



Prime Ministers Avenue

The Prime Ministers Avenue is a feature of national significance located within the picturesque Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Each of the 25 Prime Ministers of Australia are displayed as bronze portraits mounted on polished granite pedestals.

History

On March 2, 1940 the then Governor of Victoria, Sir Winston Duggan unveiled the busts of the first six Prime Ministers of Australia at a ceremony in the long avenue of Horse Chestnuts.

The donor, Richard Armstrong Crouch was born in Ballarat in 1868. He was elected to Federal Parliament in 1901 as a member of the Protectionist Party for the electorate of Corio, representing that area until his defeat nine years later. He was the youngest member of the new House of Representatives and shared a rare distinction with the oldest member, W.H. Green of Queensland. After service in World War 1, Crouch returned to parliament, this time as Labour member for Corangamite, but after a brief two year period was again defeated.

During his terms, Crouch served under two Ballarat Prime Ministers Alfred Deakin and James Scullin.

What prompted Crouch's concept for benefaction? His patronage and love of fine arts which he supported and endowed in many other ways and the influence of two parliamentary terms under the statesmen Barton, Deakin, Watson, Fisher and Scullin prompted him to return to Ballarat something of what it had given him. Not only did he provide the actual busts, but he left a legacy to perpetuate this historic avenue.

Each of Australia's Prime Ministers is depicted regardless of the length of time spent in office.

The Sculptors

The first sculptor was Wallace Anderson who was born in 1888 at Dean near Ballarat. Wallace's most renowned work is "Simpson and His Donkey" displayed at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. His work at the Australian War Memorial and The Ballarat Botanical Gardens established him as a sought after artist in the medium of bronze sculpture. Wallace Anderson created the busts of Barton, Deakin, Watson, Reid, Fisher, Cook, Hughes, Bruce, Scullin, Lyons, Page, Menzies, Fadden and Curtin.

Ken Palmer was born in Ballarat in 1925 and studied art at the Ballarat School of Mines. He was commissioned to sculpt Chifley's bust during his election campaign in 1946. Ken taught art in Schools in Castlemaine and Melbourne before returning to Ballarat where he opened an art shop.

Victor Greenhalgh was born in Ballarat in 1900. He was educated at the Ballarat School of Mines until World War One. Following the war he returned to study at the Working Men's College. He taught art at the Bendigo School of Mines, Ballarat School of Mines and Royal

Melbourne Institute of Technology. His large statue of King George V dominates the Sturt Street plantation. His last work within the Prime Ministers Avenue was Malcolm Fraser's bust which he was himself critical of the final casting. Following Victor Greenhalgh's death the bust of Malcolm Fraser was recommissioned. Victor's works displayed are Holt, McEwan, Gorton, McMahon and Whitlam

Peter Nicholson was born in Melbourne in 1946, studied law and became renowned for his cartoons in the Nation Review, Financial Review and The Age. In 1985 he created the TV puppets "Rubbery Figures". His serious work as a sculptor was not well known to the general public until commissioned to produce Premier Rupert Hamer's bust for Parliament House Melbourne. Peter was commissioned to undertake the sculpting of Bob Hawke's bust. Following the success and acclaim of this work the replacement bust of Malcolm Fraser was commissioned. His works of Paul Keating and John Howard have followed his philosophy that the busts should impart an expression of the character of the individual. Peter created the bust of Robert Bruce Clark mounted in the Robert Clark Centre forecourt.

The Prime Ministers

Edmund Barton	1901 to 1903
Alfred Deakin	1903 to 1904
	1905 to 1908
	1909 to 1910
Chris Watson	1904
George Reid	1904 to 1905
Andrew Fisher	1908 to 1909
	1910 to 1913
	1914 to 1915
Joseph Cook	1913 to 1914
Billy Hughes	1915 to 1923
Stanley Bruce	1923 to 1929
James Scullin	1929 to 1932
Joseph Lyons	1932 to 1939
Earle Page	1939
Robert Menzies	1939 to 1941
	1949 to 1966
Artie Fadden	1941
John Curtin	1941 to 1945
Frank Forde	1945
Ben Chifley	1945 to 1949
Harold Holt	1966 to 1967
John McEwan	1967 to 1968
John Gorton	1968 to 1971
William McMahon	1971 to 1972
Gough Whitlam	1972 to 1975
Malcolm Fraser	1975 to 1983
Bob Hawke	1983 to 1991
Paul Keating	1991 to 1996
John Howard	1996

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