

# KURRAJONG AVENUE



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SOHE 2008



h02061 1 kurrajong trees  
comyn street 02 2004



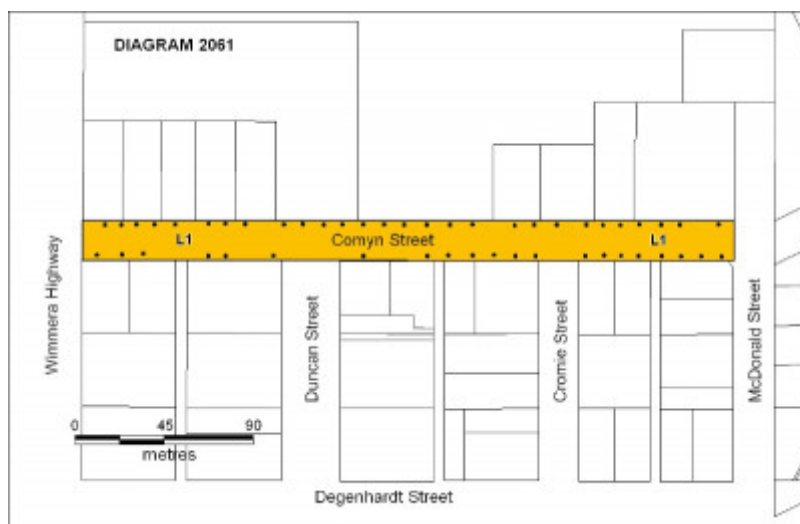
h02061 kurrajong trees  
comyn street 01 2004



h02061 measured tree 1



h02061 kurrajong trees  
comyn street sign 02 2004



h02061 plan

## Location

COMYN STREET MURTOA, YARRIAMBIAK SHIRE

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2061

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO74

## VHR Registration

March 3, 2005

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 3, 2005

### What is significant?

Formerly known as Marma Gully, the township of Murtoa started to be developed in the early 1870s on land owned by pastoralist Sir Samuel Wilson of 'Longernong'. In 1871 the first freehold block was pegged out on the eastern side of Lake Marma and in 1876 the township was surveyed. The railway arrived in 1878 and the water tower was built in 1886.

Comyn Street was formed as part of the original 1876 town survey and provided the main road from the Wimmera Highway to the Murtoa railway station. In Comyn Street (north side) is the 1880 home of Gustav Degenhardt, who was a member of the original party of four Germans from Mt Gambier that pegged out claims around the Lake in 1871. The majority of other houses in Comyn Street are from the interwar period and later.

The Murtoa Progress Association was formed in 1888. For the first decade and a half its activities 'were mainly directed to tree planting in the main streets and on crown lands by Lake Marma.' In 1889 200 trees were obtained from the Macedon State Nursery and 180 trees from Adelaide. Ratepayers were urged to water trees in front of their blocks. An extra 500 trees were to be planted in 1890 and the Progress Committee reported that 1,000 trees had been planted in 1892.

At the 1902 Annual General meeting of the Murtoa Progress Association it was reported that among the 533 trees planted in 1901 were '28 curyjongs [sic]. The curyjongs were planted in Comyn Street and are looked after by the residents of that street who also donated the trees.' A further 28 trees were planted the following year. A postcard postmarked 1903 shows the avenue of young trees in tree guards along Comyn Street.

The avenue of 49 Kurrajongs planted in 1901-02 is located along Comyn Street between the Wimmera Highway and McDonald Street. There are 28 trees along the north side and 21 trees along the south side. A tree measured on the north side, at the intersection of McDonald Street has a trunk circumference (1.4m above ground level) of 1.92m, height 11m and canopy spread 13m. The trunk circumference ranges in size from 1.09m to 1.92m.

Most of the trees are in good condition, exhibiting single trunks and spreading crowns. Some trees on the northern side in the western half have been subjected to powerline clearance. The construction of aerial bundle cables has now reduced the need for severe pruning, except to four trees at the western end where the powerlines are still mounted on cross-arms.

### **How is it significant?**

The Kurrajong avenue is of historical and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

The avenue of Kurrajong trees in Comyn Street Murtoa planted in 1901 and 1902 is historically significant as being the earliest known Kurrajong planting in Victoria, and being amongst the earliest surviving street tree plantings using an Australian native species. This tree planting represents a significant change in tree selection in Victoria where evergreen Australian natives became the preferred species for northern areas, rather than exotic deciduous trees mainly used prior to 1900. The planting is only preceded by an avenue of Moreton Bay Figs in Warrnambool, believed to have been planted in the 1890s. From the 1850s fast growing evergreen trees, mostly conifers but also Blue Gums and Moreton Bay Figs were planted in streets. From the 1880s large growing deciduous trees, mostly elms, planes, poplars and oaks were the preferred street tree; however these trees were unsuitable for drier parts of Victoria. The Sugar Gum, Pepper Tree, Silky Oak, Moreton Bay Fig and Kurrajong were recommended. Other Kurrajong street plantings occur in Dunolly, planted after 1909, and at Yarrowonga and Nathalia an Avenue of Honour were planted in the 1920s.

The avenue of Kurrajong trees is of aesthetic significance as an important landscape feature providing an impressive evergreen 'tunnel' and visual experience rarely encountered in Victoria. The trees have grown to a mature size along a residential street for a length of about 325m and provide a unifying theme. The smooth grey trunks, dense lime green canopies and regular spacing between the trees, barring the 7 missing trees, provide an attractive and outstanding landscape.

## **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:**

General Conditions: 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 Conditions: 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 the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

#### Minor Works:

Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

#### Landscape:

The process of gardening, including mowing, clipping, lawn maintenance, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, and emergency works.

Removal of dead trees and replanting with a Kurrajong.

Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; *Pruning of amenity trees* AS 4373

Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, structures, roads and paths, edges, fences and gates, drainage and irrigation systems.

Construction dates	1901,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	KURRAJONG TREES,
Hermes Number	13054
Property Number	

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## History

### Brief History of Street Tree Planting in Victoria[1]

The choice of trees planted as avenues in streets and parks during the nineteenth and early twentieth century falls into two fairly distinct periods; that lasting from 1850 to 1870 in which fast growing evergreens, mostly conifers but also natives including Blue Gums and Moreton Bay Figs. From the 1880s the deciduous trees used in the streets of large European and American cities were preferred. The Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens Ferdinand von Mueller, exerted a major influence on the selection of trees. Between 1857 -58 he developed a design in the Domain featuring avenue plantings of Silky Oak and Illawarra Flame trees and by 1861 a double line of Blue Gums had been planted along St Kilda Road. Blue Gums were planted in Sturt Street

Ballarat in 1858, however by the late 1880s they had deteriorated and were replaced with elms and oaks. Other tree species to gain popularity during the 1860s include the true Plane, the North American Wax Ash, and *Pinus insignis* [now *Pinus radiata*], Monterey Pine.

In 1861 Daniel Bunce, Superintendent of the Geelong Botanic Gardens advocated the use of deciduous Wych elms, poplars, oaks ashes, maples, gleditsias, robinias, planes and evergreen Blue Gums, Silver Wattle, *Pinus radiata*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Picea abies* and *Araucaria heterophylla*.

By the late 1880s conifers and Blue Gums had lost favour as street trees. As early as 1869 an avenue of Blue Gums in Victoria Parade had been ringbarked and the deciduous trees widely used in major European cities were now recommended for street planting. The trees recommended were a range of elms, planes, oaks, and poplars. In cooler districts American and English Ash, Spanish Chestnut, Limes and Horse Chestnuts were planted. For northern districts, White Cedar, Silky Oak, Kurrajong, Tree-of-Heaven were planted. Joseph Firth, Superintendent of the Macedon State Nursery, noted in 1905 that deciduous trees were unsuitable for drier parts of Victoria and recommended Sugar Gum, Pepper Tree, Kurrajong, Silky Oak, Moreton Bay Fig, She-oak, Golden Wattle and Flame Tree. For milder climates Firth recommended the usual deciduous trees but also suggested limes, sycamores, maples, ashes, alders, birches, beeches and walnuts.

In 1910, A. Crooke wrote *Tree planting for the beautifying of cities and towns*, in the Victorian Journal of the Department of Agriculture, and recommended the following trees; *Eucalyptus ficifolia*, [now *Corymbia ficifolia*], *Prunus* spp., *Lagunaria patersonii*, *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, *Liriodendron tulifera*, *Pittosporum undulatum* and *Tristania conferta* [now *Lophostemon confertus*]. For hot northern areas such as Kerang and Swan Hill, *Schinus molle* [now *Schinus areira*], was well established as a rapid grower, and for general planting the Kurrajong and Silky Oak

[1] *Fashions in Street Tree Planting in Victoria*, Roger Spencer, *Landscape Australia* 4/86 pp304 - 309

## Murtoa

Formerly known as Marma Gully, the township of Murtoa started to be developed in the early 1870s on land owned by Sir Samuel Wilson of Longernong?. In 1871 the first freehold block was pegged out on the eastern side of Lake Marma and in 1876 the township was surveyed. A post office opened in 1874, a flour mill and Presbyterian Church were established in 1876, followed by a police station and St John's Church in 1877, Anglican Church 1887, and Methodist Church 1892. The Dunmunkle Standard was first published in 1878 and in 1881 the Mechanics Institute was built and the agricultural society formed. The railway arrived in 1878 and the water tower was built in 1886.

Comyn Street was formed as part of the original 1876 town survey and provided the main road from Wimmera Highway to the railway station. In Comyn Street (north side) is the 1880 home of Gustav Degenhardt, who was a member of the original party of four Germans from Mt Gambier that pegged out claims around the Lake in 1871. At the corner of Comyn and Duncan Streets is the 1891 Thomas house. The majority of other houses in Comyn Street are from the interwar period and later.

The Murtoa Progress Association was formed in 1888. Its first president was Dr H Rabl, an acquaintance of Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Government Botanist. For the first decade and a half its activities were mainly directed to tree planting in the main streets and on crown lands by Lake Marma. In 1889 200 trees were obtained from the Macedon State Nursery and 180 trees from Adelaide. Ratepayers were urged to water trees in front of their blocks. An extra 500 trees to be planted in 1890 and the Progress Committee reported that 1,000 trees had been planted in 1892.

The Dunmunkle Standard , Nov 16, 1900 reported ;

The committee planted an avenue, leading from the railway station to the township, and along both sides of the principal thoroughfares are now well grown trees which afford a pleasing prospect to the eye.

Images of the town around 1900 mostly show gum plantings. The largest street tree occurring today is a large Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) at the western end of Marma Street. A large Sugar Gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) once grew beside the Water Tower but was removed for safety reasons in 2002. Many Sugar Gums are planted in Lake Marma and probably date from the 1920s - 30s. In Soldiers Avenue there is a mature planting of Claret Ash and a few Elms which appear to have been planted from the 1930s, and later native plantings. The majority of other street plantings are Australian natives, including mixed plantings of Eucalyptus, Callistemon,

Hakea and Melaleuca, mostly planted from the late 1960s and 1970s.

In Degenhardt Street between Mc Donald Street and Soldiers Avenue on the north side is a row of Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*) trees and on the south side are a few Illawarra Flame Trees (*Brachychiton acerifolius*). In Comyn Street between the Wimmera Highway and Mc Donald Street is an avenue of 49 Kurrajongs, and recent planting of a *Lophostemon confertus* and a *Callistemon viminalis*. Beside the Water Tower are a further three Kurrajongs. When photographed in 1970 these trees appeared to be about 30-40 years old.

At the 1902 Annual General meeting of the Murtoa Progress Association reviewing the year 1901, it was reported that among the 533 trees planted that year were 28 Kurrajongs [sic]. The Kurrajongs were planted in Comyn Street and are looked after by the residents of that street who also donated the trees. (Dunmunkle Standard, Jan 1902). Also included in this report are the following trees; 185 sugar gums, 16 red gums, 153 Aleppo pines, 12 valonia oaks, 12 lusitanica Oaks, 30 silver poplars 6 common poplars, 8 English elms, 16 cork elms, 50 weeping willows, 15 basket willows, 2 pepper trees.

There are a total of 49 Kurrajong trees, 28 along the north side and 21 along the south side. The trees are only planted about 1m from the back of kerb and about 12m apart. The kerb and channel is concrete, and most of the cross overs are sandstone pitchers and along the inside edge of the gutter is a row of sandstone pitchers. A tree measured on the north side of Comyn Street, at the intersection of McDonald Street, has a trunk circumference (1.4m above ground level) of 1.92m, height 11m and canopy spread 13m. The trunk circumference ranges in size from 1.09m to 1.92m. Most of the trees are in good condition, exhibiting single trunks and spreading crowns. The trees on the northern sides have been subjected to powerline clearance, except at the eastern end. The construction of aerial bundle cables has now reduced the need to severe pruning, except to four trees at the western end where the powerlines are still mounted on cross-arms.

#### Comparative examples

Kurrajong naturally grows in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, where it occurs in the north east Victoria, Upper Murray, East Gippsland, Snowy River valley and an isolated occurrence at Nyerimilang Park near Lakes Entrance. A tree at Nyerimilang Park, estimated to be about 400 years old, has a girth of 5.35m, height 22.8m and canopy spread 20m (1988). A tree in a stand of 12 other trees has a girth of 3.1m, height 16m and canopy spread 13m (1991).

Kurrajong was amongst the first group of Australian native trees to be cultivated. Plants were listed in the 1857 nursery catalogue of John Rule of Richmond, and during the 1860s and 1870s Kurrajong was listed by most Victorian nurseries.

An Avenue of Honour in Bromley Street, Nathalia in northern Victoria is planted with 53 Kurrajongs. The planting occurred in 1918-22, and the average girth size is 2.3m, height 11.5m and canopy spread 9m (1988).

The Broadway in Dunolly is planted with an avenue of Kurrajong trees. Between Thompson and Tweeddale Streets are 26 trees (16E & 10W), and a further 4 trees to the south of Thompson Street (3E & 1W) and 3 trees north of Russell Street (1E & 2W). The Kurrajong outside the Dunolly Post Office has a girth of 1.82m, height 10m and canopy spread 8.5m.

West of the Broadway along Tweeddale Street is an avenue of 31 (16S 7 15N) Kurrajong trees, and a further 2 trees west of the rail line, on the south side. A tree at the eastern end, south side has a girth of 1.5m, height 10.5m and canopy spread 8.3m. The planting date of these trees is unknown, but they were not planted prior to c1909 (slv postcard H141499).

A tree planted at Bontharambo homestead, near Wangaratta in the 1870s has a girth size of size of 3.9m, height 15.7 and canopy spread 23.4m (1992). At Steglitz Cottage, Meredith a tree planted in about 1875 by William Champ has a girth of 2.05m, height 10.4 and canopy spread 10.5m.

Kurrajong is a tree that has been widely cultivated in Victoria and can be seen in many nineteenth century homestead gardens, public parks and gardens and botanical gardens. A number of these trees have grown to a very large size and are impressive specimens in the designed landscape.

Kurrajongs have been occasionally planted as a street tree, mainly in northern Victorian towns, eg Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca, Mooropna and Yarrowonga, and today a few trees remain. The important commemorative Avenue of Honour at Nathalia is the finest avenue in Victoria and is of historical significance, and includes trees of

outstanding form and landscape value.

Twenty-eight Kurrajong trees in Comyn Street were planted in 1901 and the rest by 1903. A postcard postmarked 1903 shows young trees in tree guards along Comyn Street. The Kurrajong avenue is an early, and now a rare surviving example of street tree planting in Victoria. The use of an Australian native species is an important example of street planting in Victoria.

Other trees known to have been planted around 1900 include;

*Queens Avenue, an avenue of Variegated Elms planted in Eastern Park Geelong in 1897 to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria. An avenue of Silver Poplars and English Elms were also planted in Lilydale for the Diamond Jubilee. In about 1896 Washingtonia filifera (Petticoat Palm) were planted in Palm Avenue Mildura, and over the next few years many palms were planted in the Mildura and Merbein district. Pepper trees had been planted in Swan Hill in the 1890s and in the 1900s Sugar Gums were planted in Bendigo, Mildura and other northern towns.*

*English Elms were planted in Royal Parade in about 1900. Alexandra Avenue, which was opened by the Duke of York in 1901 was planted with London Planes, Dutch Elms and Silver Poplars. The Federation planting at Milawa is an avenue of London Plane trees while at the Ferntree Gully Shire Offices English Oaks were planted. In 1901 the Duke and Duchess of York planted two Himalayan Cedars in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, and the Duke of York planted an English Oak at Rupertswood, Sunbury and Kilmany Park, Sale.*

*In the coastal towns of Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Portland, avenues of Norfolk Island Pines were planted in the early 1900s. Moreton Bay Figs and Olives were also occasionally planted as street trees in Warrnambool and Port Fairy.*

## **Extent of Registration**

All of the land marked L1 and 49 Kurrajong trees in Comyn Street, between the Wimmera Highway and McDonald Street, Murtoa, shown on Diagram 2061 held by the Executive Director

*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/>*