent the men and two nursing sisters from the Cranbourne district who served in World War I. Trees in the avenue have no individual identification. It appears that name plaques were not produced and a list associating servicemen and women with particular trees has not been located. An associated war memorial was erected c.2000.

### *Description Summary*

The original portion of the Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is an avenue of 65 oak trees (originally 67) which are a collection of English oak (*Quercus robur*), Algerian oak (*Quercus canariensis*) and hybrid oak (*Quercus canariensis x Quercus robur*). Planted on the South Gippsland Highway, the avenue begins at Sladen Street and runs approximately 350 metres to the south-east. An associated war memorial was originally placed at the commencement of the avenue however this has since been relocated. A recent stone memorial with timber shelter is located within the Avenue of Honour, on the eastern side of the South Gippsland Highway. It contains plaques which list the names of 87 men and women from the district who served in World War I. These names have been taken from the District Roll of Honour and do not relate to specific trees.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Kulin Nation.

## How is it significant?

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is of historical and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion E Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

## Why is it significant?

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is historically significant for exemplifying rural Victoria's reaction to World War I. It is significant as a fine example of this important form of memorial planting in Victoria which commemorated individual sacrifice during World War I. It is representative of many plantings that appeared in Victoria, particularly during World War I, commemorating all those who enlisted for service in an egalitarian form where each individual, regardless of rank, was equally recognised for their service. The recent memorials and plaques are important for their associations with the Avenue of Honour.

(Criterion A)

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is aesthetically significant as an avenue of 65 oak trees which is a highly intact and distinctive commemorative planting. The uniform planting of trees on both sides of the road produces a short, dramatic and continuous avenue which is an impressive visual and cultural landmark and a key landscape feature of the district.

(Criterion E)

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is socially significant at a local level for its relationship with the community as a memorial to those who served in World War I and for its continuing commemorative importance. It remains as an indication of the involvement of Victoria's communities in commemorating the sacrifices of their volunteers, along with the loss and sorrow experienced in rural areas such as the former Shire of Cranbourne.

(Criterion G)

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

#### General Condition: 1.

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of

the registered place or object.

**General Condition: 2.**

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

**General Condition: 3.**

All works should be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place.

**General Conditions: 4.**

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

**General Condition: 5.**

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

**Vegetation Exemptions:**

- . Removal of dead or dangerous trees and emergency tree works to maintain public safety and to protect buildings and structures providing the Executive Director is notified within 21 days of the removal or works occurring.
- . Management and maintenance of trees, including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood, pest and disease control, cabling, mowing, weed control and mulching.
- . In the event of loss or removal of trees, replanting with suitable oaks.
- . Removal of tree seedlings and suckers but excluding herbicide use.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Protection of trees on development sites AS 4970.
- . Removal of plants listed as prohibited and controlled weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

**Hard Element Exemptions:**

- . Repair, maintenance, replacement and removal of existing structures and hard landscape elements such as driveways and crossovers, stone and concrete edging, fences and gates.
- . All road and pavement works to the South Gippsland Highway and any intersecting road within the extent of registration from shoulder to shoulder.
- . Traffic management and safety works including removal and installation of traffic and directional signs, reflector posts, and line marking.
- . Minor repair, maintenance and conservation by a qualified conservator to memorial monuments and name plaques in a manner which preserves the cultural heritage significance of the place.

**Theme**

**8. Building community life**

Construction dates	1919,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	197428

## History

### HISTORY

#### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Since the early 1900s, commemorative avenues of trees have been planted in Australia and internationally to honour those who have served in wartime. Becoming commonly known as 'avenues of honour', they were first planted in Victoria at Horsham and Apsley to the west of the state in 1902, to commemorate soldiers who fought in the Boer War. During and after World War I, avenues of honour were particularly popular in Victoria with some 218 memorial avenues planted throughout the state. Victoria has the largest number of avenues of honour of any state or territory in Australia.

From the 1850s, there was a civic movement in Australia to create parks, gardens and tree-lined streets in order to beautify and improve the amenity of towns. This was strengthened with the introduction of Arbour Day in Australia in 1889, a day when coordinated tree plantings took place in local communities. These days were very popular in rural communities and local school children were often involved in the plantings. Tree plantings of a commemorative nature also took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Trees were often planted in public spaces by both local and visiting dignitaries at official ceremonies to commemorate special occasions such as royal events and the opening of new buildings. From the mid-nineteenth century, royal tours to Australia often included the planting of commemorative trees.

World War I had an immense impact on Australia, more than any other event since British settlement, with over 200,000 Australians killed or wounded in just four years. This tragedy pervaded all communities and resulted in various commemorative activities. This included the creation of honour boards, war memorial statues and monuments and the planting of trees to form an avenue of honour, with each tree planted to commemorate a person who served, no matter their rank. Considered a living symbol of hope for the future, trees had the additional benefit of beautifying towns and the surrounding countryside, particularly in Australia where the landscape was regarded as being largely undeveloped. The majority of avenues of honour were planted along major roads where they received maximum public exposure and their distinctive form became an important aesthetic element along the main roads of small towns in country Victoria. A range of different tree species was used, more commonly exotic species such as elms, oaks and cypress, and occasionally native species such as eucalypts.

Unlike most types of memorials, the planting of a commemorative avenue of trees enabled entire communities to become involved in commemorating those involved in the war. This was encouraged by an official initiative from the State Recruiting Committee of Victoria, which wrote to all municipalities and shires in 1917 recommending that an assurance should be given to every intending recruit that 'his name will be memorialised in an Avenue of Honour'. As a result Victoria became the heartland of such avenues as they were promoted early and strongly, and a total of some 218 avenues were planted to commemorate World War I in Victoria.

The first avenue of honour identified in Victoria to commemorate World War I was planted at Eurack (VHR H2101) in the Western District of the state in May 1916. This was a single row of twenty Dutch elms with white crosses containing name plaques placed at the foot of each tree. The largest avenue was planted at Ballarat (VHR H2089) from 1917 to 1919. This avenue comprised over 3000 trees of various species which were planted to commemorate the soldiers and some nurses from the district who served their country. This avenue appeared to influence other communities in the surrounding districts to plant similar avenues.

The avenues were symbols of a national cause of commemoration but also allowed individual communities to express their local identity and independence. Together with honour boards, this form of memorial allowed communities to create immediate memorials, and avenues preceded the erection of war-related monuments and statues, often by a significant number of years. A high level of community participation was generally required for both raising funds and planting the trees. Trees were often donated and planted by voluntary labour and as part of a local civic ceremony. The local council and progress association were often the instigators of the projects

and many meetings included discussions to determine the location of the avenue, the tree type, the form of tree guard and the provision, type and arrangement of name plaques. Local councils often contributed financially to the avenue and frequently the community was also asked to contribute. Once the location was decided, numerous working bees were held to prepare for the final planting of the trees. The local Red Cross societies were involved in providing refreshments for these occasions.

Commemoration after World War II was more commonly utilitarian, with the building of memorial halls and swimming pools and the planting of gardens in Victoria. Avenues of Honour declined in popularity however some existing avenues were extended after the war and a small number of avenues were planted. The latter included the Calder Woodburn Memorial Avenue (VHR H1975) which was planted along the Goulburn Valley Highway between 1945 and 1949 by Mr J L F Woodburn as a memorial to his son Calder and other local servicemen who did not return from the war. It comprised a total planting of 2,457 Australian native trees. A very small number of commemorative avenues were planted in association with later wars such as the Vietnam War.

In total, over 300 avenues of honour were planted in Victoria to commemorate service personnel in the twentieth century. The majority of these, approximately 218, were planted as World War I memorials between 1917 and 1921. This compares with significantly fewer avenues in other Australian states, with well less than this number planted in the other states combined.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

The secretary of the Cranbourne Patriotic Association wrote to the Cranbourne Shire Council in June 1918, in regard to the possible planting of an honour avenue of trees in Cranbourne. Members of the association were prepared to raise funds for this purpose and it was suggested that the council would not be required to provide any financial assistance. The idea was to plant trees to honour local volunteers from the Cranbourne district who had served, and were serving, in World War I. The added benefit of beautifying the main thoroughfare of the town was noted. The council at this time deferred the matter as it was felt that similar avenues would then need to be planted at other centres in the Shire, requiring unnecessary expense. Reference was made by a councillor to the 'miles and miles of ornamental trees in Ballarat in honour of the soldiers....the council was not in a position to go on with it, but he was afraid there were too many other things to consider. He was afraid the public would not take it up very warmly'.

Despite this, final preparations for the planting of an honour avenue at Cranbourne were well in hand by July the following year, and on 9 August 1919 the avenue was opened by the Shire President, Councillor D McGregor. The selected route commenced at the Shire Hall, and ran along the South Gippsland Highway, past the original school which had been attended by many of the servicemen and women. The chosen tree species, as reported in the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal* at the time of planting, was Portugal oaks however a variety of oak species was actually planted. On 6 November 1919, the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal* reported that 67 commemorative trees had been planted representing the men and two nursing sisters from the Cranbourne district. Red gum tree guards were erected to protect these trees.

In recognition of later conflicts the avenue was reportedly extended to the south-east along the South Gippsland Highway and various recent sources record 172 trees as presently forming the Avenue of Honour. However this part of the Avenue of Honour lacks any cohesion or continuity and comprises individual trees of varying size and type. Five oak trees on the west side of the South Gippsland Highway, and at the southern extremity of the assumed total avenue, are the only substantial trees in this later section of the avenue.

Trees in the avenue have no individual identification. It appears that name plaques were not produced and a list associating servicemen and women with particular trees has not been located. A stone memorial and shelter, known as the Oak Tree memorial, was erected on the east side of the avenue c.2000. This records the planting of the Avenue of Honour and plaques list the names of eighty seven men and women who served in World War I. These names have been taken from the District Roll of Honour, and do not relate to specific trees. An associated war memorial was originally placed at the commencement of the avenue however this has been relocated.

## KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

S Cockerell. 'Summary of the history and state of Australia's Avenues of Honour', unpublished thesis, 2007

J Haddow. 'Avenues of Honour in Victoria', unpublished masters thesis, University of Melbourne 1987

J Wadsley Planning and Heritage Consultancy, 'Conservation Management Plan - Ballarat Avenue of Honour and Arch of Victory', prepared for the City of Ballarat, 2014

D Rowe, 'War related heritage in Victoria: a report; Botanic features: Avenues of Honour', Dept Planning and Community Development, Melbourne 2011

Victorian War Heritage Inventory at [www.vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/veterans](http://www.vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/veterans)

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Database

City of Casey, 'Our Living Memorials, Avenues of Honour in the City of Casey', 2001

Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc., Casey Cardinia Remembers - a survey of monuments and memorials in the City of Casey and Shire of Cardinia', 2011

City of Casey Heritage Citation report for Avenue of Honour (Cranbourne)

*South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 6 June 1918, p 3; 21 August 1919, p 2; 6 November 1919, p 3

*Dandenong Advertiser and Cranbourne, Berwick and Oakleigh Advocate*, 6 June 1918, p 2.

## Plaque Citation

This Avenue of Honour was planted in 1919 by the local community for the Cranbourne district with each of the oak trees representing a local enlisted serviceman or woman. It is one of more than 200 World War I avenues planted in Victoria.

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is historically significant for exemplifying rural Victoria's reaction to World War I. It is significant as a fine example of this important form of memorial planting in Victoria which commemorated individual sacrifice during World War I. It is representative of many plantings that appeared in Victoria, particularly during World War I, commemorating all those who enlisted for service in an egalitarian form where each individual, regardless of rank, was equally recognised for their service. The recent memorials and plaques are important for their associations with the Avenue of Honour. [

### Criterion A]

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is aesthetically significant as an avenue of 65 oak trees which is a highly intact and distinctive commemorative planting. The uniform planting of trees on both sides of the road produces a short, dramatic and continuous avenue which is an impressive visual and cultural landmark and a key landscape feature of the district. [

### Criterion E]

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:

The Avenue of Honour, Cranbourne is socially significant at a local level for its relationship with the community as a memorial to those who served in World War I and for its continuing commemorative importance. It remains as an indication of the involvement of Victoria's communities in commemorating the sacrifices of their volunteers, along with the loss and sorrow experienced in rural areas such as the former Shire of Cranbourne.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including Heritage Register Number H2345 in the category described as



Heritage Place.

Avenue of Honour  
South Gippsland Highway  
Cranbourne  
Casey City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2345 encompassing part of the road reserve for the South Gippsland Highway.

Dated 9 April 2015

TIM SMITH  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette No G14 9 April 2015 p.758]

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*