

**Locality:** BRIAGOLONG  
**Place address:** 23 AVON STREET  
**Citation date** 2016  
**Place type (when built):** ANZAC Park, Soldiers' Memorial  
**Recommended heritage protection:** Local government level  
Local Planning Scheme: Yes  
Vic Heritage Register: No  
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): Yes

**Place name:** ANZAC Park and Soldiers' Memorial



**Architectural Style:** Inter War Classical (WW1 monument), Post War Classical (WW2 monuments)  
**Designer / Architect:** Not known

## Statement of Significance

This statement of significance is based on the history, description and comparative analysis in this citation. The Criteria A-H is the Heritage Council Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance (HERCON). Level of Significance, Local, State, National, is in accordance with the level of Government legislation.

### *What is significant?*

ANZAC Park and Soldiers' Memorial at 23 Avon Street, Briagolong, including the whole of the land, the memorial structures on the site and the landscape setting are significant.

### *How is it significant?*

ANZAC Park and Soldiers' Memorial are historically, socially, aesthetically and scientifically significant at a local level to Wellington Shire. They are also of local significance for the potential to yield archaeological data.

### *Why is it significant?*

ANZAC Park and Soldiers' Memorial are **historically significant at a local level**. The memorial is located on its original site, on land which was donated in 1920 for use as a sacred place by local Mrs W. J. O'Nial whose son was killed in WW1. It is significant for the erection of memorials in recognition of the soldiers from the district who served in WW1, WW2, and several other conflicts, identified on each of the memorials. (Criteria A & D)

ANZAC Park and Soldiers' Memorial are **socially significant at a local level** for the volunteers who constructed the park, planted the memorial trees in 1920, raised funds for fencing, landscaping and particularly the monuments, and for the Anzac Day and other remembrance services held there over the past 95 years until present day. (Criteria A & G) It is also significant for its special association with the life and works of Mrs John Mills, as represented by a marble tablet affixed on the WW1 monument in 1924, as it was rare to recognise and honour the contribution of the womanhood of Australia on these monuments. (Criterion H)

ANZAC Park and Soldiers' Memorial are **aesthetically significant at a local level** for the WW1 and WW2 obelisk monuments, which are symmetrically placed, facing Avon Street, in a quiet park setting, and constructed of high quality materials such as granite and bluestone. The construction of three obelisk monuments of similar but not exactly the same design is particularly significant as this is unique in Wellington Shire, and rare in Victoria, as it visually creates a harmonious, strong and dignified memorial over a period of 30 years. (Criterion E)

The Soldiers' Memorial is **scientifically significant at a local level** for the work of the artisans with stonemasonry skills, which are now rarely used for new monuments. It also has **potential to yield archaeological evidence** in the land around the monuments, and in the cavity of the die stone of the pedestal, as a document was placed in a leaden casket and hermetically sealed there in 1921. (Criteria B, C & F)

## Statutory Recommendations



This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wellington Shire Planning Scheme with the boundaries as shown on the map.

<b>External Paint Controls</b>	Yes, including cleaning
<b>Internal Alteration Controls</b>	No
<b>Tree Controls</b>	Yes
<b>Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3</b>	No
<b>Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted</b>	No
<b>Incorporated Plan</b>	No
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Place</b>	Not assessed

## Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



### KEY

-  Recommended for Heritage Overlay
-  Title boundary

### **Anzac Park and Soldiers' Memorial 23 Avon St, Briagolong**

Project: Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study  
Client: Wellington Shire Council  
Author: Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd  
Date: 12/2/16

## History

### Thematic context

This place is associated with the following themes from the *Wellington Shire Thematic History* (2005):

8. Governing and administering:

- 8.7 War and Defence

9. Developing cultural institutions and way of life:

- 9.2. Memorials

The following is based on information taken from the *Wellington Shire Thematic Environmental History* (Context 2005:45-6):

Memorials are erected throughout the Shire in honour of pioneers and district explorers, significant events and people, and those who served in world wars and other conflicts.

The soldiers' memorials that are spread throughout the Shire show the impact that the two world wars, and subsequent conflicts, had on so many communities and families within the Shire. It must be remembered that while commonly referred to today as 'war memorials', these memorials were originally erected in honour of, and to commemorate, the soldiers and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The memorials were often funded by the community and erected with great community pride, in honour of the locals who died or served and returned.

The group of Rosedale memorials comprises two soldiers' memorials and an Angus McMillan memorial. Among the names listed on the soldiers memorials are those of James Wilfred Harrap and Ernest Merton Harrap, brothers from Willung who were killed on the same day at the battle for Polygon Wood near Ypres in 1917. Listed on the Briagolong soldiers' memorial are the names of six Whitelaw brothers, three of whom were killed on active service and one who died later from wounds received. A memorial to their mother, Annie Whitelaw, was erected at her grave in honour of her sacrifice, and to all mothers of sons who served at the front. Soldiers' memorials also remain at Maffra, Stratford and Yarram, to name a few. While St James Anglican Church in Heyfield stands as a Soldiers' Memorial Church. There are also remnants of avenues of honour. The pine trees at Stratford lining the route of the former highway were planted as a memorial to soldiers who served in the First World War. Many of the memorials also have plantings, such as a lone pine, planted in connection with the memorial.

Among the many other memorials in the Shire are those to district pioneers. The cairns erected to Angus McMillan and Paul Strzelecki in 1927 follow their routes through the Shire and were part of an orchestrated campaign of the Victorian Historical Memorials Committee to infuse a sense of history into a landscape that had no ancient monuments.

The struggle for road access in isolated areas is remembered by a cairn dedicated to the Country Roads Board, erected in 1935 at the intersection of the Binginwarri and Hiawatha roads. Transforming a landscape from dryland grazing to irrigated pasture is symbolised by a dethridge wheel mounted on a cairn on the Nambrok Denison estate. A memorial is planned at site of the West Sale Holding Centre to commemorate the migrants who came to settle in postwar Australia. Bronze plaques, designed by Sale artist Annemieke Mein and on display in Sale, document the contributions of several famous Gippslanders, including singer Ada Crossley and writer Mary Grant Bruce.

## Place history

The memorial at ANZAC Park is located on land that was first purchased from the Crown by W. J. O'Neil in February 1888 (Township Plan). O'Neil operated the cheese factory and was married to one of Annie Whitelaw's sisters. O'Neil and his wife lost their son Angus Cyril O'Neil who served in World War I. "A subscription list dated June 14, 1919, enabled ANZAC Park to be established on land donated by Mrs Janet O'Neil, nee Mc Sween" (Mills 1971:19).

A photo dating to June 1920 (Figure H1) showed a cleared lot bound by a new timber picket fence and vehicular gates. Inside the fence was a horse and cart and piles of dirt from holes being dug by men working in preparation for the erection of the World War I monument and planting trees (AWM). At a series of working bees, starting on 30 June 1920, trees were planted in memory of local ex-servicemen. Further working bees in July and September concluded planting (Mills 1971:19).

The large central obelisk was erected in 1920 'to commemorate the action of the men who took part in the Great European War 1914-1919' (inscription on memorial). It was unveiled by Mrs John Mills, 'a friend of the soldiers' on January 1921 (Bradley 1994; inscription on memorial). The actual dedication date was Saturday 29 January, 1921. In the cavity of the die stone of the pedestal a document had been placed in a leaden casket and hermetically sealed. The words contained in the document are:

"This monument was erected by the people of Briagolong in memory of the brave lads of this district who took part in the Great European War, 1914-19. The following committee carried out this work: Cr. Noble, G. O. Bennett, T.X. Feely, R. W. Noble, G. Atkinson, W. E. Kelly, A. J. Bryant, Mesdames R. Linaker, R. M'Innes, B. Short, with Cr. Kelly president; F. Hickey, treasurer; A. Bennett, hon. secretary; T. Rayment, original hon. secretary." Briagolong, Dec. A.D. 1920, in the reign of George V., King of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Dominions beyond the seas" (Monument Australia).

Two photos of the unveiling (Figures H2 & H3) showed the obelisk with the Australian flag wrapped around the base, Mrs Mills unveiling the monument and a speaker in front of a large gathering (SLV; Mills 1971). The memorial bears the names of the six Whitelaw brothers, sons of Annie Whitelaw, whose memorial is located within the Briagolong cemetery. Local Annie Whitelaw is renowned for the tragic loss of four of her six sons who served in World War I: Robert Angus Whitelaw, Ivan Cecil Whitelaw, Angus McSween Whitelaw and Kenneth Whitelaw. The first three died in active service while Kenneth died later from wounds received in action. Annie also lost two nephews (her sisters' sons), Thomas Leslie Lotton and Angus Curil O'Neil, whose names are also listed on the ANZAC Park Memorial along with the six Whitelaw brothers (MDHS).

Mrs John Mills of 'Powerscourt' homestead (c1860s; Stratford Road, Maffra) was known for the 'practical interest she had evinced in the soldiers, both at home and abroad' (*Gippsland Times*, 30 Oct 1922:1). She is known to have also laid the foundation stone of the All Saints Anglican Church in Briagolong in 1903 and St Matthews Anglican Memorial Church in 1923. Mr John Mills is known to have made his fortune in mining (Context 2005). The Rev. A. E. Adeney said, in 1924 at the unveiling of a marble tablet in her honour, that it was fitting that the tablet should be affixed to the monument erected in honor of the men for whom, and others, Mrs Mills had done so much. Her work was typical of that carried on by the womanhood of Australia during the war, and in honoring Mrs Mills they were also honoring the womanhood of Australia (*Gippsland Times*, 28 Apr 1924:2).

The WW1 obelisk monument is almost identical in design to the (WW1) obelisk monument at the Stratford Memorial. A photo of the memorial (probably soon after its erection; prior to the erection of the WWII obelisks) after an ANZAC day ceremony showed the memorial with the two-step bluestone plinth but not the concrete footing and apron below that, in the area showing young trees in the background, and the monument (Figure H4) (AWM). The two smaller obelisks were erected, alongside the 1920 monument in commemoration of soldiers who served in World War II (Bradley 1994). These were unveiled by Mrs W Walker and dedicated by Brigadier J Field on 9 February 1948 (Mills 1971). Although these were designed and erected over 30 years after the taller monument,

they harmonise with the larger one, because the design is discretely different and the materials and colours are the same.

A photo dating to the day of the 1965 ANZAC day (Fig H5) service showed the Junior Red Cross at the memorial. In the background, an extensive white picket fence ran along the southern boundary of the property (possibly the original), either side of a timber arched entrance (Briagolong History). A photo dating to c2003 (Fig H6) showed that the memorial was immediately surrounded by a contained area of loose pebbles (since concreted) and had considerable biological growth on the main obelisk (since cleaned) (Victorian Places). The current 'entrance' was marked by a timber sign bearing the name 'ANZAC PARK' (recently removed) and a single flagpole. The picket fence apparent in the 1965 photo was since removed and in 2003 there was a 'short representative' picket fence delineating an 'entry'.

A Lone Pine was planted in 2008 by the local RSL (remains in 2015) which was part of an overall change to the site, with new landscaping, and construction of two low walls of yellow concrete block with grey concrete block plinths behind the cenotaph area bearing modern bronze and painted plaques, in commemoration of the conflicts in Malaya and Borneo, Korea and Iraq. These walls were designed by W O (Ret) Neville Gibbons OAM ( Barraclough 2016), but it is not known if these changes were based on historic evidence of the original memorial park, or not. Plantings from the 1950s remain within the landscaping, including Silky Oaks, Golden Elms and Chinese Windmill Palms. A recent white concrete path and exposed aggregate concrete circular apron surrounds the memorial and leads to the front boundary. In 2015, the entrance to the memorial is marked by a recent small representative picket fence and a rose and rosemary garden, and two flag poles. The historic monuments are located within a modernised landscaped and concrete setting.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H17718

**Figure H1. Picket fence, gates( the gates are facing Blundy St ), preparing the grounds for the memorial and trees in June 1920. (AWM)**



**Figure H2. Unveiling of the World War 1 Memorial in 1921 (SLV).**



**Figure H3. Unveiling of the central obelisk, the World War 1 Memorial, in 1921 by Mrs J Mills (Mills 1971:102).**





**Figure H6. Memorial in 2003 (Victorian Places).**

### Sources

Australian War Memorial (AWM), items H17717 & H17718, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/>>, accessed 17 Dec 2015.

Briagolong History Facebook page, <<https://www.facebook.com/BriagolongHistory/photos/>>, accessed 19 Dec 2015.

Context Pty Ltd (2005), *Wellington Shire Heritage Study Thematic Environmental History*, prepared for Wellington Shire Council.

*Gippsland Times*

Mills, Peter (1971), *Back to Briagolong Centenary Celebrations*, Easter 1971 Souvenir Booklet, Sale (Vic.) Monument Australia, 'Briagolong War Memorial', <<http://monumentaustalia.org.au/display/30490-briagolong-war-memorial>>, accessed February 2016.

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, <<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/>>, accessed 17 Dec 2015.

Township of Briagolong Plan

Bradley, Harold (1994) *War Memorials in Victoria: a pictorial record*, Melbourne.

Victorian Places, 'Briagolong War Memorial, 2003', <<http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/node/67196>>, accessed 17 Dec 2015.

### Description

This section describes the place in 2016. Refer to the Place History for important details describing historical changes to the physical fabric.

The memorial is set in a Memorial Park, ANZAC Park, with landscaping elements, vegetation and trees. The monuments have been symmetrically positioned to face Avon Street and have a backdrop of green landscaping, some of which may be the soldiers memorial trees planted by soldiers, that can be seen in Fig H3, however, all traces of those historic trees may have been removed over time, and

when extensive new landscaping was done in 2008. Some mature trees, such as the Silky Oaks, Golden Elms and Chinese Windmill Palms may date to c1950s. Directly around the monument is a new concrete apron, possibly dating from the works in 2008, and in front of the monuments is a concrete path that leads to the gateway and small section of picket fence in Avon Street, which are used for processional entry to the formal memorial services. However, the recent (2008) landscape design to the rest of ANZAC Park provides a passive and contemplative setting with winding paths around clumps of foliage and trees, which provide glimpses of the monuments.

**Figure D1 . The base of the 1920 memorial on the right and the 1940s memorial on the left.**

Note the use of high quality stone materials which were all hand sculpted by skilled stonemasons. The choice of stone (granite) is symbolic: it was known to last beyond the lifetimes of those who constructed it, providing an enduring memory for future generations, as well as natural weathering which, in turn, reminds the viewer that the memorial is for an event long ago. These memorials are expected to develop a sombre patina of age to emphasize their age and history.

The light grey stone is granite, some of which is polished, the rest is hand tooled. The 1940s monument has a 'quarry faced' base and a 'crazy paving' design above that, which was popular for garden paths in the Inter War period, but unusual on a Soldiers Memorial monument.

The base of the 1920s monument was constructed of hand tooled and faceted granite with incised lettering on each corner facet.

Both the 1920s and 1940s monuments sit on a stepped plinth of rectangular blocks of smooth, dark grey bluestone. Below the two levels of bluestone are the concrete footings, which have been exposed, but they are a low quality material, and they were not meant to be seen (they are below ground in Figure H4, but were exposed, possibly when the concrete edging and red gravel was introduced, in Figure H6).

**Figure D2. Detail of lettering and materials on the base of the 1920 memorial.**

Note the hand tooled faceted granite base, with a white marble tablet fixed onto one facet (which has a damaged surface; may have been by acid washing) and the polished granite pedestal above that. The lettering in the polished granite appears to be incised into the stone and painted black, whereas the lettering on the marble tablet appears to be lead lettering painted black. There are a small number of metal (bronze?) decorative motifs such as the rising sun.

**Figure D3. Lettering detail on the base of the tall 1920 monument.**

This base is constructed of tooled and faceted granite with incised lettering on each corner facet. The lettering is hand cut into the stone and painted black. The stone has distinctive and natural impurities in it.

**Figure D4. Detail of a plaque on the recent low walls.**

The low walls to the rear of the obelisks were constructed after 2003, of machine-made concrete blocks and modern paint and bronze plaques. The contrasting design, materials and colours of the recent memorial walls provide a back drop and 'enclosure' for the earlier memorials.



Figure D1. The base of the 1920 memorial on the right and the 1940s memorial on the left.



Figure D2. Detail of lettering and materials on the base of the 1920 memorial.



**Figure D3. Lettering detail on the base of the tall 1920 monument.**



**Figure D4. Detail of a plaque on the recent low walls to the rear of the earlier monuments.**

### *Sources*

All photos taken in 2015 by Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd as part of Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study unless otherwise stated.

Monument Australia, 'Briarlong War Memorial', <<http://monumentaustalia.org.au/display/30490-briarlong-war-memorial>>, accessed February 2016.

## **Comparative analysis**

In Victoria, 1,366 monuments that were erected to commemorate various conflicts were recorded in the study by Rowe (2008), however, less than 9% of these have protection with a Heritage Overlay.

### *Obelisks*

In Victoria, 250 monuments are in the form of an Obelisk, as recorded in the study by Rowe (2008 Vol 1:61): "The most popular war monument erected after the Boer War and First and Second World Wars is the obelisk. Defined as a 'monolith, square on plan, tapering slightly towards the top, which terminates in a pyramid', obelisks were originally 'associated with the sun, were both phallic and gnomons, and were symbols of continuity, power, regenerations, and stability.' A politician after the First World War described the memorial obelisk as having both secular and spiritual significance in is

shape: 'its upright form spoke of the upright character of these men, their actions and noble deeds should taken them like its column heavenward and upward.'

### *Gardens*

In Victoria, 46 Gardens were recorded in the study by Rowe (2008 Vol 1:61): "Unlike parks, memorial gardens are often more aesthetically refined, sometimes being fenced in and featuring flower beds and other flora and landscapes of botanic interest and possibly entrance gates. A number of these gardens are public or civic spaces, such as the Macarthur and District Memorial Rose garden at Macarthur, which also features a memorial stone to Soldier Settlers and a memorial obelisk."

In Wellington Shire there are numerous memorials, but only 9 are monuments to commemorate conflicts, of which 2 are obelisks, 2 are flagstaffs on low cairns, 1 drinking fountain, 2 statues on pedestals, 1 pillar-cenotaph, and 1 obelisk-cenotaph. The two obelisks are very similar in design with some variation in the wording and decorative features, which is unusual, however, the Briagolong memorial is particularly distinguished from the Stratford memorial by being flanked by 2 smaller WW2 obelisks, similar in design and colour to the WW1 monument.

The Briagolong Soldiers Memorial is set in a memorial garden, built on land donated for that purpose. It is the only known Soldiers/War memorial in Wellington Shire and possibly Victoria, that has 3 obelisks from two different conflicts which have been designed to be harmonious in style and materials.

According to Rowe (2008 Vol 1:17), one of the most common forms of commemorating the contribution and sacrifice of those who served in the Second World War was to add to an existing First World War memorial, usually in the form of an additional plaque or inscription, or possibly additional features, such as a memorial wall or war trophies. This was not done in Briagolong, at that time, but the recent low walls fits this description

### *Sources*

Rowe, D. (2008), Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd, 'Survey of Victoria's Veteran-Related Heritage', Vols 1-3.

Curl, J.S. (1991), *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1991, p.242. cited in Rowe 2008.

## **Management Guidelines**

Whilst landowners are not obliged to undertake restoration works, these guidelines provide recommendations to facilitate the retention and enhancement of the culturally significant place, its fabric and its setting, when restoration works or alterations to the building are proposed. They also identify issues particular to the place and provide further detailed advice where relevant. The guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive and a pragmatic approach will be taken when considering development proposals. Alternative approaches to those specified in the guidelines will be considered where it can be demonstrated that a desirable development outcome can be achieved that does not impact on a place's heritage integrity.

### **1. Location and Setting**

- 1.1. Retain a formal entry gate and path directly in front of the main WW1 monument. The existing concrete path could be retained, but long term, a compacted granitic sand path would be more appropriate or a fine sandy exposed aggregate concrete surface would be a more durable option to actual granitic sand.
- 1.2. Reconstruct the picket fence to the same design, height, etc on both street boundaries to enclose the sacred space, as shown in Figure H1 above.

- 1.3. Check if any of the existing trees are memorial trees planted in 1920 and if so, seek professional arborist advice to maintain them.
- 1.4. Develop a master plan to replant any missing memorial trees.
- 1.5. Retain a passive, contemplate style of park e.g. no active recreational facilities, advertising signs, or facilities such as a toilet block, on the site, etc.
- 1.6. Retain clear views to the monuments from Avon Street.
- 1.7. Do not put directional signage e.g. "ANZAC Park" in the view lines directly in front of the monuments, as seen from Avon Street.
- 1.8. New memorials should be placed to the side of the three stone memorials, outside the existing circular concrete apron, not behind or in front of them.

## 2. Care and Maintenance

- 2.1. Refer to the Resources list below. These were written by Jenny Dickens, Senior Conservator, Heritage Victoria. They are in plain English, well illustrated and have very important instructions. Further assistance is available from the Shire's heritage advisor.
- 2.2. The biggest risk to memorials is permanent damage by the use of cleaning materials, agents and methods. E.g. Acid washing dissolves the marble which cannot be undone, sand and water blasting remove the stonemasons skilled decorative works, the polished surfaces and lettering and details.
- 2.3. Memorials are meant to develop a patina of age to imbue them with as sense of timelessness, and gravity of the memory. They are not meant to look bright and super clean, apart from when they were built.
- 2.4. This memorial has been cleaned and new concrete aprons and paths built in the past few years, and therefore, no specific works are urgent.

## Resources

The following fact sheets contain practical and easy-to-understand information about the care and preservation of war heritage and memorabilia commonly found in local communities across Victoria. They can be downloaded at <<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/veterans/victorian-veterans-virtual-museum/preserving-veterans-heritage/preserving-war-heritage-and-memorabilia>>:

- Avenues-of-honour-and-other-commemorative-plantings
- Finding-the-right-conservator-tradespeople-and-materials
- General-Principles
- Metal-objects: including swords and edged weapons
- Useful-resources-and-contacts
- War-Memorials.