

Brachychiton Rupestris - The Unique Bottle Tree

Sure, Bottle Trees can be found across Australia. From Rockhampton to Brisbane, to Sydney and Melbourne you'll find this distinctive native Australian, but you won't find anywhere that the tree dominates the skyline or countryside like Roma.

The Heroes Avenue

In common with many Australian towns, Roma saw a great number of its young men enlist in that "War to end all Wars" of 1914 - 1918. Around 10% of those enlisting from this district did not return and rest on the battlefields of Europe.

In 1918 with the war still raging, the then Mayor of Roma, Alderman Miscamble, noted that progressive towns had planted memorial avenues of trees.

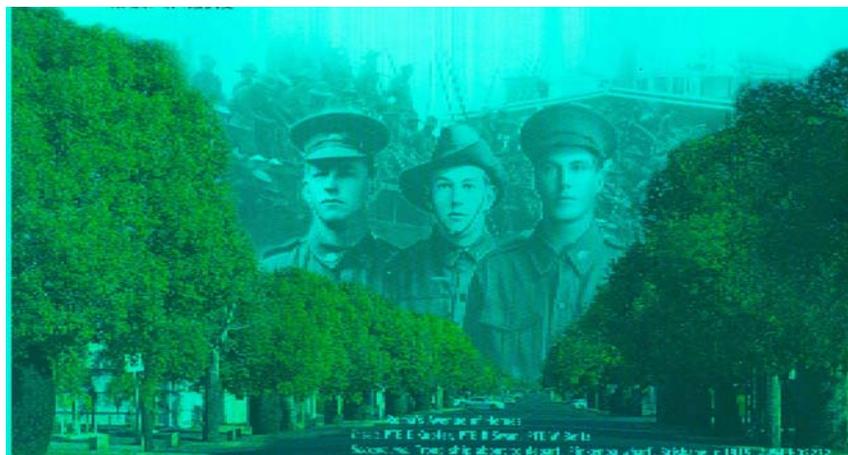
There had been some time earlier, a Council resolution to form an ANZAC Avenue in Roma and the Mayor proposed that planting should commence. Miscamble referred to the proposed project as the Heroes' Avenue. After considering several species, the Bottle Tree was selected and the first one planted was in honour of Lt./Cl. Norman Saunders. This tree, Roma's "Tree of Knowledge", was planted at the Post Office on September 20, 1918.

Originally, each tree was fenced and bore a copper plate engraved with a particular soldier's name. In a project of 1994-95, trees of the avenue which had died were replaced and each now has adjacent to it, a concrete block with an aluminium plate engraved with known details of the man to whom it is dedicated.

Heroes Avenue extends from in front of Roma's Railway Station in Station Street along Wyndham Street, then into Bungil Street ending at the Cenotaph. ANZAC Day marches continue to follow the line of trees.

The original Tree of Knowledge was some 6.7 metres in circumference (not the largest in Roma), and gets its title from more leisurely days when it was common to see locals seated on the bench about the tree, solving the world's problems in general.

Many of the engraved plates on the trees bear quite detailed information of each soldier's death. Because there are often no descendants of these fallen heroes in Roma, many trees have been "adopted" by groups and individuals, in order that, on ANZAC Day, trees in the Avenue bears a wreath.



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