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## Cressy Avenue of Honour



Cressy Avenue of Honour.jpg



45265 AVENUE OF HONOUR



Cressy 5.jpg



Cressy 6.jpg

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### Location

Yarima Road and New Station Street and Lyons Street CRESSY, Colac Otway Shire

### Municipality

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

### Level of significance

-

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

### Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2003

The Cressy Avenue of Honour is a World War I memorial, planted on the road verges of Yarima Road, New Station and Lyons Streets, Cressy, as a major community endeavour to honour the district's volunteer servicemen. The Avenue of Honour consists of three convergent plantings (c1917) of approximately 130 trees of mixed species (predominantly Eucalyptus spp.), generally in poor or very poor condition and lacking visual unity or amenity typically associated with avenue plantings. The Cressy Avenue of Honour is of historic and social importance to the Shire of Colac Otway. The Cressy Avenue of Honour is historically important through association with the commemoration of the service and sacrifice of the Cressy district's volunteers, and illustrates the scale of impact the war had on local communities. The Cressy Avenue of Honour is socially important through association with the local district and its commitment to preserve and maintain the commemoration of the district's volunteers.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Colac Otway - Colac Otway Heritage Study, Mary Sheehan & Associates, 2003;
Construction dates	1937,
Hermes Number	125800
Property Number	

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## Historical Australian Themes

Memorials & Monuments (9.3)

### Physical Description 1

Est. Age: varying, but some 80+ years (pl. c1917) Ht:15-20m (some up to 25m) Canopy: varying Circumference: varying, including some multi-trunked Distance between Trunks /Spacing: 20m and closer in parts  
The Avenue of Honour at Cressy is situated in three converging plantings along Yarima Road, New Station and Lyons Streets. It consists of a mixed planting of approximately 130 trees on approximately 1.8 km of road, predominantly eucalypts (Eucalyptus cladocalyx, E. botryoides (Southern Mahogany), E. leucoxylon (Yellow Gum), E. longifolia (Woollybutt)), but also including other Australian trees (Grevillea robusta (Silky Oak), Casuarina sp. (Sheoke)) and exotics such as Ash (Fraxinus oxycarpa), Willow (Salix babylonica) and Elm (Ulmus spp.). The Elms form a smaller avenue (8 + 11 trees) within the larger framework. Up to 20-30 further trees are confirmable as replacement plantings, seedlings or inter-plantings. It has been suggested that the Elms may be the only remnant of an original planting and all other trees new, however the sizes of several eucalypts are comparable to other occurrences known to be of a similar age. Estimates of age are affected by the impact of the relatively harsh environmental conditions on tree size and vigour. Of the mature trees, the Elms are the most visually intact, while the majority of trees lack visual unity or impact due to both the mixture of species and large scale spacings. The very poor condition of many individual trees also detracts from visual amenity value for the streetscape. The whereabouts of the commemorative plaques for each tree are not known.

### Physical Conditions

Poor / Missing

### Integrity

Substantially intact

### Veterans Description for Public

The Cressy Avenue of Honour, planted on the road verges of Yarima Road, New Station and Lyons Streets, Cressy, as a major community endeavour to honour the district's volunteer First World War servicemen. The Avenue of Honour consists of three convergent plantings (circa 1917) of approximately 130 trees of mixed species (predominantly Eucalyptus spp.). Unfortunately the avenue is in quite poor condition, however a small rock monument marks the avenue's presence at the corner of Lyons and Tenants Streets.

In 1917, the Victorian State Recruiting Committee wrote to all municipalities and shires recommending that an assurance be given to every intending recruit that his name would be 'memorialised in an avenue of honour'. Cressy was one of the first towns in the Shire to respond to the Victorian State Recruiting Committee. An Avenue of Honour of 137 indigenous trees was planted there in September 1918. The names of the volunteers from Cressy, Weering and the surrounding district who had enlisted were recorded on enamelled plaques nailed to guards surrounding the trees similar, according to a 1917 photograph, to the guards erected at Ballarat. These no longer survive. A tree was also planted on behalf of the King.

It consists of predominantly eucalypts (*Eucalyptus cladocalys*, *E. botryoides* (Southern Mahogany), *E. leucoxyton* (Yello Gum), *E. longifolia* (Woollybutt)), but also including other Australian trees (*Grevillea robusta* (Silky Oak), *Casuarina* sp. (Sheoke)) and exotics such as Ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa*), Willow (*Salix babylonica*) and Elm (*Ulmus* spp.). The Elms form a smaller avenue (8 + 11 trees) within the larger framework. Up to 20-30 further trees are confirmable as replacement plantings, seedlings or inter-plantings. It has been suggested that the Elms may be the only remnant of an original planting and all other trees new, however the sizes of several eucalypts are comparable to other occurrences known to be of a similar age.

The Cressy Avenue of Honour survives as a memorial to the districts volunteer servicemen. It also remains as a symbol of the dedication of the Cressy and district community who purchased the trees, prepared the ground and nurtured the avenue as a means of expressing their reaction to local involvement in the war. It remains too as an illustration of the continuing commitment of the local community who have nurtured and preserved the trees for more than 80 years.

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. The Eurack Avenue of Honour is the earliest known avenue of honour to be planted in Victoria and dates from May 1916.

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/>*