ANZAC Memorial Avenue, O'Connell
Bathurst-Oberon Road MR253

Images of 1927 ANZAC Memorial Avenue, Commemorative Wall and Community Support

Draft Heritage Assessment
Planning Proposal OLEP2013
Schedule 5 Part 1 Heritage Items

Prepared for

Oberon Council
137-139 Oberon Street
OBERON NSW 2787

Prepared by

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December 2024

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SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The subject of this assessment is a memorial avenue of trees in the historic village of O'Connell which were planted between 1925-1927 to honour those soldiers from the locality who fought in World War I. The main road from Bathurst to Oberon (MR253) runs through the village and the Avenue defines almost a kilometer at the western entrance to the village. The road is known locally as the O'Connell Road. The local community initiated the memorial in the early 1920s and today the community retain the same strength of attachment, meaning and respectful symbolism.   The ANZAC Memorial is recognised for its historic and social values and is a significant component of the O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area recognised by Oberon Council. The avenue is also listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and is included in the listing of the O'Connell area on the former Register of the National Estate (RNE). The National Trust also listed the 'Settlement of O'Connell' as a Conservation Area in 1974 defined by a 0.8km radius based on the intersection of the Bathurst Road and Beaconsfield Road which included the ANZAC Avenue.

In August 2024 Oberon Council received a number of community submissions to individually heritage list the ANZAC Avenue on Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage of the Oberon LEP 2013 in recognition of its local significance and to ensure its ongoing protection. The listing would also assist in future heritage grant funding opportunities. Council formally adopted three motions related to the Memorial Avenue at a regular Council meeting 11th June 2024:

1. *Update the draft State Heritage Inventory Sheet for the Avenue of Trees at O'Connell (ref 2210207)*
2. *Prepare a Planning Proposal for the individual listing of the Avenue of Trees at O'Connell as a local item for inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Oberon LEP 2013*
3. *Advise the local community in O'Connell to consider liaising with Heritage NSW, based on the State level assessment of the 1998 CMP, with a longer-term view of nominating the Avenue of Trees for inclusion separately on the State Heritage Register.*

In September 2024 Christo Aitken & Associates was appointed to work with Council staff in preparing the SHI sheet and Planning Proposal for the amendment to the OLEP 2013.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this report are to support the preparation of a State Heritage Inventory sheet (SHI) for the ANZAC Memorial Avenue to accompany its proposed individual LEP listing. The heritage assessment will draw together the relevant studies, reports and conservation documents prepared for the Avenue and using the

Heritage NSW assessment format, methodology and criteria update and supplement previous material. The Assessment and SHI sheet will follow the HNSW current updated guidelines (June 2023). On finalization of the LEP Amendment the SHI sheet will be forwarded to HNSW for inclusion on their publicly accessible website database.

It is intended that this report be only used as a cross-reference to the available studies and not to duplicate content. Although some brief extracts may be included in this report the original reports must be referred to for their comprehensive detail. The assessment essentially provides the background to the content of the State Heritage Inventory sheet for local listing. However, a focus will be on available local material and information not previously documented.

Local heritage listing generally only requires a completed SHI sheet as information is often limited, however, in the case of the ANZAC Memorial Avenue in O'Connell the available research and material is considerable and provides useful supporting documentation.

1.2.1 Statutory and Legislative

The following statutory instruments relate to the place:
- NSW Heritage Act 1977
- Oberon LEP 2013 and DCP 2013

Although the ANZAC Memorial Avenue is proposed at this stage as a local heritage item on OLEP 2013 the place is identified as a significant element within the O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area already listed on the OLEP 2013. It is also important to note that the 1998 conservation management plan prepared for *NSW Roads and Traffic Authority* similarly acknowledged its State significant cultural values.

1.2.2 Conservation Management Plan

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Memorial Avenue, O'Connell was prepared for NSW Roads and Traffic Authority in 1998[1]. The methodology adopted for the CMP is in accordance with *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and J. S. Kerr's 2013 *Conservation Plan: a guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European cultural significance*. The document was prepared by experienced heritage landscape consultants and included a detailed arborist's report.

The CMP includes a detailed analysis of documentary and physical evidence, a systematic assessment of significance, a comprehensive analysis of constraints and opportunities, management options and a range of conservation policies and management guidelines. The over-arching policy was "*the Memorial Avenue on MR253 at O'Connell*

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[1] *Conservation Management Plan Memorial Avenue, O'Connell*, Musescape Pty Ltd, David Beaver and Arborscapes Pty Ltd, RTA, December 1998, finalised May 1999

shall be conserved to retain its historic, aesthetic, social and technical / research values for the State"[2]

The CMP provides a well-considered, structured analysis and set out a range of guiding policies. The document has been cross-referenced in this report. The key aspects of the document are still relevant. Subsequent documents in the intervening years, such as, the 2008 *National Trust of Australia* heritage listing; the 2012 Planning Proposal to create the *O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area*; the 20xx *Oberon Land Use Study* and the 2018 study of the *O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area* by University of Sydney, all reinforce the wider values of O'Connell and the ANZAC Memorial Avenue.

1.3 The Study Area

1.3.1 General

The focus of the study area is the section of Bathurst-Oberon Road MR253 between Beaconsfield Road in the west and Box Flat Road in the east. Box Flat Road is located at the eastern approach to the village. However, consideration is also given to the section of road west of Beaconsfield Road to the Fish River as the original intent of the avenue in 1925 extended from the village to the river a distance of almost 2 miles[3].

The entire corridor is largely defined along its length by boundary fences and lot boundaries of neighbouring homesteads, residences, shop, church, hotel and Council recreation reserve. The 2008 listing by the National Trust of Australia focussed on '*a corridor width of approximately 25m (centred on the centre-line) in order to take in the roadway, shoulders, avenue trees and their root systems[4]*.

1.3.2 Heritage Listings

The village of O'Connell comprises 15 individually listed heritage items together with the significant heritage conservation area. The village precinct originally extended to the western side of the Fish River now part of Bathurst Regional Council LGA. The following heritage items listed in *Schedule 5 of the OLEP* lie between the Fish River and Box Flat Road in the village :
- *O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area* extending from the Fish River to the eastern approach to the village.
- *Lindlegreen Barn* State Heritage Register (ID 0212) on the corner of Beaconsfield Road (LEP I46)

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[2] *Ibid,* Conservation Policies & Management Guidelines Section 6.2 p25
[3] *Bathurst Times*, 16th November 1925
[4] *National Trust of Australia (NSW), Classification Report*, prepared by Bathurst and District Branch, 26th May 2008, p8

- *O'Connell Road Store Group, Barn, Slab Barn, Post Office, Shop and Cottage* on the corner of Beaconsfield Road (LEP I46)
- *Butcher's Shop (former) located* in the centre of the village (LEP I43)
- *O'Connell Roman Catholic Church Group* located in the centre of the village (LEP I45)
- *St Francis Church and Roman Catholic Cemetery* located in the centre of the village (LEP I49)
- *O'Connell Hotel and Bakery* located in the centre of the village LEP I44)

The above illustrates the significant history embedded in the village with the ANZAC Memorial Avenue to west providing a landmark entrance to the village and the original intended approximate 2 mile avenue linking the sections of the village on either side of the Fish River.

The ANZAC Avenue is also individually recognised in the following listings and related schedules:

- *O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area* extending from the Fish River to the eastern approach to the village, Oberon LEP 2012, Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage, Part 2 Heritage Conservation Areas
- *National Trust of Australia (NSW), Classification Report*, prepared by Bathurst and District Branch, 26th May 2008
- *National Trust of Australia (NSW), Classification Report*, Settlement of O'Connell, Urban Conservation Area, approved 3rd June 1974
- *Register of the National Estate* (Place ID 19038) (Non-statutory archive)O'Connell Settlement (redefinition), Bathurst, O'Connell, NSW
- *Monument Australia,* O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue
- *Virtual War Memorial Australia*, O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue
- *Avenues of Honour*, O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue
- *NSW War Memorials Register*, O'Connell First World War Memorial Drive

The above illustrates the already significant cultural values and associations recognised by a number of authoritative groups over many years for the ANZAC Memorial Avenue in O'Connell.

1.4 Report Structure

1.4.1 Methodology

This heritage assessment is structured to mirror the investigation and assessment of significance guidelines recommended by Heritage

NSW[5]. The structure of the report by summarising what is known, preparing a comparative analysis, and assessing significance and integrity using the standard HNSW criteria. The conclusions are brief and focus on the nomination for listing together with initial management recommendations.

- *Documentary evidence.*
- *Physical evidence.*
- *Assessment of Cultural Significance.*
- *Conclusions and Recommendations.*

1.4.2 Documentary Sources

The documentary sources have been detailed in Section 7.0

1.4.3 Limitations

The history and significance of the site is focussed on its European heritage and the study does not address in detail the Indigenous history of region or the site.

1.4.4 Authorship

The SOHI has been prepared by *Christo Aitken + Associates* a heritage consultancy based in Bathurst and the Blue Mountains. The practice comprises Christo Aitken BA(Hons)Arch, Dip Arch., AIA, M.ICOMOS and Tracey Aitken BA(Archaeology), Grad Dip IM (Archives), Grad Cert Arts (Archaeology), GradDipURP. Christo is a member of a number of professional bodies including the Australian Institute of Architects, Australia ICOMOS and the National Trust of Australia (NSW). He is an experienced conservation architect and has worked on a wide range of heritage projects in Sydney, Blue Mountains and the Central West. He is also an accredited and widely experienced heritage adviser to more than ten Local Government Areas since 1996. Tracey is a partner in the practice and brings her specialized qualifications, skills and experience in Australian history, local history, archives administration and historical archaeology to the projects.

1.4.5 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following for their involvement and assistance, in particular to local resident, the late Peg Savage, who researched the history of O'Connell and region for many years and compiled a considerable collection which provides a valuable resource for local groups :

Damian O'Shannassy, Planning and Development Manager, Oberon Council

Janet Bailey, Planning Administration Officer

Bennett Kennedy, Senior Planner, Oberon Council

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[5] *Assessing Heritage Significance*, Department of Planning and Environment, May 2023

Fran White, local resident and researcher. Including research compiled by Marcus Croft relating to the 2008 National Trust Listing.
Ian Browne, local resident and researcher
Sue and David Willis, local residents and members Heritage Advisory Committee
Jaclyn Burns, local resident and planning consultant
Marie Larnach, local resident and family history researcher
Steven Ford, Land Titles Research, Search for Land

SECTION 2.0 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The following section is a brief overview of the European history of the Oberon, Bathurst and O'Connell region. It draws from available reports, studies and thematic histories of the region. The footnoted documentary sources should be referred to for a greater level of detail.

O'Connell is located in the Central Tableland region of New South Wales. The 1996 publication Regional Histories was prepared to assist in the assessment of the environmental heritage of New South Wales which placed each of the then identified 17 historical regions and their topographical, historical, social, economic and cultural identities. The Central Tablelands were centred on Bathurst and included Orange, Wellington, Mudgee, Lithgow, Oberon and among other localities in the Central West.

The Central Tableland region was noted generally "*as an area of older settlement on solid geology which made gold mining an important phase in its development. Mostly within the Limits of Location, it has older towns and settlements than areas further out*". O'Connell was one such rural village located close to the Fish River crossing and close to the earliest alignment of the first road across the Blue Mountains to Bathurst. Oberon and O'Connell are located in the south eastern area of the region.

2.1 Historical Overview

The region is a flat plain elevated by uplift and containing parts of the central tablelands and central slopes. It represents an area of early occupation, mostly within the limits of location of 1829. It consists of a number of level tablelands separated by ranges dropping generally in altitude towards the west. Except in the west, there are good topographical boundaries, though the regional boundary follows the local government areas…Rugged land exists in the Canobolas area, along the Abercrombie and Turon Rivers, both goldfields, and in the east. Part of the area drains to the east through the Coxs River, but most to the west by way of the Macquarie and Upper Lachlan Rivers.

Oberon shire encompasses part of the Gundungurra lands, and part of Wiradjuri country. The boundaries between these two peoples are not currently clearly established, but generally the north and north west of the shire was Wiradjuri country and the south and east was Gundungurra country. Within this area were smaller groups (bands or kinship groups) who had associations with particular areas[6].

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[6] Phillipa Gemmel-Smith, *Thematic History of Oberon Shire*, Aboriginal Contact, p8

In 1813 George Evans crossed the Blue Mountains, looked upon the Central Tableland and found it good: *'I am more pleased with the Country every day. It is a great extent of Grazing land without being divided by barren spaces as on the East side of the Mountains, and well watered by running streams in almost every Valley'.* Though timbered, the rolling plains around the Macquarie River were open, with long visibility and an encouraging quality of grass. The new colony's need for new expansive grazing land was the prime mover in the early colonisation of the tableland and the establishment of the early towns. Evans recorded in his diary '*I came on a fine Plain of rich Land, the handsomest Country I ever saw; it surpasseth Port Dalrymple; this place is worth speaking of as good and beautiful; the Track of clear land occupies about a Mile on each side of the River; I have named it after the Lieut. Governor. "O'Connell Plains"… I cannot see the termination of it North of me; the soil is exceeding rich and produces the finest grass intermixed with variety of herbs; the hills have the look of a park and Grounds laid out; I am at a loss for Language to describe the Country; I named this part "Macquarie Plains"… there is Game in abundance; if we want a Fish it is caught immediately; they seem to bite at any time… I proceeded over the Plains following the Water, which I now name the "Fish River"; at about 4 Miles I was brought up by a stream nearly as large from the Southward, and terminates the Plains*'[7]

Evan's expedition led Governor Macquarie to quickly commission William Cox for the construction of a road suitable for carts and carriages across the Blue Mountains from Emu Plains to Bathurst. The road was completed in January 1815 and ran from Cut Hill and Phil Falls in the east to a crossing of the Campbell's River in the west. It was not long before deviations from Cox's Road were made. An alternative route to Bathurst from O'Connell is believed to have started as early as 1815, crossing the Fish River at O'Connell instead of going through Bloom Hill and crossing the Campbells River.

European settlement in these southeastern parts of the region was tentative because of apprehensions about resistance from the Aboriginal people. Members of the Wiradjuri linguistic group had occupied on a seasonal basis most of the Macquarie River area. They moved regularly in small groups but preferred the open land and used the waterways for a variety of food. There are numerous river flats where debris from recurrent camps accumulated over a long period. Naturally the focus of settler attention was on many of the areas most favoured by the indigenous people. There was some contact, witnessed by sporadic hostility.

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[7] Evan's First Journal, Journey to the Bathurst Plains, Two Journals of Early Exploration in NSW, George William Evans, July 1813-December 1815, Project Gutenberg Austrlia https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1300271h.html

2.2 O'Connell Village

Early landholders in the Oberon and O'Connell areas were William Lawson (Macquarie), William Cox (Hereford), Robert Lowe (Sydmouth Valley), Captain Thomas Raine (Raineville) among others who established large grazing properties.

At O'Connell the first grants were given in 1823 to the Reverend William Walker, and to the Reverend Thomas Hassall and his brothers James and Samuel Hassall. Thomas called his place Lampeter Farm (also spelt Llambeda). He erected a three bedroom wattle and daub hut which subsequently became the first school, store and post office. The village of O'Connell was established on land that Thomas and his brothers were granted. In 1833 Thomas also established the first Anglican chapel in the region, Salem Chapel to the north-west of the village and an early cob barn on the corner of Beaconsfield Road to the west of the village, at a property known as Lindlegreen. Whilst the majority of the historic village lies to the South of the Fish river crossing within the shire of Oberon, a portion of the settlement is located North of the Fish river, rising up toward Cox's hill is now within the Bathurst local government area.

The township and surrounding landholdings have significant historical associations with prominent figures in the Colony of New South Wales. Gold was discovered in February 1823 at Kinghorn Falls on the Fish River. There were also goldfields at Wisemans Creek and O'Connell Plains was becoming an important staging post on the main western road to Bathurst, which led to the building of some of O'Connell's earliest buildings. O'Connell's Post Office opened in August 1834 and for many years was located in the store at the junction of Beaconsfield Road and O'Connell Road at Lindlegreen. Some of the earliest buildings to be built in O'Connell Plains include Milford (c1822), the Mill Cottage (1826), Salem Chapel (1831 or 1833?), Plough Inn (1833), the O'Connell Post Office located in the Lindlegreen Barn precinct (1834) and the water-driven Flour Mill (1837). The road linking the eastern and western sections of the village to the Fish River crossing were central to daily life of the village.

The O'Connell Hotel was built in 1870 and later extended a number of times into the late 19th C. A butcher's shop was built in 1873 and the shop and dwelling still remain today. In addition there were two blacksmith shops, two bakeries, a School of Arts which housed a library, and is presently situated on the corner of Wisemans Creek and Oberon Roads opposite Lindlegreen, a general store, saleyards, an abattoir and a brick kiln among other village services. The 1860's and 1870's was a period of intense building activity and many of O'Connell's other buildings were constructed at this time.

The O'Connell Co-Operative Dairy Company was formed in 1892 which was notably the first butter factory to be established close to Bathurst. The building still stands across from Black's Mill Lane on the Oberon Road. The significant Memorial Avenue of trees was

planted between 1925-27 which also played a significant role in linking the village activities east and west of the Fish River.

The prime agricultural land in O'Connell was an important aspect in the history and development of the valley and this remains much the same today. Today, the valley presents as lush agricultural and pastoral land surrounded by gently rising fields with the rugged forested hills of the Oberon district behind. The river and the O'Connell Road wind their way across the centre of this landscape setting with their margin of mature trees marking their routes when viewed from the top of Cox's Hill. The 20th C period in O'Connell has seen little change because of its isolated location off the Great Western Highway which carried the bulk of east-west traffic, low population and relative scarcity of work. Since Council amalgamations and LGA boundaries that occurred in 2004 the northern section lies in Bathurst Regional Council area and the southern section in Oberon Council area.

2.3 O'Connell ANZAC Memorial

The 1914-18 World War was catastrophic and its impact was left on cities, towns and villages across the globe for many years. The legacy of the Great War had an enduring resonance. Country towns and smaller communities in Australia, such as O'Connell, had made a brave contribution but the country had lost many thousands of their young men and women. The strength of feeling shared by communities is evident in commemoration events and memorials, such as those as early as 1917, in the Bathurst area[8] leading up to the end of the war. The article noted in detail those members of the community who had made considerable contributions to the war effort. "*ANZAC Day, the second anniversary of the date upon which Australia experienced her baptism of fire on the grim slopes of Gallipoli will be embraced throughout Australia today…Bathurst has played her part nobly and well. In the various churches in Bathurst rolls of honour were being installed. All denominations and churches were listed together with an extensive selection of representative names. It is interesting to note under the Catholic denomination the inclusion of Edgar Gornall and his family members.*

The Armistice of 11th November 1918 ended the First World War. Australia, with a 1914 population of just 3 million, had 415 citizens mobilised in military service over Work War 1's duration. 60,000 servicemen and women did not return. This left lasting scars. Avenues of Honour were a living way of remembering and honouring those lives and sacrifices[9]. The above extract from a paper prepared by the Australian Garden Historical Society well-articulates the history of commemoration. "*The war affected the lives of so many people, that fostered an enormous community need to establish lasting memorials. This was most apparent in the young Commonwealth countries of*

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[8] National Advocate, *ANZAC Day, Bathurst's Magnificent Effort*, Wednesday 25th April 1917
[9] Read, Stuart, *Avenues of Honour in the Landscape – Australia's Living Memorials*, Australian Garden History Society, The 19th National Street Tree Symposium, 2018

Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Australia in fact has more war memorials than any other country"[10]. In Australia the first memorial planting was in Stirling, Mount Lofty, South Australia (9th September 1915) while in NSW the first was at Laurieton within the landscaped grounds of Laurie Park (19th August 1916). The planted memorials included planting of avenues, groves, groups, scattered and single trees. In Bathurst *Memory Drive* was planted near the general cemetery between 1917-28 with 460 wattle trees. At the time the 'Drive' was exclusively for 'Bathurst Boys'. It appears that both Lithgow and O'Connell expressed a desire to include their fallen soldiers in the Bathurst Memory Drive however the decision by Bathurst meant that they would have to go their own way. The town of Oberon commenced a 'Soldiers Memorial Movement in July 1922 and according to articles at the time sought subscriptions for fund raising.

Thirty six men and women of O'Connell enlisted and served in the First World War. There were 34 men and two women. Of the 36 who served, 10 died on active service. In O'Connell, the first public mention of a memorial avenue appears to have been in the Bathurst Times of 17 April 1925:

"*The movement to have a Memory Avenue planted at O'Connell is receiving enthusiastic support. A working bee has been arranged for Saturday to cut poles for tree guards, while a meeting of ladies has been called to arrange for social functions, and provide meals for the workers. The first social in aid of the Avenue movement is listed for April 29, when Hurrell's orchestra will furnish the music. The secretary of the Avenue Committee has been advised by the curator of the botanical gardens that desert ash trees are the most suitable for the avenue"[11].*

As supporting material for the 2008 National Trust listing of the ANZAC Memorial the Bathurst Branch compiled an collection of local newspaper articles held on microfilm in Bathurst Public Library[12]. The articles provide an evocative outline to the local community's efforts, enthusiasm and progress during the work. The costs were considerable for a small rural community In view of their importance the articles are attached to this assessment report for reference.

In early 1925 the O'Connell Progress Association appears to have been formed by Edgar Gornall who then initiated the ANZAC Avenue through the Association[13]. Edgar Gornall (President) and W.T. Pickup (Secretary) were recognised at the time as the 'hardworking promoters' but also had the 'unfailing support of a small committee who threw their energies wholeheartedly into the project'[14]. The original concept for the memorial was an avenue of Desert Ash trees from the O'Connell Hotel to the Fish River crossing, a distance of almost 2 miles. The

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[10] ibid
[11] Bathurst Times, 17 April, 1925
[12] *Early History of O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue*, compiled by Marcus Croft, 2008
[13] Bathurst Times 10 September 1925
[14] Bathurst Times 29 January 1926

avenue would comprise approximately 500 trees and would be carried out in two stages. The first stage from the O'Connell Hotel to the O'Connell Post Office close to the corner of Beaconsfield Road, a distance of ¾ mile (1.1km). The second stage from the Post Office to the Fish River bridge, a similar distance of ¾ mile (1.1km).

Preliminary research undertaken at NSW State Archives suggest it unlikely that NSW Government was involved. The road was not a designated main road and therefore not under State Government management. The road at the time was likely classed as a 'Parish' road and under management of local Council. Road Plans (Crown Plans) were briefly reviewed for notations or references to Memorial Avenue or Drive and no notations identified at State Archives for Box Flat Road (R3490-1603), O'Connell Road (Duckmaloi to O'Connell Plains) R175A-1603) and O'Connell Road (Beaconsfield Road to Fish River) R5562-1603) [15].

On 24 June a deputation from O'Connell Progress Association interviewed the Council and explained their proposals regarding the Memorial Avenue at O'Connell. *"On the motion of Crs Wilcox and Hughes, it was decided to grant permission to the association to plant trees on the roadway, with the exception of the narrow part of the road, and that it be left to the engineer or overseer to arrange where"*[16]. The location and extent of the 'narrow part' of the road is unclear at this stage and whether it may have played a part in the 'staging' of the overall project to the river. Further research recommended.

The promoters advertised regularly in the local papers and publicised the fund raising events which included dances, social functions, sports carnival, and working bees. The first of the 'Memory Avenue' dances was held on the 29th April 1925. Oberon Shire Council assisted with the site and preparatory work with men at work grading and ploughing the road preparing for planting the trees. The residents have been at work cutting, carting and sawing off poles for tree-guards[17].

"While the O'Connell ladies were holding a meeting recently for the avenue social on April 29, the men folk were hard at work cutting and carting poles five to six inches in diameter for tree guards for the Memory Drive. The enthusiasm displayed at both functions must be pleasing to the promoters. On Saturday afternoon last about 300 posts were cut, and nearly 200 were carted and stacked at a spot near the O'Connell Hotel"[18]

by November 1925 it was it was shown that as a result of the Radio Ball and other functions, that half the Memorial Avenue was planted, netted etc., and paid for, and good lot of poles, battens etc were ready to finish the two mile avenue. In early December the Bathurst times reported

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[15] Initial advice Steven Ford from NSW State Archives October 2024. TBC
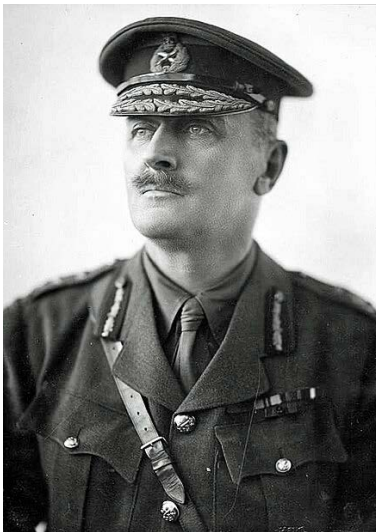[16] Lithgow Mercury, 24 June 1925
[17] Bathurst Times, 18 July , 1925
[18] Bathurst Times, 25 April 1925

that "*The trees already planted in the Memorial Avenue are growing splendidly and leads one to think the O'Connell district is suitable for desert ash*".

The Department of Agriculture had recommended the planting of Desert Ash[19]. According to notes by the Australian Garden History Society the seeds were obtained from the Middle East[20]. They were grown in Bathurst Experimental Farm for the Sydney Botanical Gardens and then returned to O'Connell for planting. They were chosen for their hardiness and links to World War I battle sites. The species is native to North Africa and southern Europe, the area where the troops fought. Trees in general symbolise stability, life and immortality[21].

By September 1925 an article in the National Advocate advertised a "Radio Ball", one of the first to be held outside the Metropolis is to be held at O'Connell and noted that "*the live wires of the community have for some time past been getting together under the guiding hand of Edgar Gornall, and already the first half of the ANZAC Avenue has been completed and runs from the store to the Hotel. So far 225 Desert Ash trees have been planted. It is hoped that by means of the projected ball sufficient money will be raised to enable an early start to be made on the planting of the second section, from the store to the bridge, which will require about three hundred more trees. The completed avenue will be one of the longest in Australia, and great credit is reflected on those progressive people concerned*"[22].

In late 1925 the O'Connell Progress Association became aware that Field Marshall Edmund Allenby, a famous WWI British Commander was visiting Australia and intended to visit the Jenolan Caves. Edgar Gornall appears to have used this fortuitous event to offer Allenby the opportunity to formally open the first stage of the ANZAC Memorial Avenue. Lord Allenby, during WW1, then General Sir Edmund Allenby, was commander of the allied forces in the Middle East, including the ANZAC Light Horsemen, involved in the famous charge at Beersheba.

There are a number of newspaper articles providing details of the brief ceremony and importantly the ongoing work on the avenue. The articles illustrate the intent to complete the avenue to the Fish River with further public fund raising events in hand the "*The chief force was the O'Connell Progress Association, which has become renowned for its unabated activity in the public affairs at the historic hamlet*". The additional funds sourced from these successful events were being devoted '*to completion of the ANZAC Avenue – O'Connell's tangible tribute to her brave soldiers in the Great War*'[23].

Field Marshall Edmund Allenby in 1917 (Source : *National Army Museum*)

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[19] National Advocate, Monday 27 April 1925
[20] 'Avenues of Honour, memorial and other avenues, groves and Lone Pines around Australia, in New Zealand and Turkey', Garden History Society, https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Avenues-of-Honour-sorted-by-states-Feb-18.pdf
[21] *A Memorial to the Soldiers of O'Connell*, O'Connell Village Preservation Group, O'Connell 2000
[22] National Advocate, Thursday 10 September 1925
[23] Bathurst Times, 19 January 1926.

The article covering the opening ceremony notes the following "*When it was known that Lord Allenby would be travelling through O'Connell on his way to Jenolan, the Progress Association arranged for the General to officially open the Anzac Avenue . On his arrival quite a good crowd had attended to witness the ceremony.*

Mr E. Gornall, Preseident, introduced Lord Allenby and remarked that the avenue was on the road which the first expedition to the west travelled. He pointed out the white pisa [sic.] house at Llambeda, this being the birth place of the first Australian bishop of the Church of England...and the work of building the other half (of the ANZAC Memorial Avenue) *would start immediately, and when they had the chance of having the avenue opened by such a great leader, they took it. Lord Allenby said he was very pleased to open this avenue in memory of those gallant soldiers who died in the Great War. It was very fitting that this avenue had been made in the memory of those great Australian soldiers, who gave their lives for the great cause and as these trees grew they must think of the men who gave their lives for their country. He then declared the avenue open, and Lady Allenby cut the ribbon.*

The first stage was officially opened on 14th January 1926.

A front page article in the Western Times on Saturday 30 January 1926 covering O'Connell's fine effort, the completed section from Hotel to Post Office, the official opening, the determination to complete the avenue at an early date and that "*O'Connell folk don't believe in half measures....they intend to achieve their aim, despite the expense and work involved*".

Edgar Gornall was aged 19 in 1914 when he enlisted as a Private in the 20th Battalion, 'A' Company. (Source : *Marie Larnach family history research, O'Connell*)

Edgar Gornall

Edgar Allan Gornall appears to have largely instrumental together with the support from the O'Connell Progress Association to initiate the proposals and then to implement the first section of the Memorial Avenue. It is important that Edgar's contribution and that of the O'Connell Progress Association be included in this assessment as it illustrates the strength of feeling and high degree of community involvement in issues that matter locally.

Edgar was born in Bathurst on 7th December, 1895 to parents Frederick Gornall and Emily Mabel (nee Cousins). Edgar was the eldest of their children. Edgar's father, Frederick Gornall, was the youngest son of convict Charles Gornall and his wife, Eliza (nee Gardiner). Upon arrival at Port Jackson, Charles was assigned to George Ranken in Bathurst and gained his Certificate of Freedom in 1838. Frederick Gornall worked as the local commission agent in Bathurst. Frederick and Emily had seven children, with four sons; namely Edgar born 1895, Langar born 1897, Stuart born 1899 and Neville born in 1904, as well as three daughters; Ailee, Hazel and Hilda Ethel.

Pictured, at sea, Lieutenant Gornall (centre) giving an aviation lecture on board troopship 'Aeneas' during November 1919 to January 1920 voyage, carrying AIF troops back to Australia from England (Source : *Marie Larnach family history research, O'Connell*)

At the beginning of World War One, the Gornall family were residing in Ranken Street, Bathurst. Three of the four sons enlisted for duty with Edgar enlisting first on 17th March, 1915. In March 1916 a letter that Edgar wrote to his parents on his war experience was published in the local newspaper, as written from the original report. The following is a brief extract from the article *"Private Edgar Gornall, of Bathurst, writing to his parents, states that he was the last man to leave the Australian trenches during the evacuation of the Anzac positions. At 3.20 they were the only two men on the post. Gornall further relates that while running…they suddenly discovered that the path along which they were to retire had been blocked by their own men with barbed wire. Neither of the men was able to scale the barrier, and there were thousands of suspicious Turks only a hundred yards away. On hunting round, they luckily found another opening, and while making their way through this, the mines in the trenches blew up. The Turks then opened a terrific infantry fire, but the two men successfully over-took the last party as it was stepping aboard the last remaining motor barge"[24].*

On 1st June, 1917 it was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald that Private E. A. Gornall had been conferred by *His Majesty, King Peter of Serbia, the Serbian Silver Medal* for his bravery in holding a telephone in the trenches on Gallipoli while his comrades got away, and being obliged to run for his own life. Edgar was also awarded the *1914/1915 Star, the British War Medal* and the *Victory Medal*.

Edgar returned to Australia after his WW1 service and was discharged from duty on 12th March, 1920. His occupation prior to his enlistment was a farmer, and according to newspaper articles, after the War, Edgar moved to Condobolin where he worked on the land. Newspaper reports have Edgar involved in the local municipal council where he held the position of Alderman, Deputy Mayor and later Mayor, as well as raising money for the local community in Condobolin.

On 7th December, 1923 The Land newspaper reported the following:
"The Nationalists of Condobolin have nominated Alderman Edgar A. Gornall as a candidate for selection at the next conference of the Murrumbidgee electorate. Mr. Gornall is a grazier on the Lachlan.
He has five years' war service to his credit, as an infantryman at Anzac and as a pilot in the Flying Corps on the Western front (during WWII).
He added two decorations to his service record"[25].

In October of the same year, Edgar resigned from his position on the Condobolin Council and then on 12th November, 1924 it was announced in the Lithgow Mercury that "*A quiet wedding was celebrated in Sydney recently, when Miss Jennie McKenzie, of "Milford," O'Connell, was married to Mr. Edgar Gornall, of Condobolin. The happy couple intend to reside in O'Connell"[26].*

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[24] Bathurst Times(?), Published letter from E.A. Gornall, 16 March 1916
[25] The Land, Article, 7 December 1923
[26] Lithgow Mercury, Article, Wednesday 12 November 1924

Again, not long after Edgar's move to O'Connell, he became involved in his local community, this time as President of the O'Connell Progress Association. It appears that Edgar was one of the "hardworking promoters" of the Avenue. The successful fund raising that occurred between 1925 and 1926 which realised the completion of the first stage and the commencement of the second stage. However, after Jennie's father passed away in 1928, Edgar and Jennie sold their O'Connell property, *Belvoir* and bought a city property which included a block of sixteen flats in Macleay Street, Kings Cross, five shops and residence, several cottages and a vacant site. Edgar and Jennie had two sons, Phillip Marsden Gornall and Edmund McKenzie Gornall, before they divorced in 1938. Edgar subsequently remarried (twice) and lived initially in North Sydney and subsequently on the northern beaches in Sydney.

In 1940, Edgar enlisted in WW2 in the Australian Army Service Corps, and after the war was discharged in 1944 in the rank of Lieutenant. There is a memorial plaque to *Lieutenant E. A. Gornall M.M.* at Rookwood Cemetery.

Edgar died on 13th June, 1962 at Collaroy Plateau, aged 66 years. There is a wildflower botanical garden at Collaroy Plateau named the '*Edgar Gornall Wildflower Reserve'*. Warringah Council's Plan of Management for this significant local feature notes that "*The bushland on the escarpment is contained in a number of reserves, including McLean's Lookout and Edgar Gornall Wildflower Reserve. Edgar Gornall helped to found the Collaroy Plateau Garden Club in 1959 and was deeply involved in a number of community wildflower and gardening activities. In its heyday, the Edgar Gornall Wildflower Garden was the venue for the Warringah Wildflower Festival, and over 600 native plants were planted there*"[27]. Today the gardens continue to be regularly used for weddings and other community functions.

Edgar Gornall memorial plaque at Rookwood Cemetery (Source : *Marie Larnach family history research, O'Connell*)

2.4 O'Connell Community

The locality of O'Connell has a long history of community pride and spirit, which is evidenced by the number of social interest action groups that have, and continue to, exist. These groups all share an interest, attachment and passion for the O'Connell locality and have made considerable contributions to the locality, its care and management. The establishment of the ANZAC Memorial Avenue in the early 20th century is a good example of that local energy but there are other more recent examples.

The O'Connell Anzac Memorial Avenue is a key element of the O'Connell Conservation Area as it links together the groups of heritage buildings. The community has continued to take an interest in the

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[27] Warringah Council, Collaroy Escarpment Reserves, Plan of Management, August 2009

Conservation Area through participation in the Oberon Council Heritage Committee.

In 1996 the *O'Connell Village Preservation Group* was formed and produced two fine publications:
- *The Historical Significance of the O'Connell Urban Conservation Area*, and
- *A Memorial to the Soldiers of O'Connell*[28].

The group also developed a successful strategy to conserve the ANZAC Memorial Avenue then threatened by road works. The campaign appears to have encouraged Roads & Traffic Authority (TfNSW) in 1999 to prepare a conservation management plan[29] for the avenue of trees to assist the State Agency in its care and management. The local group ensured the avenue's listing in the Register of War Memorials of NSW. A formal Dedication Ceremony was conducted for the ANZAC Memorial.

In 2007 the *O'Connell Valley Landscape Conservation Group* was formed with one of their key concerns being what they saw as inappropriate land development in the area. A successful campaign was mounted to raise a wider appreciation of the rare character of the O'Connell valley and particularly the Memorial Avenue. In 2008 the *Community Guardians of the O'Connell Memorial Avenue* was formed to raise State Government awareness of the importance of the ANZAC Memorial Avenue. The campaign was multifaceted - public meetings, newsletters, political representations, liaison with government departments, community activities, fundraising and wider media. For many years a group of concerned citizens has undertaken voluntary maintenance on the Anzac Memorial Avenue and adjacent road verges, following repeated requests for assistance from Oberon Council. The final Charter was adopted in 2007. One of their primary objectives was "*that the O'Connell valley is rich in early history and is a beautiful and important cultural landscape in NSW. The group wishes to preserve the character of the O'Connell Valley with its sparse settlement pattern and its considerable array of early heritage buildings*"[30].

The local group developed a website which has a wide membership in the region. The group embarked on community information days and in November 2008 organised a well-attended Armistice Day Service to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the end of World War I.

During this period the O'Connell Valley Landscape Conservation group began to raise the wider community's understanding of the increasing importance and world-wide recognition of Cultural Landscapes. The group stated that "*the concept of a cultural landscape considers heritage in a holistic way, including the visual catchment, the*

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[28] Copies of these publications are available from O'Connell Valley Landscape Conservation Group.
[29] *Conservation Management Plan Memorial Avenue, O'Connell*, Musescape Pty Ltd, David Beaver and Arborscapes Pty Ltd, RTA, May 1999
[30] *2007 Charter, O'Connell Valley Landscape Conservation Group*, Article 3.1

natural environment, the social and community relevance, as well as the individual historic buildings"[31].

In early 2009 the group made a major contribution to Oberon Council's Land Use Strategy through their planning submission comprising a Draft Land Use Issues Paper. Oberon Council in 2007 had already adopted a resolution in developing their LUIP to "*pursue the linking of heritage and cultural landscape of the O'Connell Valley within the review of the Land Use Strategy*"[32]. The ANZAC Memorial Avenue was one of the important issues notes as being '*a living memorial avenue of trees*' which makes a considerable contribution to the cultural landscape of O'Connell.

In 2010 Oberon Council established a Heritage Committee as part of the Heritage Advisory Program offered by State Government. The O'Connell members of the Oberon Committee have consistently provided support and assistance within the program. A number of working groups were established providing strong support to local projects including O'Connell Earth Buildings and Friends of Lindlegreen, a State Heritage Register listed early cob barn.

The community successfully applied for listing of the Memorial Avenue on the National Trust Heritage Register in 2010 with the support of local members of the Bathurst & District Branch of the National Trust of Australia (NSW). Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services bring the community together. The community groups focused on these in the mid 2000's and they continue to this day.

The insight, initiative and urgency of the various community groups in O'Connell over the 19th and 20th centuries have achieved significant positive planning outcomes in the natural and built environment to the benefit of the locality and wider region.

SECTION 3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The following section has largely been drawn from the 1999 *Conservation Management Plan* for the Memorial Avenue and the subsequent 2007 *Environmental & Heritage* report both prepared for NSW Roads & Traffic Authority. The reports were prepared by experienced heritage architects, arborists and environmental consultants. The reports acknowledge the assistance and involvement of staff from the RTA, Oberon Shire Council and the local community.

3.1 Site and Setting

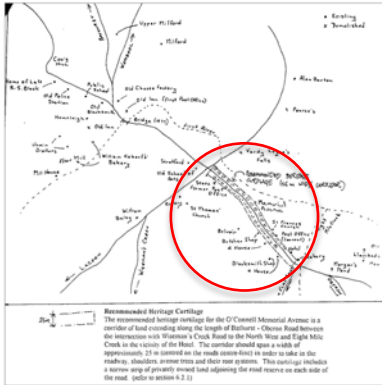The sealed road width within the avenue averages approximately 8 metres. Unsealed shoulders extend a further 1 to 2 metres either side of the road. The trees are located just off the road shoulders, with an

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[31] *The Cultural Landscape of the O'Connell Valley*, Information Sheet, O'Connell Valley Landscape Conservation Group
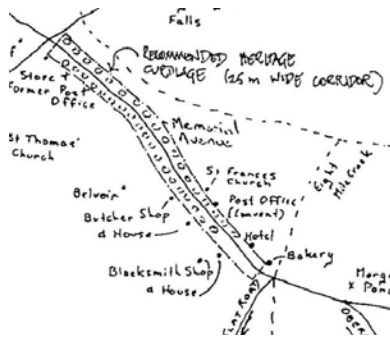[32] *Oberon Council Meetings Resolutions,* 11th September 2007 and 13th November 2007.

average distance between the trunks measured across the road of 15 metres.

The road slopes down towards the north and trees in this area are generally larger and more vigorous than those upslope, probably due to water availability and difference in soil type and depth.

Trees in the north west section of the avenue are generally better specimens, possibly as a result of runoff and nutrients from adjoining farmland, although this area was excavated for drainage purposes during 1993. This excavation varying in depth from about 300mm to 500mm occurred within 0.5 metre to 1 metre on all sides of the trees, removing any surface roots in this area. This action does not appear to have had any serious effect on the trees. To examine this, test trenches were dug on the road shoulder and major roots were found at a depth of approximately 600mm, effectively at least 900mm below original ground level. Other test trenches on the eastern side of the road showed similar major root location.

Extracts, above and below, from 1999 CMP regarding the proposed curtilage (Source : CMP, Memorial Avenue, O'Connell, *Musecape, David Beaver, Arborscapes, 1999)*

3.2 Curtilage

The 1999 CMP recommended the heritage curtilage at that time be 'the corridor of land extending along the length of Bathurst Road – Oberon Road between the intersection with Wiseman's Creek Road (ie Beaconsfield Road) to the north-west and Eight Mile Creek in the vicinity of the O'Connell Hotel (ie Box Flat Flat Road) . The corridor should span a width of approximately 25m (centred on the road's centre lines) in order to take in the roadway, shoulders avenues trees and their root systems. This curtilage includes a narrow strip of privately owned land adjoining the road reserve on each side of the road'[33]

While the above defines the primary curtilage, a secondary curtilage should be recognised from the corner of Beaconsfield Road to the Fish River as the originally intended full extent of the Memorial Avenue. It is possible that the project could be completed in the future.

3.3 Condition and Integrity

The trees on the eastern side of the road have been pruned in the past for line clearance. The overhead powerlines have been removed except for a section of bundled cabling extending from tree 1 to tree 8 (closest to the hotel). The repeated pruning has given the trees on the eastern side a distinct, upright, multiple-leadered, pollarded form as opposed to the basically natural form of the trees to the west.

Epicormic growth has contributed to the 'untidy' form of some trees. The western trees are generally single- or codominant-leadered, with main scaffold branches arching over the roadway in larger specimens.

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[33] *Conservation Management Plan Memorial Avenue, O'Connell*, Musescape Pty Ltd, David Beaver and Arborscapes Pty Ltd, RTA, December 1998, finalised May 1999

Apart from clearance for overhead wires, signs of limited removal of branches overhanging the road and possibly major deadwood, the trees show no evidence of remedial, formative, hazard reduction or cultural pruning works.

3.4 Physical Analysis

An inspection and analysis was prepared in 1999 by the arborists together with a detailed drawing numbering the 127 trees and tabulating their condition and character. Maintenance recommendations included tree protection, arboricultural significance, SULE Assessment and condition.

The above assessments guided subsequent maintenance work initiated by the Community Guardian s of the O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue.

3.5 Recent Restoration and Maintenance
TBC

**SECTION 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL
SIGNIFICANCE**

4.1 Comparative Analysis

The 1999 CMP included a broad comparative analysis and this was
supplemented in 2024 with a further analysis as part of the local
community's response to a recent threat to the Memorial Avenue. Also,
since 2004 *Treenet*[34], through its national Avenues of Honour project,
has been '*documenting original tree plantings commemorating the
military service, sacrifice and suffering made on behalf of
Australians'*[35]. The project aims to honour with a tree the memory of
every individual who has fallen in the service of Australia.

The following comparative analysis draws from various sources
including the 1999 CMP (Musecape/Beaver), the 2024 heritage
assessment (GML), Heritage NSW State Heritage Inventory (SHI), the
Australian Garden History Society database and the Treenet database
of their Avenues of Honour Project.

Treenet was established in 1997 to help improve Australia's urban
forests. The groups provides valuable advocacy, promotion, research,
education and facilitates priority projects. The Avenue of Honour
project was initiated in 2004 and has since brought together a large body
of valuable work. The Treenet website notes that the Avenues of
Honour project, is a national initiative to document, preserve, promote
and reinstate the original Avenues of Honour and to establish new
commemorative trees, honouring Australia's service men and women,
encompassing plantings related to the Boer War, WW1, WW2 and all
subsequent conflicts. The project is led and managed by TREENET, a
national not-for-profit organisation based in Adelaide, South Australia.

In 2008 Treenet published an initial analysis of Avenues of Honour
outlining the symbolism and man's long association with trees.[36] This
publication was subsequently supplemented in 2018[37]. Trees have been
valued as the focus of worship or as markers of important sites or
landmarks for centuries and the tree as a symbol of life and the cycle of
life, death and renewal is very common. Different tree species are often
associated with a specific meaning as well as the symbology associated
with trees in general. These associations are often rooted in ancient
history and mythology. Such associated meaning makes these trees a
natural choice for memorial avenues and may have influenced species

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[34] Treenet is a national, not-for-profit, environmental organisation that is committed to promoting the benefits of trees in urban environments
through research, education and community engagement https://treenet.org
[35] *Avenues of Honour, Guidelines to Developing and Sustaining an Avenue of Honour*, Treenet, Glenn Williams, August 2024
https://treenet.org/about-us/avenues-of-honour/
[36] *Avenues of Honour: Location assessment and management of war memorial tree avenues in Australia*, Sarah Cockerell, Treenet 2008
[37] *Avenues of Honour in the Landscape – Australian's Living Memorials*, Stuart Read, Australian Garden History Society, 2018

choice for Australia's avenues as much as aesthetic or climatic considerations.

When Australia was colonised by Europeans the planting of avenues and memorial trees was part of our cultural inheritance. One of the oldest intact avenues in Australia was planted in 1876 at Camperdown, Victoria. The exact number of memorial avenues in Australia is unknown and may be impossible to ever state definitively. Treenet's first survey in 2006 found 567 Avenues of Honour in Australia, (over half, estimated 325, in Victoria) most remaining in some form, some in depleted or poor condition. These are typically on public land, managed by local Councils, some with dedicated local management committees (RHSV, 2/2013). Of those 567, 2 are in the ACT, 67 in NSW, 52 in Queensland 38 in South Australia, 69 in Tasmania, 312 in Victoria and 27 in W.A[38].

The 1999 CMP also outlined aspects of symbolism of the tree and the Ash Tree in particular. In Christian iconography the tree symbolises life lived in accordance with God's plan : its annual cycle refers to life, death and resurrection. Apart from its suitability for the climatic conditions of the Central West Region, the Ash tree (*Fraxinus* sp.) has some historical symbolic associations which render it appropriate for war memorial avenue planting. To the ancient Greeks the ash tree was a symbol of stability. Ash was the wood used for spear shafts and is a metaphor for the weapon itself. In Scandinavian folklore the ash tree was known as *Yggdrasil*, the symbol of immortality and the link between the three levels of the cosmos[39].

The 1999 CMP identified the following examples of Memorial Avenues noting that "while many avenues of honour were planted in Victoria, there are few surviving examples in New South Wales. Even in the other states, many plantings have been removed for road improvements or redevelopments". The CMP includes relates details of each of the following examples:

South Australia
- **Anzac Highway (Adelaide to Glenelg),** planned by Anzac Memorial Highway League from 1917**.**
- **The Plantation & The Soldier's Memorial Avenue**, (formerly The Parade) & Prescott Terrace, Rose Park (Burnside City Council, South Australia). English Elm Trees
- **Cherry Gardens Soldiers' Memorial Park**, Cherry gardens road, Cherry Gardens (Happy Valley City Council). Cherry Trees.
- **Memorial Tree Avenue**, Arden Vale Road, Quorn.
- **Memorial Grove,** 11 Main Street, Peterborough.
- **Memorial Drive**, Tea Tree Gully. Pine Trees

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[38] *Avenues of Honour in the Landscape – Australian's Living Memorials*, Stuart Read, Australian Garden History Society, 2018
[39] *Conservation Management Plan Memorial Avenue, O'Connell*, Musescape Pty Ltd, David Beaver and Arborscapes Pty Ltd, RTA, December 1998, finalised May 1999

- **Soldiers Memorial Gardens,** Flinders Parade (Esplanade Street), Victor Harbour. Norfolk Pine Trees

Queensland
- **Roma** War Memorial and Heroes Avenue.

Victoria
- **Calder Woodburn Memorial Avenue**, Goulburn Valley Highway, south of Shepparton

New South Wales
- **Remembrance Driveway**, Hume and Federal Highways, Sydney to Canberra.
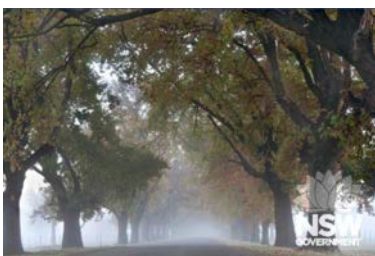- **Main street**, Harden - Murrumburrah

Western Australia
- **May Drive and Lovekin Drive**, Kings Park, Perth

In 2024 a further comparative analysis was undertaken to support community representations relating to potential threats to the O'Connell Memorial Avenue. The following examples were documented together with copies of their respective heritage listings and significance aspects and details:

New South Wales
- **Memorial trees, Barton Highway, Yass Valley** (Yass Valley LEP 2013, Item no. 99). London Plane Trees
- **AIF Memorial Avenue of Trees, Grafton Road, Armidale** (Armidale Dumaresq LEP 2012, Item no. 244). Poplar Trees
- **Memorial Avenue trees**, Bacon Street, Grafton (Clarence Valley LEP 2011, Item no 470); Jacarandas, Australia Wattle and Christmas Bush
- **King George V Avenue of Memorial English Oaks, King George V Memorial Avenue Tamworth** (SHR listing no. 01922). English Oak Trees.

Tamworth King George V Avenue (Source : *Heritage NSW Database)*

In regard to comparative values of the O'Connell and the Tamworth avenues it is important to note that the heritage listing for the King George V Avenue details that "*the Avenue is of state heritage significance for its aesthetic values as the carefully planned planting has allowed the distinctive growth habit of oak trees to form a cathedral or tunnel like effect as the branches have grown and interlocked over the roadway, making the avenue aesthetically distinctive. It is also one of the longest avenues in NSW being 2 kilometres long. Being the only avenue of oak trees planted in NSW, the avenue is aesthetically distinctive and has unique landmark qualities*". Some of these values are represented in a similar way at the O'Connell Memorial Avenue as it matures in the future.

As part of this current heritage assessment the following Memorial Avenues were identified in the immediate region :

Regional Examples

- **Kelso Memorial**, Hughes Street, Kelso; established before 1921 to commemorate WW1. Small row.
- **ANZAC Memorial Avenue, Bathurst Road, Orange;** established April 1923 to commemorate WW1. Single row
- **Soldiers Memorial Avenue, Lachlan Valley Way, Cowra.** Established 1917
- **ANZAC Avenue of Honour, Nangar Road, Canowindra;** established early to mid 1930s to commemorate WW1. Canadian Poplar, approx 100 trees over 580m, entry to town. Most of original trees removed and existing trees (fewer) taken from cuttings.
- **Avenue of Honour, Park Avenue, Blackheath,** established 1920 to commemorate WW1. Double row Common Rhododendron

The database managed by *Treenet* was searched for memorial avenues comprising Desert Ash plantings. The only other example remaining appears to be in South Australia but the O'Connell Avenue is a more complete example.

- **Avenue of Honour for the Fallen, Adelaide Road, Mount Barker**, the establishment of a WW1 soldier's memorial for the township of Mount Barker was first proposed in May 1918. It wasn't until the early 1920's after much community deliberation and fund raising the Avenue of Honour was planted either side of Wellington Road, from the show grounds to the district hospital. Originally, Desert Ash trees (*Fraxinus angustifolia* subsp. *angustifolia*) were ordered from a Government nursery in Mount Gambier and later other trees were planted, which are the Plane trees *Platanus* X *acerifolia* near the hospital. The database notes "*The situation today is an expanding urban environment in conflict with a disfigured and eroded avenue of trees which no longer serves as an appropriate monument to the soldiers from the Mount Barker community who served their country in World War One*".

The longest Avenue of Honour in Australia is **Remembrance Drive and Avenue Road, Ballarat, Central Highlands, Victoria**[40]**.** The avenue was established in 1917 and extends 22 km with 3,771 trees, each planted with a plaque dedicated to the individual men and women from Ballarat who enlisted their services in World War 1. Originally, 23 different species of trees were planted and these were mostly the traditional 'European' or exotic deciduous species popular at the time, including different types of Ash, Oak, Maple, Alder, Birch, Lime,

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[40] Virtual War Memorial Australia, *Ballarat Avenue of Honour* https://vwma.org.au/explore/memorials/2179

Poplar and Elm. Many of the original species planted did not flourish and new planting is mostly of the Quercus and Fraxinus varieties.

The comparative analysis indicates the following key aspects of the O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue that should be taken into consideration:

- Tree planting was part of a nationwide commemoration at the end of WW1 to commemorate those who gave their lives.
- Each memorial avenue is important to its local community, who were often involved in planting the trees in the memory of lives of local men and women lost in association with conflicts overseas.
- The type of planting ranges from individual trees to those planted in gardens as well as avenues (single and/or double rows) along a key entry road to a township.
- The species selected, spacing and the local environmental conditions greatly impacts how the memorial avenue grows and forms. The trees in the comparable examples are younger than the trees at O'Connell.
- Adequate funding and resources were typical obstacles that delayed, extended or curtailed the extent of projects.
- Intact examples of double row avenue planting are now rare both in the immediate region and farther afield in Australia.
- The use of Desert Ash trees was rare and the only other example in South Australia was not fully implemented and is in poor condition. The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue appears to be the only intact example of a Memorial Avenue of Desert Ash plantings in Australia.
- Remembrance Drive and Avenue Road in Ballarat is the longest Avenue of Honour in Australia, established in 1917, but many of the original plantings have been replaced. The Redcliffe Anzac Memorial Avenue in Queensland was established 1925 to commemorate the service and sacrifice of enlistees during WW1 appears to have been the longest in the State but weather and roadworks took their toll over the years. The King George V Avenue in Tamworth is the longest 'commemorative' avenue in NSW at approximately 2 kilometres, but was planted in 1936 as a memorial to a monarch and is not strictly a comparable ANZAC Avenue of Honour.
- The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue appears to be the longest avenue in the Central West region; extending just over 1km (3/4 mile). The Canowindra ANZAC Avenue of Honour extends approx 580m. The Canowindra avenue appears to be the closest comparable to the O'Connell Avenue in scale and character but the O'Connell avenue is more intact retaining almost a complete suite of original plantings with little damage resulting through roadworks as has occurred widely elsewhere in Australia including NSW. Perhaps if the O'Connell Memorial Avenue had been completed as originally envisaged

Canowindra ANZAC Avenue of Honour , Canadian Poplars (Source : *Treenet* Database

at approximately 2 miles (3.2kms) it is likely to have been the longest Avenue of Honour in NSW.

Assessment of Heritage Significance (Source : Heritage NSW, May 2023)

4.2 Assessment of Significance

The assessment follows the Heritage NSW guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria. The terms 'cultural significance', 'cultural heritage value', 'cultural heritage significance' and 'heritage significance' are often used interchangeably. *The Heritage Act 1977* uses 'heritage significance'. The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter defines 'cultural significance' as meaning the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. The term brings together all the cultural values of a place or object.

The Heritage Council of NSW criteria encompass the values of cultural significance as outlined in the Burra Charter, which are commonly accepted by government agencies, peak organisations and heritage professionals.

In NSW, four levels of heritage significance are recognised for places. All levels of heritage significance are important. Levels do not signify hierarchy or ranking of importance. The significance level indicates the context in which a place or object is important. This assessment is integral to being able to make good decisions about important places, particularly when change in some way is proposed:

- International
- National
- State
- Local

Gathering and summarising evidence is critical for both investigating and assessing heritage significance. In considering significance, it is important to objectively consider (i) the material elements of the place that contribute to its importance, and (ii) the intangible values of a place, such as ideas, traditions and other meanings of a place.

The assessment involves reference to the 7 standard criteria (a-g) developed by Heritage NSW. The significance criteria are:

- Criterion (a) Historic significance
- Criterion (b) Historical association
- Criterion (c) Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement
- Criterion (d) Social, cultural, and spiritual
- Criterion (e) Research potential
- Criterion (f) Rarity
- Criterion (g) Representativeness

A place needs to meet one or more of the criteria to be considered of heritage significance. Not all places or objects will meet all 7 criteria.

This assessment also draws together the earlier assessments of significance prepared in 1999, 2000, 2013, 2018, 2024 as part of the Conservation Management Plan, Draft State Heritage Inventory Sheet, the listing of the O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area, National Trust of Australia (NSW) listing and community initiative related to recent threats to the integrity of the O'Connell ANZAC Memorial respectively. Additional assessments have been included to address recent findings.

Criterion (a) Historic significance. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue is important in the course, or pattern, of cultural history in NSW and the Oberon and Bathurst region :*

- The erection of War Memorials and the planting of memorial Avenues was part of a national phenomenon which took place in Australia from the end of WWI, through the 1920s, and was repeated to a lesser extent after WWII. (State)
- The avenue is associated with the commemoration of local people who served in WW1 and is a good example of a memorial avenue in NSW. The bold intent of the original memorial was for the avenue to extend from the heart of the village to the Fish River crossing a considerable distance of almost 2 miles. (State)
- The avenue was intended to comprise over 500 trees and at least 225 desert ash trees were planted to complete the first stage. The trees have been located along O'Connell Road for 99 years with the 100 year commemorative anniversary in 2026. (State)

Heritage NSW Threshold Indicators:

Significance Indicator	State	Local
Association with an event, or series of events, of historical, cultural or natural significance	✓	✓
Demonstration of important periods or phases in history	✓	✓
Association with important cultural phases or movements	✓	✓
Demonstration of important historical, natural or cultural processes or activities	✓	✓
Symbolism and influence of place for its association with an important historical, natural or cultural event, period, phase or movement	✓	✓

Criterion (b) Historical association. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural history of NSW and the Oberon and Bathurst region :*

- The avenue was formally opened by Field Marshall Viscount Allenby in early 1926. General Sir Edmund Allenby led the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to victory in Palestine and Syria in 1917 and 1918. He successfully pioneered the combined use of infantry, cavalry, tanks, artillery and aeroplanes at the Battle

of Megiddo. Allenby's British Yeomanry, Australian and Indian cavalry units were particularly successful against the Turks at Gaza and Bersheeba (State)

- The initiative to establish an Avenue of Honour in O'Connell was driven during Edgar Allan Gornall's term as President of the O'Connell Progress Association with the first stage completed in January 1926. Gornall was from an early Bathurst family and enlisted in WW1 receiving the *1914/1915 Star, the British War Medal* and the *Victory Medal* for his active service. Gornall was also received a medal from *His Majesty, King Peter of Serbia, the Serbian Silver Medal* for his bravery in holding a telephone in the trenches on Gallipoli. It appears that he may have been one of the last service men to leave the Australian trenches during the evacuation of the ANZAC positions (State)

- Edgar Gornall later worked with the Condoblin community and served as an alderman and Mayor in the early 1920s before settling at O'Connell. In his later years he moved to the Sydney and continued to work with local community's, as illustrated by. The 'Edgar Gornall Wildflower Reserve' on the Collaroy escarpment. (Local)

Heritage NSW Threshold Indicators:

Significance Indicator	State	Local
A key phase(s) in the establishment or subsequent development at the place or object was undertaken by, or directly influenced by, the important person(s) or organisation.		
An event or series of events of historical importance occurring at the place or object were undertaken by, or directly influenced by, the important person(s) or organisation.	✓	✓
One or more achievements for which the person(s) or organisation are considered important are directly linked to the place or object.	✓	✓

Criterion (c) Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW and the Oberon and Bathurst region :*

- The avenue is an integral element of the O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area. The rural setting of the township within the O'Connell valley and its lush agricultural and pastoral land, surrounded by gently rising fields with the backdrop of Oberon's rugged forested hills is of high scenic significance. The listing of the HCA particularly notes that the approach to the village from the north is of particular significance with the picturesque rural vista from Cox's Hill, the crossing of the Fish

River and the passage through the Memorial Avenue of trees. (Local)

- The avenue is an integral part of a broader cultural landscape which is based on exotic deciduous trees and conifers planted in a pastoral setting. The seasonal effects, such as flowers and autumn foliage contribute to the aesthetic significance of the Avenue which is representative of its type at least a regional level.

- The avenue is a visual landmark located close to the centre of the village. It is also the main unifying element in the village of O'Connell, the avenue links the various historic buildings along the Bathurst - Oberon Road and identifies the location of the village to motorists travelling along the road. (Local)

- The canopies of the ash trees create an arched space below that is evocative of the interior of a gothic cathedral, although the design intention has not been fully realised because the trees on one side of the road have been pollarded in the past to clear former powerlines. Although the canopies do not fully meet currently, they still create a strongly legible avenue that is a striking feature in the landscape and as experienced from the roadway. (Local)

Significance Indicator	State	Local
Recognition as a landmark or distinctive aesthetic natural environment		✓
Recognition of artistic or design excellence		✓
Represents a breakthrough or innovation in design, fabrication or construction technique, including design/technological responses to changing social conditions		
Distinctiveness as a design solution, treatment or use of technology	✓ Desert Ash	✓
Adapts technology in a creative manner or extends the limits of available technology		

Criterion (d) Social, cultural, and spiritual. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons in the Oberon and Bathurst region*

- The avenue has strong social significance to the O'Connell community. This is clearly illustrated from the community commitment and passion at the heart of the scale and form of the 1925 project. The same commitment is evident today in the response and sensitive management and care of the avenue by the community. The O'Connell community also have a strong attachment to the wider cultural landscape of the O'Connell valley which has been evident over many years from their positive efforts to appropriately manage its landscape and environment to ensure that its qualities are not eroded. The

O'Connell Progress Association in 1925 is likely to have been the first formal representation of those special associations which have continued through to today. (Local)

- The concept of the avenue with its use of Desert Ash trees may have mythological associations and are symbolic in certain cultures of both soldiers and immortality. The ash tree has been a symbol of life, healing, and magic for centuries. It has been used in many religions and folklore tales as a "world tree" or "tree of life", which is a cosmic pillar that connects the heavens, Earth, and underworld. The avenue's cultural value is enhanced by the fact that it is one of only two surviving examples of such plantings in NSW and the O'Connell avenue is unique being substantially intact. (State)

- A measure of social significance is the esteem in which an item is held by the contemporary community or recognisable groups within that community. The avenue is recognised by authoritative conservation organisations as an important component of the settlement of O'Connell. In 1974 the O'Connell Conservation Area was one of the first to be listed in New South Wales by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). In 1977 the conservation area was recognised Nationally with inclusion in the former Register of the National Estate. Both of the above listings referred to the Memorial Avenue. The Avenue itself was listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 2018. These are all clear indicators of the esteem in which the Avenue is held by the contemporary community or recognisable groups within that community and New South Wales (State)

- The establishment of the avenue in 1925 required considerable effort, funding and resources, all of which were only made possible by local community action, which reinforces the importance of the memorial in the hearts and minds of the O'Connell community.

- A major aspect of the social significance of the avenue lies in its continuing value to the local community in providing an important link with the past. The avenue provides a distinct identity to the settlement which is valued highly by many in the contemporary community. Evidence of this may be seen in the decoration of the trees with red poppies made by the Village Preservation Group for Armistice Day since 1996. ANZAC Day services are held annually at the Avenue and the commemorations are well attended by the community. This action highlights the memorial function of the avenue which is not immediately apparent to passers-by. (Local)

Significance Indicator	State	Local
Highly regarded by a community as a key landmark (built feature, landscape or streetscape) within the physical environment	✓	✓

Important to the community as a landmark within social and political history		✓
Important as a place of symbolic meaning and community identity		✓
Important as a place of public socialisation		✓
Important as a place of community service (including health, education, worship, pastoral care, communications, emergency services, museums)		✓ ANZAC Service
Important in linking the past affectionately to the present		✓

Criterion (e) Research potential. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the cultural history of the Oberon and Bathurst region*:

- The Avenue is a benchmark for research into the performance of exotic tree species in a particular locality. Its research value is enhanced by the fact that the years of planting are known and the arboricultural investigations carried out previously and for the CMP and later restoration and maintenance works have yielded considerable data which can be used by others and supplemented in the future. As discussed, the avenue of Desert Ash is a rare example of World War I memorial planting in a state context and has the potential to add to our knowledge of this Australian social custom. (State)
- The involvement of Regional and State Government in the selection and propagation of the Desert Ash is an important aspect of their research potential. The seeds were sourced from the Middle East. The trees were recommended by the Department of Agriculture as being 'a most beautiful tree' and at this time, the Bathurst Experimental Farm were growing the trees for the Sydney Botanical Gardens, therefore, they were able to supply the trees to the O'Connell Progress Association (State)

Significance Indicator	State	Local
A comparative analysis suggests that further research at the place or of an object could improve our understanding of NSW's past histories and environments	✓	✓
Potential to improve knowledge of a little-recorded aspect of an area's past or to fill gaps in our existing knowledge of the past		
Potential to inform/confirm unproven historical concepts or research questions relevant to our past		
Potential to provide information about single or multiple periods of occupation or use		

Potential to yield site-specific information that would contribute to an understanding of significance against other criteria	✓ WW1 Desert Ash	✓

Criterion (f) Rarity. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue possesses uncommon or rare or endangered aspects of cultural history* in NSW and the Oberon and Bathurst region:

- The O'Connell HCA has identified State rarity values as detailed in the 2013 listing; the combination of early history, early settlement patterns, high degree of intactness of the worked rural landscape, high degree of intactness of the traditional buildings and high aesthetic values of the overall river valley setting are rare in NSW. Many of the characteristics of a small 19th C rural English hamlet, transferred to Australia through the early European settlers, are still evident in the character, scale and setting of the village of O'Connell and its buildings. The ANZAC Memorial Avenue is located in the heart of the HCA. (State)
- The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial was originally envisaged to extend from the centre of the village to the Fish River crossing, approximately 2 miles (3.2km). If completed as first conceived, it was likely to have been the longest Avenue of Honour in NSW at the time.

Significance Indicator	State	Local
Rare surviving evidence of an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in an area's history that continues to be practised or is no longer practised		
Evidence of a rare historical activity that was considered distinctive, uncommon or unusual at the time it occurred		
Distinctiveness in demonstrating an unusual historical, natural, architectural, archaeological, scientific, social or technical attribute(s) that is of special interest	✓ Intactness Desert Ash Length (orig concept)	✓
Demonstrates an unusual composition of historical, natural, architectural, archaeological, scientific, social or technical attributes that are of greater importance or interest as a composition/collection	✓ Intactness Desert Ash Length (orig concept)	✓

Criterion (g) Representativeness. *The O'Connell ANZAC Memorial Avenue is important in demonstrating the principle characteristics of a early 20th Century Avenues of Honour in NSW and the Oberon and Bathurst region :*

- The avenue is a highly intact representative example of an early 20th Century living memorial. It incorporates the key aspects of these commemorative memorial avenues, including use of a

specific tree species that have strong associations with WW1 and the wider symbolism of lives lost. The Avenue is listed on the respective databases of monuments and memorials and in Australia.

Significance Indicator	State	Local
A class of places or objects that demonstrate an aesthetic composition, design, architectural style, applied finish or decoration of historical importance	✓ Intactness	✓
Representative of a class of places that demonstrate a construction method, engineering design, technology, or use of materials, of historical importance		
Representative of a class of places that demonstrate an historical land use, environment, function, or process, of historical importance		
Representative of a class of places that demonstrates an ideology, custom or way of life of historical importance	✓ Avenues of Honour	✓

4.3 Statement of Significance

The ANZAC Memorial Avenue in O'Connell was originally conceived in 1925 to extend from the heart of the O'Connell Village to the Fish River; a considerable distance of approximately 2 miles. The establishment of the memorial was not fully realised at the time but the completed section today still represents a highly significant Avenue of Honour in New South Wales. The Memorial has State and Local level cultural significance demonstrated in its historical, associational, aesthetic, social, research and representative values. Aspects of its form, material and character, such as the largely intact double row of Desert Ash plantings spanning over a kilometre of a major road are rare in NSW, if not Australia. Many avenues elsewhere in Australia from the period have suffered from the challenges of climate, weather, pests, road works and other environmental damage.

The erection of War Memorials and the planting of memorial Avenues was part of a national phenomenon which took place in Australia from the end of WWI, through the 1920s, and was repeated to a lesser extent after WWII The O'Connell avenue commemorates local people who served in WW1 and was initiated and implemented by the local community through the O'Connell Progress Association. The O'Connell avenue has significant associational values with the opening of the completed section in January 1926 by General Sir Edmund Allenby who led the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to victory in Palestine and Syria in 1917 and 1918.

Edgar Allan Gornall (Eddie) appears to have been the driving force of the local Progress Association at the time. Eddie was from an early

Bathurst family and enlisted in WW1 receiving the *1914/1915 Star, the British War Medal* and the *Victory Medal* for his active service. Eddie also received a medal from *His Majesty, King Peter of Serbia, the Serbian Silver Medal* for his bravery in holding a telephone in the trenches on Gallipoli. It appears that he may have been one of the last service men to leave the Australian trenches during the evacuation of the ANZAC positions.

The Memorial Avenue is an integral element of the O'Connell Heritage Conservation Area. The rural setting of the township within the O'Connell valley and its lush agricultural and pastoral land, surrounded by gently rising fields with the backdrop of Oberon's rugged forested hills is of high scenic significance. The listing of the HCA particularly notes that the approach to the village from the north is of particular significance with the picturesque rural vista from Cox's Hill, the crossing of the Fish River and the passage through the Memorial Avenue of trees. The avenue is a visual landmark located close to the centre of the village. It is also the main unifying element in the village of O'Connell, the avenue links the various historic buildings along the Bathurst - Oberon Road and identifies the location of the village to motorists travelling along the road.

O'Connell has a rich history and was located close to the main road west for many years. It is a relatively small tightly knit rural community. The avenue has strong social significance to the O'Connell community which is clearly illustrated by the community commitment and passion at the heart of the memorial project in 1925. The establishment of the avenue in 1925 required considerable effort, funding and resources, all of which were only made possible by local community action. The same commitment is evident today in the response and sensitive management and care of the avenue by the community. The O'Connell community also have a strong attachment to the wider cultural landscape of the O'Connell valley which has been evident over many years from their positive efforts to appropriately manage its landscape and environment to ensure that its qualities are not eroded.

The avenue provides a distinct identity to the settlement which is valued highly by many in the contemporary community. Evidence of this may be seen in the decoration of the trees with red poppies made by the Village Preservation Group for Armistice Day since 1996. ANZAC Day services are held annually at the Avenue and the commemorations are well attended by the community.

A measure of social significance is the esteem in which an item is held by the contemporary community or recognisable groups within that community. The avenue is recognised by authoritative conservation organisations as an important component of the settlement of O'Connell. The involvement of Regional and State Government in the selection and propagation of the Desert Ash is an important aspect of their research potential. The trees were recommended by the

Department of Agriculture as being 'a most beautiful tree' and at this time, the Bathurst Experimental Farm were growing the trees for the Sydney Botanical Gardens, therefore, they were able to supply the trees to the O'Connell Progress Association.

The O'Connell HCA has identified State rarity values as detailed in the 2013 listing; the combination of early history, early settlement patterns, high degree of intactness of the worked rural landscape, high degree of intactness of the traditional buildings and high aesthetic values of the overall river valley setting are rare in NSW. Many of the characteristics of a small 19th C rural English hamlet, transferred to Australia through the early European settlers, are still evident in the character, scale and setting of the village of O'Connell and its buildings. The ANZAC Memorial Avenue is located in the heart of the HCA.

The avenue is a highly intact representative example of an early 20th Century living memorial. It incorporates the key aspects of these commemorative memorial avenues, including use of a specific tree species that have strong associations with WW1 and the wider symbolism of lives lost. The Avenue is listed on the respective databases of monuments and memorials and in Australia.

SECTION 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Avenues of Honour are living memorials. Australia's 1914 population of 3 million had 415,000 in military service in World War 1. 60,000 died. This was one in five, leaving lasting scars. Honour Avenues are poignant reminders of patriotism and community spirit. We need to conserve them, gain heritage listings and better management for their future[41].

Apart from their cultural significance, Avenues of Honour are under the many of the threats experienced by urban trees generally. Research undertaken by Treenet since 1997 shows that the management of urban trees has become increasingly complex and important as Australia has developed and in many cases, avenues that were planted in semi-rural environments are now in the middle of towns. This has often resulted in conflicts between the trees and the progress of modern infrastructure[42].

However, it is the irreplaceable social significance of Avenues of Honour that is crucial in their future care and management. An article in 2008 by Sarah Cockerel summarises the importance in conserving these living memorials :

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[41] *Australia's Avenues of Honour, Living Memorials*, paper International Symposium, Tree Avenues – From War to Peace, Stuart Read, 2018
[42] *Avenues of Honour: Location assessment and management of war memorial tree avenues in Australia*, Sarah Cockerel, Treenet 2008

One of the most notable features of the planting of memorial avenues in Australia was the level of community involvement. These avenues were almost always planned, organised, paid for and planted by local community groups. This did usually involve the local council to some extent, particularly as they were generally responsible for the long-term management of the trees, but very few involved State or Federal Government. In fact, larger government bodies have had difficulty in replicating local efforts and grander plans such as the Roads of Remembrance Project have had many difficulties over the years. Therefore the avenues' cultural significance is twofold. Nationally these avenues represent a unifying need for a commemoration of the sacrifices of two world wars and a popular desire for a living memorial to the dead. At a local level, each avenue is a very personal monument for the community that created it. In some cases, almost the entire town was involved in designing, planting or paying for the avenue and trees were regularly planted by relatives of the soldiers the commemorated. They not only symbolise a community's grief over the losses of war but also the communities pride in their people and their town. Such communal events are great milestones in the history of a local community.

Another unusual quality of these memorials is that their significance is not necessarily tied to one or two historical events. These memorials are not static and can be modified or added to without damaging their value as a memorial for earlier events. Often new trees are added to old avenues to commemorate new conflicts and soldiers. This means the avenue can be a symbol for all the community's war dead rather than simply representing a single conflict.

Recommendations
The Oberon Council – Minutes – Extraordinary Meeting – 11 June 2024 adopted the following recommendations:

1. *Update the draft State Heritage Inventory Sheet for the Avenue of Trees at O'Connell*
2. *Prepare a Planning Proposal for the individual listing of the Avenue of Trees at O'Connell as a local item for inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Oberon LEP 2013*
3. *Advise the local community in O'Connell to consider liaising with Heritage NSW, based on the State level assessment of the 1998 CMP, with a longer-term view of nominating the Avenue of Trees for inclusion separately on the State Heritage Register.*

Based on the findings of this heritage assessment it is recommended that Items 1 and 2 of the above can be supported. As such, the State Heritage Inventory sheet for the ANZAC Memorial Avenue in O'Connell has been completed and is attached in the Appendix to this assessment for inclusion within the formal Planning Proposal to the Department of Environment & Planning.

SECTION 6.0 KEY REFERENCES

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O'Connell, Avenue of Trees, Proposed Heritage Listing, Christo Aitken&Associates heritage report prepared for Oberon Council meeting 6 April 2024

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SECTION 7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Related statutory Listings and Community Recognition

7.2 Related Newspaper Articles and Extracts

7.3 Related Family History Material

7.4 Draft State Heritage Inventory Sheet (SHI 2210207)