

**Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority
(Supported by RSLWA and Honours Avenue Group)**

**Centenary of the dedication of the Honour Avenues and first Memorial
Plaques Service**

**Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC
Governor of Western Australia**

Saturday, 3rd August 2019

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past, present and future.

Today marks the centenary of the opening of the State's first Honour Avenue on May Drive in Kings Park on 3rd August 1919, dedicated to Western Australian servicemen who lost their lives while serving for Australia in the Great War, 1914 – 1918.

It was the fifth anniversary of the declaration of World War I when the Governor of Western Australia at that time, Sir William Ellison-Macartney, officially opened the May Drive Honour Avenue here at May Circle.

Despite adverse weather conditions with driving rain and wind, around 2,000 people including Government Ministers attended this inaugural State and public dedication ceremony.

It was a significant event at which the Governor read a message from Her Majesty Queen Mary, the Salvation Army Band performed and local Scouts and school students attended the formal proceedings to pay their respects.

The crowd witnessed the planting and dedication of 404 trees and memorial plaques to honour individual servicemen who had enlisted in Western Australia and had died overseas in conflict. The trees were planted in unison on the day, after a single gunshot rang out to signal the coordinated plantings.

Each plaque carried the rank, name, age, service unit, place and year of death of the soldiers, most of whom had lost their lives in the attack on Gallipoli or in warfare in France and Belgium.

Over 6,000 Western Australian servicemen lost their lives while serving in World War I, many of whom were buried overseas or remain missing and have no known grave.

Mr Arthur Lovekin, a member of the Kings Park Board since 1895, raised the idea of the May Drive Honour Avenue in 1918, to honour the many Western Australians who had fallen during the Great War.

The Kings Park Board agreed that an avenue of oak seedlings would be planted, many of which had been grown from acorns sent to Lovekin by Queen Mary, collected from the Great Park at Windsor.

The planted avenue originally extended from the statue of Sir John Forrest through to Saw Avenue. This was extended further to the southwest in 1920 to meet the demand for additional plaques.

Unfortunately, the original oak trees failed to thrive and were replaced with Bangalay (*Eucalyptus botryoides*) in the 1940s, which proved to be a more robust species choice.

After World War II, a second Honour Avenue was planted with Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), and dedicated in 1948 with plaques honouring those that had fallen during the Second World War.

The demand for plaques continued over time to such an extent that a third Honour Avenue was established along Marri Walk off May Drive, planted with Marri trees (*Corymbia calophylla*). In addition, many of the trees along Lovekin and May Drives now host more than one plaque.

More than 10,000 names of Western Australian service personnel who have lost their lives while serving this country are inscribed on the State War Memorial in Kings Park.

Almost 1,800 of those are represented in the Kings Park Honour Avenues, as a poignant reminder to all who pass by, of the unselfish sacrifice they made in serving their country for the benefit of future generations.

The plaques bear witness to the youth of those who died and the circumstances of their deaths overseas and far from their homes – some were killed in action or wounded and later died of wounds, other died as prisoners of war or are missing and have no known grave.

The Kings Park Honour Avenues form a significant, living memorial that commemorates the lives, service and sacrifices of those who have fallen in military service for Australia.

Kings Park and Botanic Garden holds a special place in the hearts and minds of many Western Australians, with ceremonial and commemorative services forming meaningful connections within the community and across generations.

The presence and prominence of the Avenues of Honour in Kings Park, along with the tradition of dedication services that commenced 100 years ago and continues today, will ensure that Western Australians have the opportunity to pay their respects and honour those who have fallen.

We will remember them.