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# Penshurst Avenue of Honour



Penhurst.jpg

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## Location

Hamilton Highway and Scales Street PENSURST, SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

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## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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Hermes Number 126866

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

Avenue of deciduous trees

## Historical Australian Themes

## Veterans Description for Public

The Penshurst Avenue of Honour, Hamilton Highway and Scales Street, was planted as a living memorial dedicated to the men and women of Shire of Mount Rouse who served in First and Second World Wars. When the avenue was planted, each tree had a brass memorial plaque with the name of a soldier on it. These were removed at some time during the twentieth century but the trees remain in good condition. The trees are a mix of traditional plantings located on either side the Hamilton Highway, the main plantings including London Plane (*Platanus x acerfolia*), English Oak (*Quercus robur*), *Ulmus procera* (*English elm*), although it appears that random other species have been used to replace these.

There has been little information available regarding the decision on planting the avenue, the species selection or those who were involved. It is believed that the members of Penshurst RSL were responsible for raising the funds and Organising the planting of the avenue of honour in Scales Street. The trees were originally planted with a small brass plaque indicating the name of someone who had served. These were removed in the twentieth century.

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/>*