

Locality: MAFFRA
Place address: JOHNSON STREET (ROAD RESERVE, IN FRONT OF 150-158 JOHNSTON ST)
Citation date 2016
Place type (when built): Soldiers' Memorial, Tree
Recommended heritage protection: Local government level
Local Planning Scheme: Yes
Vic Heritage Register: No
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No

Place name: Maffra Soldiers' Memorial



Architectural Style: Inter war Classical Obelisk-Cenotaph
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 level of Government legislation.

What is significant?

The Maffra Soldiers' Memorial on Johnson Street, Maffra, including the land to the extent shown on the map, additional memorial structures on the site and the associated Liquid Amber (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and the landscape setting are significant.

How is it significant?

The Maffra Soldiers' Memorial is historically, socially, aesthetically and scientifically significant at a local level to Wellington Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Maffra Soldiers' Memorial is **historically significant at a local level**. Originally the memorial was erected in 1918, in commemoration of those who served in World War I, at the start of the Memorial Avenue of Honour (some trees remain in 2016), which was located outside of the township of Maffra on the road from Maffra to Sale. It has been relocated twice from its original site, first to the median strip in Johnson Street in 1968, and again in c1990 to the north-east corner of the Foster and Johnson Street intersection, facing the entrance of the World War I Memorial Hall (now the library) at 158 Johnson Street. In 1993, a Liquid Amber (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) was planted in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War I, as recorded on a plaque on the site. The Soldiers' Memorial is also significant for the erection of memorials in recognition of the soldiers from the district who served in WW2 and later conflicts. (Criteria A & D)

The Maffra Soldiers' Memorial is **socially significant at a local level** for the volunteers who raised funds for the monument and the associated Avenue of Honour, and the Maffra Soldiers' Welfare League who planted the 139 trees. It is significant for the Anzac Day and other remembrance services held by it over the past 95 years, until present day. (Criterion G)

The Maffra Soldiers' Memorial is **aesthetically significant at a local level** for the WW1 obelisk-cenotaph monument, constructed of limestone blocks with white marble plaques. (Criterion E)

The Maffra Soldiers' Memorial is **scientifically significant at a local level** for the craftsmanship of the artisans with stonemasonry skills, which are now rarely used for new monuments. (Criterion B & F)

Statutory Recommendations

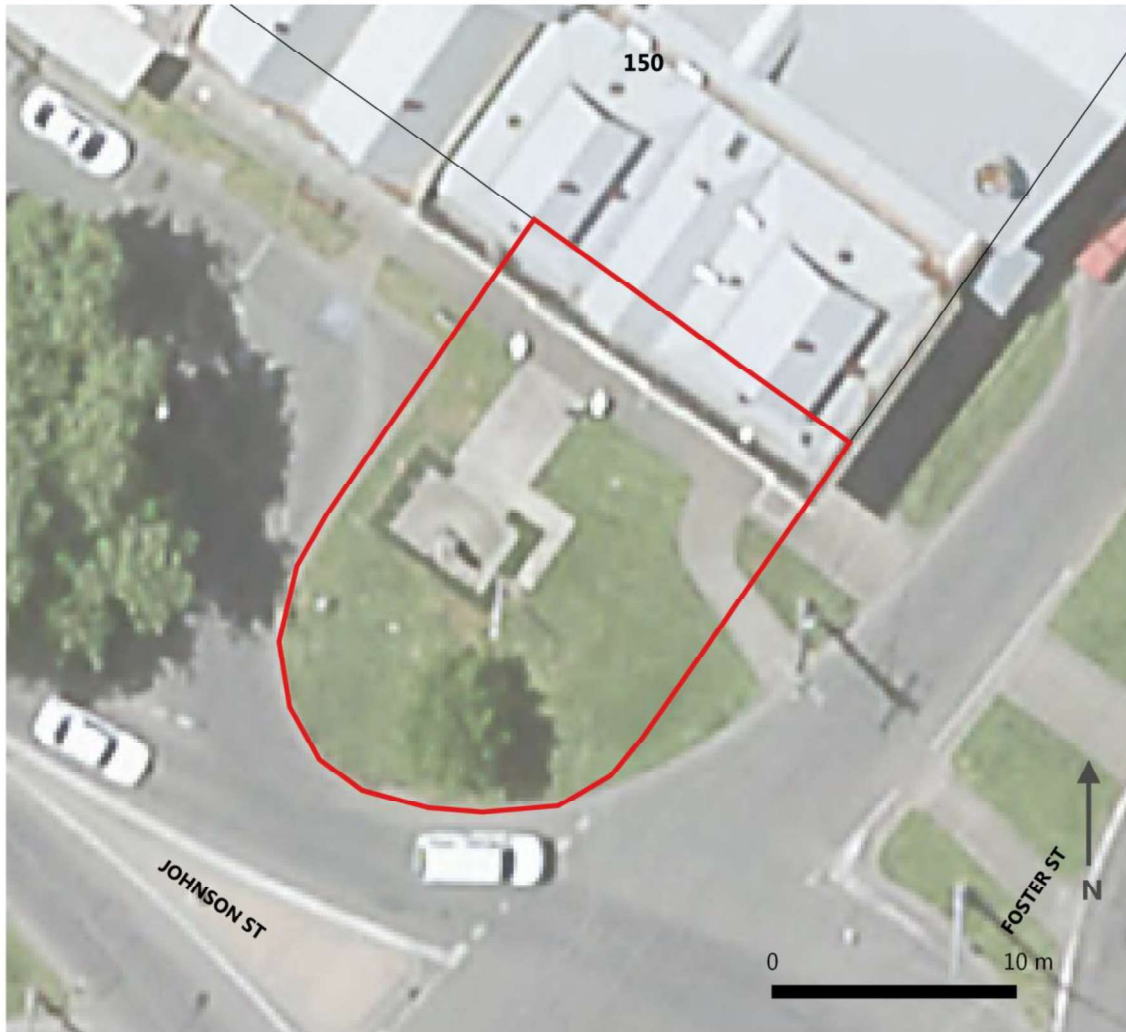
This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wellington Shire Planning Scheme with the boundaries as shown on the map.

External Paint Controls	Yes, including cleaning
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes
Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	No

Aboriginal Heritage Place

Not Assessed

Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



KEY

- Recommended for Heritage Overlay
- Title boundary

Maffra Soldiers' Memorial
Johnson St (road reserve), Maffra

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 obelisk-cenotaph (a tapered vertical structure – a sepulchral monument; accessible 3D enclosed/partly enclosed structure) is located on the north-east corner of the Foster and Johnson street

intersection, facing the entrance of the World War I Memorial Hall (now the library) at 158 Johnson Street (Rowe 2008, Vol 2:615).

The memorial has been moved twice. It was originally erected in 1918 at the start of the Memorial Avenue of Honour (some trees remain in 2016), which was located outside of the township of Maffra on the road from Maffra to Sale (Figure H1). The 139 trees comprising the Maffra Avenue of Honour were planted by the Maffra Soldiers' Welfare League (Rowe 2008:2:614; Monument Australia). The main marble plaque on the memorial reads 'Avenue of Honour opened by the Hon. D. Mackinnon, 3rd October 1918. Dedicated to the soldiers of Maffra and District. Who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-18. And whose names are recorded on the Honour Roll of the Memorial Hall'. Below that is a plaque with the poem 'All ye, who walk the avenue of life, remember them who bowed beneath their strife. Each leaf, a laurel crowns with deathless fame. And every tree reveals a hero's name.'

The memorial also bears a plaque with the names of the soldiers who fell in World War II, an ANZAC emblem, a sword to the south side, and a plaque in commemoration of those who served in Korea, Malaya, Borneo, Vietnam, Kuwait and 'all peacekeeping forces 1950-2000'.

A photo dating between the late 1930s and early 1940s (MDHS) showed the memorial in its original location, on the west side of Sale Road (Figure H1). At this date, the monument had a different base. The ANZAC emblem was located near the top of the memorial, followed by the main plaque, and the small plaque bearing the poem. Below this, was a stepped base (4 steps). The memorial was surrounded by a grassed area (Avenue not visible).

The memorial was relocated to the median strip, just opposite its current location, in 1968 (Norris, pers. comm., Feb 2016; MDHS). At the base of the monument is a plaque that states the 'the cenotaph was moved to this site from Sale Road, Maffra and now honours the fallen of the Wars 1914-1918, 1939-1945. It was re-dedicated by Brigadier Sir William Hall, CBE., DSO., ED. State President Returned Service League on 13th April 1968. "Lest We Forget".'

The monument, was relocated for a second time c1990, due to the higher priority for a change in the road design of Johnson Street. The whole memorial site was moved a few metres closer to the Memorial Hall (now the library); the service road used to run through to Fosters Street but was realigned to meet Johnson Street further west, and the service road blocked (Norris, pers. comm., Feb 2106).

Next to the memorial is a small rough hewn rock (visible in the cover photo) with a plaque that states 'This tree was planted to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War I, by Cr. W. L. Cumming, Shire President, Shire of Maffra, November 11, 1993'. The associated tree is the Liquid Amber (*Liquidambar r styraciflua*) to the south, which dates to the memorial (Hawker 2016).

In 2015, the cenotaph is bordered by a small Rosemary hedge with a low granite block border. A flagpole stands to the left (east) of the hedge.



Figure H1. The memorial in its original location at the start of the avenue of honour on Sale Road, near the Beet Sugar Factory. Photo dates to late 1930s early 1940s (MDHS, ID. P02183VMFF).

Sources

Context Pty Ltd (2005), 'Wellington Shire Heritage Study Thematic Environmental History'.

Hawker, John, Heritage Officer (Horticulture) at Heritage Victoria, personal communication, 13 January 2016.

Maffra & District Historical Society (MDHS) collection: historical information and photos generously provided by Linda Barraclough, Pauline Hitchins & Carol Kitchenn, provided Nov 2015.

Maffra District Historical Society (MDHS) website, 'Maffra Township History', <<http://www.maffra.net.au/heritage/histown.htm>>, accessed 2 Feb 2016.

Monument Australia, 'Maffra Avenue of Honour Plaque', <<http://monumentaustalia.org.au/display/96728-maffra-avenue-of-honour-plaque>>, accessed 7 Jan 2016.

Martin Norris, Wellington Shire Council Coordinator, Open Space Planning and Support, Natural Environment and Parks, personal communication 19 Feb 2016.

Rowe, D. (2008), Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd, 'Survey of Victoria's Veteran-Related Heritage', Vols 1-3. Commissioned by People & Communities Unit Department of Planning & Community Development Funded by the Department of Planning & Community Development (People & Communities Unit & Heritage Victoria).

Description

The memorial was originally located at the site of the 139 tree Avenue of Honour in 1918 but it was relocated near this site in c1967 and moved again to the current site c1990, and altered in various ways. The reason it was removed the first time is not known, but it may have been road works which was the reason in c1990.

The memorial is bordered by a small Rosemary hedge with a low granite block border. A flagpole stands to the left (east) of the hedge. Next to the memorial is a small rough hewn rock (visible in the cover photo) with a plaque that states 'This tree was planted to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War I, by Cr. W. L. Cumming, Shire President, Shire of Maffra, November 11, 1993'. The associated tree is the Liquid Amber (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) to the rear, which dates to the memorial (Hawker 2016).

- **The original monument was:**

- Sited at the start of the WW1 Memorial Avenue of Honour (of 139 trees), and the tablet specifically refers to that great memorial of trees, but it is now out of context of the Avenue of Honour, although appropriately located outside the WW1 Memorial Hall in Johnson Street town centre.
- Built of coursed sawn stone ashlar blocks, possibly Mt Gambier Limestone tapered towards the top, which has three courses of limestone which step in from the outside edge, surmounted by a thin rectangular cap of the same stone (Figure D1).
- Elevated on 4 steps, possibly bluestone (Figure H1). It was very common to elevate monuments in a stepped manner (although not usually as many as four steps) as it visually grounded them, giving an impression of strength and stability, whilst at the same time honouring the soldiers by elevating the monument giving it more grandeur. The monument now sits on a tall tapered concrete base.
- There was no fence or other means of enclosing the monument in a sacred space, whereas now it sits on a concrete apron, within a sacred space created with a very low polished granite block wall with a rosemary hedge around the outside edge of the wall. A discrete thin metal edging panel defines the outside edge of the rosemary hedging.
- The two white marble tablets with hand cut incised lead lettering did not have a black frame around them, whereas, now they do, cramping the original lettering into the frame.

- **The current monument and existing location:**

- There are two metal decorative elements, a metal sword and ANZAC badge which appear to be bronze (Figure D3), attached to the limestone ashlar blocks.
- Several, more recent modern styled commemorative plaques of painted and lacquered brass, are fixed onto the newer concrete base of the monument (Figures D3 and D4).
- Figure D1 shows the coursed ashlar blocks of (Mt Gambier limestone?) stepped at the top, with thin lime mortar joints, metal (bronze?) ANZAC badge, white marble tablet with hand cut incised lead lettering and a 'recent' black frame.



Figure D1. Front of the monument with framed marble tablet.

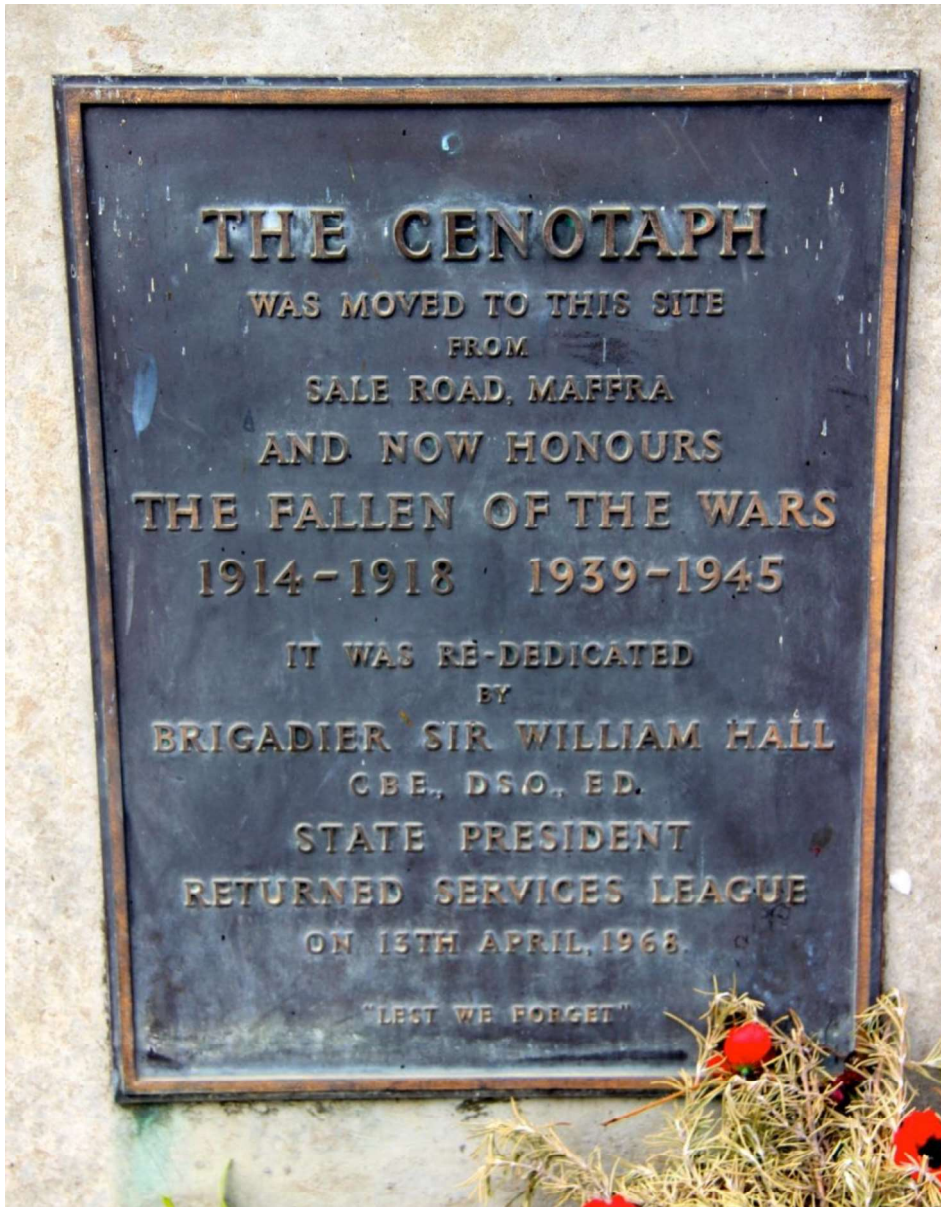


Figure D2. 1968 bronze plaque stating that the monument was moved to this site in 1968, but that no longer correct, as it was actually relocated to the median strip in 1968, and the current site c1990.



Figure D3. View of the metal sword on the limestone ashlar blocks.



Figure D4. Modern painted and lacquered bronze plaque

Sources

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

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.

Fewer war memorials were erected after WW1 and a number of these were functional structures such as gateways as seen at schools, parks, swimming pools and buildings. According to Rowe (2008:1:17), one of the most common forms of commemorating the contribution and sacrifice of those who served in the Second World War was to value add to an existing First World War memorial, largely in the form of an additional plaque or inscription, or possibly additional features, such as a memorial wall or war trophies. This can be seen on the Maffra monument.

Many monuments around Victoria have been relocated from their original position, usually around the 1960s when cars had priority over historic monuments, even those monuments and Avenues of Honour commemorating the soldiers from World War One, such as this one in Maffra. The Maffra monument has reduced significance due to relocation from its highly historic place at the start of the Avenue of Honour, in 1968 and again c1990, due to road works.

Obelisks (a tapered vertical structure - Rowe 2008 Vol 2:615)

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 its 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.'"

In Wellington Shire there are numerous memorials, but only 9 are monuments to commemorate conflicts, of which 2 are obelisks, 2 are flag staffs 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 one by being flanked by 2 smaller WW2 obelisks, similar in design and colour to the WW1 monument.

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.

Norris, M. Aborist, Wellington Shire. Personal communication.

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 the formal sacred space around the monument.
- 1.2. Retain clear views to the monument from all directions.
- 1.3. Do not put directional or information signage in the view lines to the monuments.
- 1.4. New memorials should be placed to the side of the memorial, outside the existing sacred space, not behind or in front of it.
- 1.5. Long Term: Consider restoring the Avenue of Honour and relocating the monument to its original location with the stepped bluestone base. Simultaneously install a new monument in the town centre if required.

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, free 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.
- 2.3. Memorials are meant to develop a patina of age to imbue them with a 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. Gently hand clean the monument only in accordance with the instructions from the fact sheets listed below in Resources.
 - 2.4.1. Gentle washing and scrubbing with a **soft** brush, do **not** use cleaning agents. It is important that no form of pressure cleaning (even water) is undertaken. If the above cleaning process does not remove all discolourations, leave them there.
 - 2.4.2. To clean the lead lettering, wear a mask and rub them over with pure soap, then wash and rinse well.
 - 2.4.3. To Paint the lead lettering (but not needed at this time):
 - 2.4.3.1. Wear a mask.
 - 2.4.3.2. Brush with a fine plastic brush e.g. a nail brush (not wire!) to remove any loose material.
 - 2.4.3.3. Collect the brushings as these are toxic.
 - 2.4.3.4. Then paint the top surface with a good quality dark grey/charcoal coloured oil based paint.

2.4.3.5. Don't worry about filling in the damaged areas.

2.4.3.6. If possible the painting should be done on a hot, dry day when the metal is warm.

2.5. This memorial requires maintenance of the metal sword and badge, the white marble tablets, including the removal of the black frame, and the 1967 plaque. This work should be done by a trained Conservator to avoid well meaning but costly and irreparable damage. E.g. Brasso and steel wool, and acid washing, are two examples that will severely damage the surfaces.

3. To enhance the appreciation of the war memorial:

3.1. Research and design an interpretative story board, to be located in a respectful location near the memorial.

3.2. Design and produce a brochure with a self guided tour of the history of the site and that of the Avenue of Honour.

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.