
Traralgon Avenue of Honour



Elms.jpg

Location

Kay Street TRARALGON, LATROBE CITY

Municipality

LATROBE CITY

Level of significance

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Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 156681

Property Number

Veterans Description for Public

The Traralgon Avenue of Honour was planted on Kay Street in 1929 to commemorate the First World War. Kay Street was originally the main road leading into Traralgon from Melbourne and this accounted for its exceptional

width, which is unusual within Traralgon. It was originally lined with pines that were planted in 1903. In 1911, there were already suggestions by members of the Council that an avenue of elms replace these trees.

In 1921, several pines at the Franklin Street end were removed to allow the construction of a First World War memorial 'Digger' statue, which was finally unveiled on 25th February 1923. On 20th September 1928 The Traralgon Record heralded the fact that 'Pine trees in Kay Street gardens get the axe'. In October of that year, the gardens were ploughed and the new trees later planted. Photos indicate that a picket fence surrounded a large proportion of this plantation. Also at this time, the war memorial was landscaped in gravel and patterned grass sections. There are no longer any fences or park seats and the grassed area is continuous, replacing the paths of gravel.

By 1929 all the pines had been replaced by Elm trees (*Ulmus procera*, *Ulmus x hollandia*) planted in a double row from Franklin to Breed streets. In 1979, the memorial statue was moved to face west, flanking wings were added and the names of the soldiers who died in the Second World War and Vietnam inscribed on the pedestal. As of 2011, the Elm trees have been pollarded and require extensive tree surgery to restructure the crown.

In Australia, commemorative trees have been planted in public spaces since the late nineteenth century. Arbor Days were held regularly in most Victorian State Schools during the late 1800s and early 1900s, and numerous trees were planted in parks in Melbourne and throughout Victoria to mark the visits of important and famous people.

This tradition of commemorative planting was continued in 1901 when at the end of the Boer War trees were often planted for each soldier of the district who was killed in South Africa. These plantings, however, rarely consisted of more than two or three trees in each town.

During and after the First World War avenues of honour consisting of trees lining significant streets became a popular form of commemoration. They represented a new egalitarian approach to the commemoration of soldiers where rank was not a consideration: each tree symbolises a person.

Avenues of honour are a uniquely Australian phenomenon. Australians, and in particular Victorians, embraced the idea of planting them more enthusiastically than any other country in the world. Dating from May 1916, the Eurack Avenue of Honour is the earliest known avenue of honour to be planted in Victoria.

By the time of the Second World War avenues of honour had declined in popularity as a means of commemoration. Today it is estimated that over 300 avenues of honour have been planted in Victoria to commemorate service personnel since 1901.

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/>