



The Ballarat
ARCH OF VICTORY
and
AVENUE OF HONOUR



The Ballarat Avenue of Honour

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour at 22 kilometres is the longest commemorative avenue in Australia and one of the earliest known memorial avenues in Victoria. Without consideration of service rank, it represents an egalitarian approach to the commemoration of service personnel.

The Avenue is located along Sturt Street, Remembrance Drive (formerly Ballarat-Burrumbeet Road/Western Highway) and Avenue Road to the west of Ballarat. It begins at the Arch of Victory in Alfredton, runs west to Lake Burrumbeet and heads north underneath the recently constructed Ballarat Avenue of Honour Overpass. It continues along Avenue Road and ends at Weatherboard-Learmonth Road.

The original trees were planted to commemorate an individual service man or woman, generally in the order of enlistment. Lining both sides of the road, the trees are 10 to 12 metres apart, set 4 metres back from the carriageway, with the trees planted post-1997 sitting 5 to 6 metres from the carriageway. A section south of the Western Freeway has only a single row of trees on the east side of the road, due to a long removed railway branch line. At the base of every tree, a bronze memorial plaque records the service person's name, unit or service and tree number.

History of the Avenue of Honour

On 20 May 1916, Mr. Edward H. Price, Governing Director and owner of E Lucas & Co Pty Ltd., proposed at a meeting of the local Progress Associations and the Ballarat Australian Natives Association (ANA) that the staff of 450 'girls' at the Lucas Company would offer to establish an avenue of trees to honour those who enlisted in Ballarat to serve in World War One. Mrs Matilda 'Tilly' Thompson, Director of E Lucas & Co, had seen such an avenue in the Mount Lofty Ranges in South Australia, bringing the idea home to Ballarat and the selected site on the Burrumbeet Road, west of the city.

On 26 May 1916, the Lucas Girls assisted by Boy Scout groups and Ballarat High School students dug holes for the trees, then with assistance from Council staff and local gardeners, 505 trees from the Council nursery in Victoria Park were planted on the King's Birthday holiday on Monday 4 June, 1916.



Local groups including fire brigades, nurses, unions, railway workshops, the Drapery Association and the local Progress Associations, as well as workers from the woollen mills, post offices and other local businesses, joined the Lucas Girls for the second planting of 748 trees on 18 August 1917. There was a third planting of 134 trees on 25 August and 1 September 1917. The eighth and final planting on 16 August 1919 extended the Avenue to 3771 trees – one for each local soldier, sailor, airman and nurse who served during World War One.

The total cost of the Avenue was just over £2,000, which was covered by proceeds from various fundraising activities.

At a time when the community, and indeed the nation, were under extreme stress from the events of World War One, the planting of the Avenue of Honour had very wide local support and acceptance.

Over the past century, several other 'memorials' have been added to the Avenue including the gun metal memorial name plaques commemorating each enlisted soldier in 1934; Memorial Cairn & Cross of Remembrance in 1936;

Memorial Rotunda and Roll of Honour in 1938; a tribute tree to Mrs Thompson in 1959; Memorial Wall in 1993; Ballarat Avenue of Honour Overpass in 2015; and the Garden of the Grieving Mother in 2017.

An additional 30 trees were planted in 2003, north of the Burrumbeet Caravan Park, bringing the total number of commemorative trees in the Avenue to 3,801.

A major study of the Avenue was undertaken in 1997, culminating in the formulation of a Management Strategy Plan. A 20-year restoration program began in 1997 and by 2015, more than 2,000 trees had been replanted and many bronze plaques straightened or replaced. A Conservation Management Plan was completed and adopted by Ballarat City Council in 2015.

In 2008, Sturt Street was duplicated from the Arch of Victory to Ring Road, changing the traffic flow through the Arch to west bound only.

History of the Arch of Victory

Having completed the Avenue of Honour, Lucas Girls raised \$2,000 for the construction of a suitable grand entrance to the Avenue. The iconic Arch of Victory was built in just three and a half months and was officially opened by the Prince of Wales on 3 June, 1920.

The Arch was constructed by a local team of approximately 15 bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters and labourers, led by 'Master Bricklayer' George Brookes. 70,000 Selkirk bricks were used. The piers, or columns, were hollow and 50% filled with concrete to provide added strength and to avoid movement. The completed Arch of Victory is 17.4 metres high and 19.5 metres wide, with an opening 7.3 metres high and 9.5 metres wide.

A major restoration was completed in 2011, and the Arch of Victory was officially reopened by Governor General Quentin Bryce.

Significance of the Avenue

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour is a significant cultural landscape of national importance and has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Australian Heritage Commission and more recently, Heritage Victoria.

In the mid 1800's, there was a global movement to bring nature into cities with picturesque parks, avenues and boulevards, and Ballarat embraced the idea of natural landscapes in the thriving city.

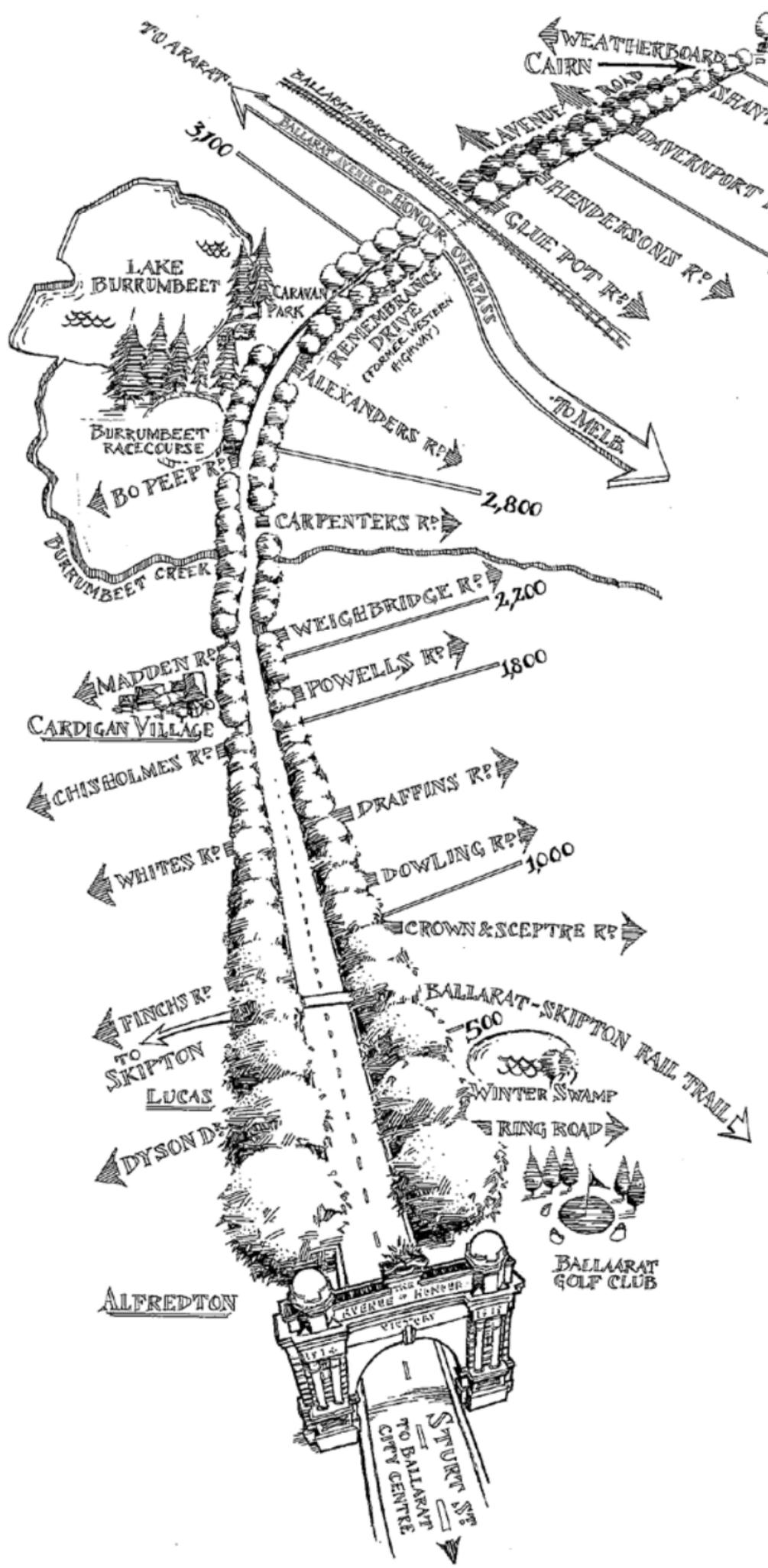
Australians, and in particular Victorians, were enthusiastic about planting Avenues of Honour, and a National Survey of War Memorials in 1920-21 indicates that at least 121 Avenues were planted across the country following World War One. Of these, 92 were in Victoria, the majority in the Central Highlands Region with many other towns inspired by the Ballarat Avenue.

Established amidst much interest and enthusiasm, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was grand in conception and form, and no other Avenue involved so many people or fundraising activities, cost so much or consisted of so many trees.

Tree Species and Integrity of the Avenue

Initially, 23 species of trees were planted in the Avenue. They were mostly traditional 'European' or exotic deciduous species popular at the time including different types of Ash, Oak, Maple, Alder, Birch, Lime, Poplar and Elm. Typically, each species was planted in blocks of 50 trees (25 on each side of the road), however at the Weatherboard end of the Avenue two species are planted alternately in blocks of 100 trees. Many of the original species of trees did not flourish and were replaced with mostly Elms and Poplars.

The 1997 study of the Avenue identified approximately 35 different tree species, varieties or cultivars. Elms (*Ulmus* sp.) and Poplars (*Populus* sp.) accounted from approximately 54% and 38% of all trees in the Avenue respectively. The remaining collection was primarily comprised of Ash (*Fraxinus* sp.), Rowan (*Sorbus* sp.), Oak (*Quercus* sp.) Linden (*Tilia* sp.) and Plane (*Platanus* sp.) trees. The removal and replanting of trees in poor condition, and the planting of many gaps since 1997, have increased the diversity of tree species including new cultivars of Ash, Oak, Poplar, Linden and Elm that are more tolerant of pests, diseases and harsh local growing conditions.



TRIBUTE
TREE
LEARMONTH R

3,900



3,500

The integrity of the Avenue is a critical component to preserving its heritage significance and maintaining its connection and relevance to the local and broader community. One integral aspect is allowing the Avenue trees to mature gracefully. The original tree species were selected for their appearance, leaf canopy and large size. From a visual perspective, mature trees provide a true sense of the Avenue as a human creation with a special purpose. Recent works are considered in the context of emphasising the broader social history and cultural heritage aspects of the Avenue, much more than landscaping and replanting programs.

Avenue Trees and Memorial Plaques

The original criteria for inclusion in the Avenue was that the person had enlisted and resided in the City of Ballarat or the Township of Ballarat East. Towards the end of World War One, the criteria was extended to include those who enlisted interstate or overseas.

The Avenue trees were named and numbered, as far as possible, in the order of enlistment starting at the Ballarat end, with odd numbers on the south side and even numbers on the north. In 1934, the bronze memorial plaques were added at the base of the trees, each bearing the name, unit or service and tree number.

The trees were numbered consecutively from 1 to 3,912 with the exception of two gaps: 1,242 to 1,344 and 1,490 to 1,552 inclusive. These numbers were reserved to accommodate, if necessary, those who had trees in the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour, planted on the other side of the city along Ballarat-Melbourne Road. This Avenue did flounder and those service personnel were allocated trees in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour but different numbers were used rather than those reserved. Another anomaly in the

numbering system is the use of 'a', 'b' and 'c' appended to 23 plaques. The extra 30 trees planted in 2003 are numbered 3,913 to 3,942.

Unfortunately, with the passing of time, many of the bronze plaques at the base of the trees have been damaged or lost. The Memorial Wall and Rotunda adjacent to the Arch of Victory provides a full list of service men and women honoured in the Avenue, listed both chronologically and in alphabetical order. Restoration of damaged plaques and replacement of lost plaques is an ongoing project of the Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Committee.

Finding a specific tree on the Avenue

The Memorial Wall, located immediately south of the Arch of Victory, has a complete list of names and associated tree numbers. The centre pedestal in the Rotunda also contains a list of all names in alphabetical order with their corresponding tree number.

The complete list of names and tree numbers is also available online at the City of Ballarat website:

www.ballarat.vic.gov.au

Tree numbers are sequential from the Arch of Victory, with trees 1 and 2 adjacent to the Arch and trees 3,911 and 3,912 located at the other end of the Avenue on the Learmonth-Weatherboard Road. Travelling west out of Ballarat, odd numbers are on the left and even numbers on the right. Trees are 10 to 12 metres apart so, for example, tree No 1400 is 700 trees, and approximately 7km, from the Arch of Victory. Trees 3913 – 3942 are located just south of the Overpass on the west side of the Avenue.

Honouring Our ANZACs website

To commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC in 2015, the City of Ballarat launched a new mobile website titled Honouring our ANZACs, with generous support from local institutions, committees, associations and individuals.

This easy to navigate website features all the 3,801 brave men and women who fought for our country's freedom during the Great War.



Honouring Our ANZACs is an exciting platform for all generations to discover the real stories of these remarkable people, much more than is listed on a plaque, and is a guided interpretation of the Avenue.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information on Honouring Our ANZACs is complete, and additional submissions are always welcome. Photographs or information about the people memorialised on the Avenue may be emailed to ballcity@ballarat.vic.gov.au, or for more information call the City of Ballarat at 5320 5500.

Visit the website:

honouringouranzacs.com.au

Avenue Landmarks of Interest

Memorial Rotunda and Roll of Honour

The Memorial Rotunda and Roll of Honour were built by the Ballarat Sailors, Soldiers, Fathers Association in 1938 to commemorate the Ballarat service men and women who took part in World War One. An alphabetical listing of all names and tree numbers are inscribed on aluminium sheets affixed to the pedestal in the centre of the Rotunda.

Originally located 180 metres west of the Arch on the north side of Sturt Street, the Memorial Rotunda and Roll of Honour were relocated to the present position in 1993 as part of the Memorial Wall Project.

Memorial Wall Project

Officially opened by Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop on 16 May 1993, the Memorial Wall Project was the culmination of more than eight years of planning by the Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Committee. The \$140,000 wall is 10 metres long and 1.8 metres high, and features 72 bronze plaques recording the names and tree numbers of the service men and women in the Avenue.

Tribute Tree

On 6 September 1959, Ballarat Shire Council planted a Tribute Tree in the memory of Mrs Matilda 'Tilly' Thompson, Director of E. Lucas & Co, at the Learmonth end of the Avenue. The Tribute Tree honours Mrs. Thompson's important role in the organisation of the Avenue and Arch of Victory. The original Scarlet Oak has since been replaced with a Yellow Gum.

Memorial Cairn and Cross of Remembrance

Dedicated on 15 November 1936, the Memorial Cairn and Cross of Remembrance were built by the Returned Sailors, Soldiers Fathers Association and the Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Committee as a fitting marker at the end of the Avenue. In 1959, the Cairn was renewed in permanent materials by the Ballarat Shire Council and dedicated at a ceremony on ANZAC Day.



Ballarat Avenue of Honour Overpass

In 1993, the Western Highway bypass of Ballarat was constructed and severed the Avenue of Honour near Burrumbeet. The adjacent rail crossing on the Ballarat-Ararat Line was also closed isolating the final 5 kilometres, home to 800 trees on Avenue Road.

With plans for the duplication of the Western Highway, VicRoads announced in 2011 that a dual Overpass of the Avenue would be constructed. This extensive project included abutments featuring the names of World War One battles and the units of the servicemen and women and leaf tabs on the bridge screens representing the 3,801 who served and the 744 who lost their lives. Other works include landscaping with red plantings extending 300 metres each side of the Overpass and the imprints of tree leaves on the walls, sound reducing road pavement, and an expansive rest area with information panels.

The Overpass and the adjacent rail crossing were officially opened by the Minister of Veterans' Affairs, Senator Michael Ronaldson on 12 April 2015.

THE GARDEN OF THE GRIEVING MOTHER

The Garden of the Grieving mother completes Ballarat's iconic Arch of Victory precinct. The garden, with its central statue of a grieving mother clutching the photo of her lost son, is an area of quiet reflection that balances the commemorative purpose of the adjacent Avenue of Honour by encouraging contemplation of the impact of war on the families of those citizens whose service and sacrifice is commemorated.



Of the 3,801 servicemen and women commemorated in the Avenue of Honour, 742 soldiers and 2 nurses made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives. Many hundreds of those who came home still had their lives irreparably damaged by the physical and psychological wounds they had suffered. Parents, siblings, neighbours and friends all shared the grief and sadness, but there is no stronger human bond than that that exists between a mother and the children she has carried, given birth to and nurtured.

Ballarat's Avenue, the longest commemorative avenue in Australia, honours 42 pairs of brothers who lost their lives in the service of their country, which meant 42 local mothers experienced the crushing grief of losing two sons. Among these brothers were the Moore twins, Clement and Ina, who were born on the same day and killed in the same battle in France; and the Sells boys, Samuel and William, who died on the same day at Lone Pine, Gallipoli. There were also the Tait brothers, Robert and Lawrence, who died two weeks apart in the last month of the war, their mother learning of the loss of her sons at the same time she learned that the war was over.

The Grieving Mother statue, created by Australia's pre-eminent commemorative sculptor Peter Corlett, stands as a permanent memorial to the mothers and families at home who experienced the grief and deep anxiety that is the consequence of war, irrespective of the colour or style of uniform worn at the battle front. It is hoped it will also serve to engage future generations in contemplation of war's impact and inevitable consequence.

The grieving mother is not an identified individual; she represents every Ballarat or Australian mother who has ever lost a son or daughter in the service of our country. She also represents the wider families, the fathers, brothers and sisters, who have been left grieving the loss of a loved son, brother or sister.

Commemoration of fighting servicemen and women has occasionally attracted claims that this is a form of glorification of war. The Garden of the Grieving Mother provides the perfect balance between the rightful commemoration of service and sacrifice and a profound reminder of the consequences of war.

The Garden of the Grieving Mother was officially opened by Governor General Peter Cosgrove on 15 February 2017.