

TREENET AVENUES OF HONOUR PROJECT 1915 – 2015

PROGRESS REPORT

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A National Project which aims to honour with a tree the memory of every individual who has made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of all Australians, by documenting, preserving and reinstating the original and establishing new Avenues of Honour by the Centenary of Anzac in 2015.

At the Inaugural National Street Tree Symposium in Adelaide in 2000 a vision was put forward for the new millenium including the establishment of more avenues and boulevards of long lived tree species to enhance the visual and environmental amenity of roadways across the country. This kindled an interest in what had happened to the many memorial Avenues of Honour planted in the first half century following the landing on Gallipoli by the Anzacs. It soon became clear that no comprehensive National survey of memorial Avenues had been undertaken, and that as they had never been documented, it was likely that many had disappeared and that many more whose significance had been lost would soon follow. The condition of the relatively few well known memorial Avenues was a cause of great concern and the urgent need to carry out proper assessments and remediation was evident if these were to survive beyond the centenary of our first campaign as a Nation. With greater knowledge of the processes involved and the recent emergence of the arboricultural profession in Australia we have a wonderful opportunity to restore fading avenues and to replant those that have been lost.

However these Avenues are not only about trees.

More importantly these Avenues honour the remembrance of those individual who made the ultimate sacrifice for each of us who are fortunate to call ourselves Australians. It is clear that each Avenue had its own story, be it of campaigns, battalions, communities or individuals and that these stories are as important to preserve as the trees that shape them. A major task of this project is to gather these stories and make them freely and readily accessible on this website and wherever the Avenues are located.

And so it was that the TREENET vision took shape and the Avenues of Honour 1915-2015 project was launched at the 2004 National Street Tree Symposium on September 2nd 2004. A dedication ceremony followed with the planting by delegates of 100 rosemary bushes originating from stock brought back by a wounded digger repatriated from Anzac cove to Keswick Barracks SA in 1915.

By September 2004:

- A Survey of avenues nationwide had commenced - over 100 councils were contacted as well as RSL branches, community groups and some private individuals.
- Site visits to ACT, NSW, SA, VIC, and WA undertaken.

- Project officially launched at 5th National Street Tree Symposium with keynote presentations made to 200 delegates from all States.
- A ceremonial planting of Gallipoli rosemary hedge performed at the Waite Institute.
- An article about the project was published in *The Australian Arbor Age* magazine.
- Some television and radio coverage occurred asking for public assistance with avenues location.

At the project launch the initial survey had identified 184 avenues but had failed to confirm the health or even the continued presence of many of these avenues planted after the First World War. Clearly the research required was going to be more intensive than anyone had guessed. Fortunately the media coverage and word of mouth began to result in many interested members of the public contacting Treenet with information and offers of support.

Public Response:

- Information and encouragement from local council arborists, RSL branches and local history groups.
- Great deal of public interest; for instance, a large number of calls were received after a radio broadcast – the number of avenues known to exist in South Australia rose from 19 to over 50.
- Offers to assess the condition of existing avenues received from several private arborists in different states.
- Over 350 avenues have now been identified and there are likely to be more discovered.

With continuing public support it is clear that we are going to amass a huge amount of Arboricultural and historical data about these avenues. A website dedicated to this project was always planned and is currently in construction. Some information is already available online and the next priority is to develop the interactive database that will allow anyone to access our research and add to it.

The Avenues of Honour Web Site (www.avenuesofhonour.org) will:

- Provide the information to the public – accessible from libraries, schools, Universities, etc – anywhere with an Internet connection.
- Allow for community interaction; uploading of pictures, reporting of avenues, commenting on existing information, etc.
- Provide a central database of Avenues of Honour information.
- Assist in the co-ordination of community activities and standardise data collection.
- Provide links data to other tree databases and scientific research – initially TREENET (www.treenet.org) and the Waite Arboretum (www.adelaide.edu.au/waitearboretum/). This sharing of data will mean being able to provide more useful data to assist with the management of the trees and improvement of existing avenues. For example, providing locations of avenues to local government arboricultural staff.

Development of the website and database is going to take time and effort as well as support from many government and community organisations. Such support has

already been forthcoming and Treenet would like to thank Brisbane City Council in particular for their generous contribution.

Earlier this year Treenet sent letters about the project to all members of Federal Parliament to inform them about avenues within their electorates and ask for their support. Although the response was not comprehensive we have received strong encouragement from those who have replied. It is clear that this project has wide interest and appeal across all states and political parties.

Table 1: Federal MP's responses

Full Name	Position	Party	Electorate	State	Response	Actions
The Hon John Anderson	Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Nationals, Minister for Transport and Regional Services	Nats	Gwydir	NSW	Supports project	
The Hon Kevin Andrews	Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	LP	Menzies	Vic	Supports project	
The Hon Kim Beazley	Leader of the Opposition	ALP	Brand	WA	Supports project	Suggested local contacts
Ms Sharon Bird		ALP	Cunningham	NSW	Expressed interest	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
The Hon Julie Bishop	Minister for Ageing	LP	Curtin	WA	Expressed interest	Asked for more information on local avenues
The Hon Malcolm Thomas	Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer	LP	Longman	Qld	Probable Support	Media Advisor to Mr Brough is tracking down information on avenues with help of local media
The Hon Simon Crean		ALP	Hotham	Vic	Strong Support	Willing to offer submissions to parliament on behalf of project.
Mrs Kay Elson		LP	Forde	Qld	Expressed interest	Suggested local contacts
Mr Martin Ferguson		ALP	Batman	Vic	Supports project	Willing to help with research into avenues.
Mr John Forrest	Chief Whip to the Nationals	Nats	Mallee	Vic	Supports project	Would like to talk further about project
Mr Steve Gibbons		ALP	Bendigo	Vic	Expressed interest	Would like to meet to discuss project
Ms Julia Gillard	Shadow Minister for Health	ALP	Lalor	Vic	Expressed interest	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
Mr Luke Hartsuyker		Nats	Cowper	NSW	Expressed interest	
The Hon David Hawker	Speaker	LP	Wannon	Vic	Supports project	Willing to raise awareness of project in Canberra
Mr Chris Hayes		ALP	Werriwa	NSW	Expressed interest	Suggested local contacts
The Hon John Howard	Prime Minister	LP	Bennelong	NSW	Expressed interest	Written on our behalf to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.
The Hon Greg Hunt	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage	LP	Flinders	Vic	Supports project	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
The Hon Robert Katter		Ind	Kennedy	Qld	Expressed interest	Suggested local contacts

The Hon Duncan Kerr		ALP	Denison	Tas	Expressed interest	Suggested local contacts
Ms Catherine King		ALP	Ballarat	Vic	Expressed interest	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
Ms Kirsten Livermore		ALP	Capricornia	Qld	Expressed interest	Asked for more information on local avenues
Ms Jenny Macklin	Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Education, Training, Science and Research	ALP	JagaJaga	Vic	Expressed interest	Referred letter to Shadow Minister of Environment and Heritage, and Shadow minister for Defence Planning, Procurement and Personnel. Passed letter on to relevant local groups
The Hon Peter McGauran	Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	Nats	Gippsland	Vic	Out of Office reply	
Mr Daryl Melham		ALP	Banks	NSW	Expressed interest	Is currently investigating memorial plantings in Banks.
Mr Kym Richardson		LP	Kingston	SA	Supports project	Written on our behalf to Minister for Veterans Affairs. Willing to help with research into avenues.
Mr Kevin Rudd		ALP	Griffith	Qld	Supports project	Suggested local contacts
The Hon Phillip Ruddock		LP	Berowra	NSW	Expressed interest	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
Mr Alby Schultz	Chair, standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	LP	Hume	NSW	Expressed interest	Willing to help with local contacts
The Hon Dr Sharman Stone	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration	LP	Murray	Vic	Supports project	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
Mr Kelvin Thomson	Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Roads, Shadow Minister for Housing and Urban Development	ALP	Wills	Vic	Expressed interest	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
The Hon Warren Truss	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Nats	Wide Bay	Qld	Expressed interest	
The Hon Wilson Tuckey		LP	O'Connor	WA	Standard response	
The Hon Danna Vale		LP	Hughes	NSW	Expressed interest	Passed letter on to relevant local groups
Mr Barry Wakelin		LP	Grey	SA	Supports project	Would like to talk further about project
Mr Tony Windsor		Ind	New England	NSW	Strong Support	Written on our behalf to Minister for Veterans Affairs. Would be pleased to discuss project.
Mr Jason Wood		LP	La Trobe	Vic	Supports project	Suggested several possible funding sources. Willing to help with local and federal contacts.
The Hon Peter Costello	Treasurer	LP	Higgins	Vic	Standard response	Referred letter to Minister for Veterans Affairs

Ms Julie Owens		ALP	Parramatta	NSW	Expressed interest	Investigating with local RSL groups for any further information to pass on.
The Hon Bruce Scott	Chairman Defence sub-committee. Joint standing committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. Acting Deputy Speaker.	Nats	Maranoa	Qld	Expressed interest	Has provided some local information. Willing to talk further.
The Hon Judi Moylan		LP	Pearce	WA	Supports project	Has investigated local avenues. Offered support for new avenue in electorate.

The avenues Project has really only just begun. We have historical and Arboricultural details on only a fraction of the avenues identified and have not even begun to implement replanting or restoration plans. Currently we are steadily forming links with other community groups who are already researching, restoring and maintaining their own local avenues. Clearly this project is very timely and judging by the ever increasing community awareness and concern it is guaranteed to succeed.

What still needs to be done?

- Further promotion of project for community awareness and support.
- Contacts network expanded, especially local community and RSL groups.
- Record oral history and locate records of known avenues where possible.
- Photograph and record GIS data for existing avenues and assess the condition of trees and plaques.
- Publish freely all information on website including searchable list of names associated with trees and locations of relevant avenues.
- Encourage local schools, community groups and organisations to be involved in all aspects of the project especially restoration and replanting.
- Commence long term monitoring of trees and plaques.
- Determine with others appropriate strategies for commemorating all unrepresented combatants lost in service.
- Negotiate sites for new avenues with State and Federal Road Authorities.
- Plant new avenues for a new century and for all unrepresented combatants lost in service.

What will be achieved by the Centenary of Anzac Day.

- Increased community awareness and pride in all our serving men and women, especially those who died in the conflicts of our first century as a Nation. Including an honour roll naming those who supplied information or supported the project.
- National database of avenues with all information freely available on the web.
- All soldiers killed in war commemorated with a tree.
- All avenues restored to good health, maintained and protected.
- 103,000 trees planted in prominent locations providing enduring cultural, aesthetic and environmental benefits.