
Corryong Avenue of Honour



Corryong 1.jpg



Corryong 2.jpg

Location

Towong Road, Hansen Street CORRYONG, TOWONG SHIRE

Municipality

TOWONG SHIRE

Level of significance

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Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 162002

Property Number

Veterans Description for Public

The Corryong Avenue of Honour was one of several established in the eastern part of the shire during the later part of the First World War. In May 1918, the notion of planting an avenue in honour to commemorate the young

men who served in the First World War was discussed at a public meeting; it was decided to start with a hundred trees and plant others year by year. A committee was established for the project, headed by W B Hamilton with A R Lacey as secretary.

On 10th June 1918, a public meeting decided that 60 conifers (*Cedrus Deodora*) be planted starting at the hall on the 3-chain road, with four redwoods planted in the gully near Playle's and 40 deciduous trees *Tillas* (*Lindens*) be planted at the west end of the town. It was also decided to plant Currajong trees to fill the gaps in the street and to continue the double rows of trees as far as the doctors'.

Subsequently contributions were procured from Corryong as well as surrounding districts including Colac Colac, Nariel and Khancoban, raising £25 for the trees, timber and fencing. The work of the planting and erecting of the timber guards was undertaken by 'a willing band of workers' on 29th August 1918, with a ceremony held in front of the Corryong Primary School. The first part of the proceedings was the unfurling of a new school flag. From there, the crowd moved to a point nearby on the Towong Road across which a red, white and blue ribbon had been stretched and a tree was yet to be planted. Mrs A. L. Hamilton senior, who was the eldest citizen in the area, planted the last tree and cut the ribbon, declaring the Avenue of Honour open for traffic. Mrs Hamilton was presented with the scissors used for the occasion and people were forced to retire to the Athenaeum Hall (later replaced with the existing Corryong Memorial Hall) because of heavy rain. Speeches were subsequently given by Mr Hamilton, Mr Beadmore (MLA for Benambra), Cr Nankervis, Cr P McMeekin, Lt Aspinall (a returned Anzac), Sgt Hiller (another Anzac), Cr Cronin, Mr G Jephcott, and Mr Acocks.

It has not been determined how many trees were initially planted, however additional planting has been undertaken as many of the specimens further to the east are smaller. The gaps suggest that some trees may have been removed over the years.

During the 1950s, the remaining Kurrajongs (Genus *Brachychiton*) were removed from the commercial zone Hansen Street (some had died over the years) in order to allow for the strengthening of the road to accommodate the large vehicles used to transport the pipes for the Snowy Mountains Scheme. In 1964, a contemporary newspaper article suggested that the avenue was not being well maintained and appropriately acknowledged by the local community.

During the mid-1990s, Manchurian Pears were introduced into the commercial zone of Hansen Street. Recently, the large specimen in front of the Commonwealth Bank on the corner of Donaldson Street was cut down as its roots were affecting various pipes however a stump has been retained.

The most substantial remnants of the avenue consists of some forty Indian Cedars (*Cedrus deodara*), which are native to the western Himalayas. It has however been suggested that some of the trees are Cedars of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*). Up to four of the trees near the hotel may be redwoods as was originally proposed.

The avenue extends along Towong Road about 0.75 kilometres from Donaldson Street (to no. 74, Pinnibar Motel on the north side and no. 71 on the south side). It seems as though the avenue was planted in stages and the most mature trees are to be found at the western end; essentially in front of the Corryong Primary School, between Donaldson Street and north of Anzac Avenue.

The trees for the most part are located on a grassy island either side of the main carriageway with flanking service lanes. The topography is gently undulating with the highest point being the cutting opposite the Corryong Primary School, which has a canted stone retaining wall.

North of the older section, the planting is less mature and less continuous with some substantial gaps in the planting and some deciduous species present.

Further west of the commercial centre, the three Linden trees (genus *Tilia*, possibly the American species), on the roadway near the Masonic Temple in Hansen Street between McKay and Kiell Streets, are probably part of the original extent of the avenue. There are also three well-established trees to the roadway opposite which may be a related planting.

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/>