
St Arnaud Avenue of Honour



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Location

King George's Park ST ARNAUD, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Municipality

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

-

Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 162057

Property Number

Veterans Description for Public

The St. Arnaud Avenue of Honour is located inside King George's Park on McMahon Street. The Avenue comprises of mature trees which are a mixture of different species of popular, holly oak, pine and gums. On 31st

July 1918, an official ceremony was held during which trees were planted around the boundaries of the sports ground and tennis courts and children's playground. These trees were dedicated in honour of the fallen soldiers from the First World War. A red gum post with brass tablet bearing the soldier's name was placed in front of each tree. The Mayor dedicated one tree to Sgt. William Young who died in France from burns on 10th November 1916. Young was the first Australian to fire a shot under war conditions in 1914, firing on a German Steamer at Queenscliff, Victoria.

Several other trees appear to have been introduced into the park in later years, a number of the dedicated trees appear to have been removed, and the plaques have since all disappeared. A map of the sports ground and the memorial trees, with a legend indicating the type of tree and to whom it was dedicated, is located at the St. Arnaud and District Historical Society. It shows a proposed layout of some 83 trees, 60 of which were dedicated. It is said that 47 trees were planted during the July 1918 ceremony.

King George's Park was created in 1913 on the former 'public battery' crushing plant that had been established in the 1850s. The park has significance as an early 20th century public recreation reserve and for the large number of exotic and native it contains, including the 1918 memorial trees.

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/>