

ACT Government

2019-20 Budget Consultation Input

This submission may be made public

Organisation: The Remembrance Driveway Committee Inc.

Proposal: Construction of a slip road from the Federal Highway into Valour Park, Watson, ACT.

Benefit: Improved access to Valour Park and improved safety for cars leaving the Federal Highway at that point.

Background

The Remembrance Driveway Committee is responsible for management of the Remembrance Driveway between Sydney and Canberra. The Driveway was launched in 1954, with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh each planting a Plane tree in Macquarie Place Sydney, marking the beginning of the Driveway. In 2002 three Red Spotted Gums were planted by the Governor-General in the Remembrance Park, behind the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, to mark the Canberra end of the Driveway.

The Driveway serves as a living memorial to all those who have served in war and peacekeeping operations. The Victoria Cross Rest Area Project was initiated in 1995 with the aim of creating rest areas and memorial parks to honour posthumous Australian recipients of the Victoria Cross from World War II and Vietnam.

In 2013 the Remembrance Driveway Committee resolved that Victoria Cross memorials could be developed whilst the recipients were living and planning was started for a memorial to Keith Payne VC. Recently an area has been allocated within Valour Park for a memorial to honour the four Victoria Cross Australia recipients from the Afghanistan conflict (one of whom was awarded the VC posthumously).

The Site

Valour Park is on the Federal Highway, Watson, ACT and is part of the Remembrance Driveway between Sydney and Canberra.

The Apex Grove on the Remembrance Driveway was planted at Watson in 1957, and locally known as Apex Park, it functioned as a memorial to members of the volunteer organisation who perished in war. The park later included a memorial to honour 'junior farmers who made the supreme sacrifice in service to their country'. The widening of the Federal Highway in front of the park blocked easy vehicle access and use of the park decreased. Following years of neglect, the park has been revitalised to include improved landscape amenity for the residents of Watson and visitors to the park.

Planned Memorial

The Remembrance Driveway Committee intends to honour the recipients of the Victoria Cross for Australia from the war in Afghanistan with a memorial in Valour Park. Recipients are:

- Trooper Mark G Donaldson VC – Awarded 16 June 2009
- Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC MG- Awarded 23 January 2011
- Corporal Daniel Alan Keighran VC- Awarded 1 November 2012

- Corporal Cameron Steward Baird, VC MG- awarded posthumously 18 February 2014.

It is intended that a precinct within the park be developed to provide appropriate recognition of the recipients. This may include a sculptural component, seating, signage and paving, designed as a significant 'place' to honour the contribution these recipients have each made.

The Remembrance Driveway Committee is working with the ACT Transport Canberra and City Services and the National Capital Authority in developing the memorial.

Access

The park has pedestrian access from the Federal Highway as well as the adjacent residential area off Tay Street. There is an unmade access track from the Federal Highway and cars do pull off the highway to gain access to Valour Park.

A properly constructed slip road with small paved parking area will both; increase access to Valour Park, very important when the Memorial is in place, and improve safety for cars wishing to leave the highway at that point.

Timeframe

The Remembrance Driveway Committee is working towards a late 2020 opening of the new memorial and would like to see the roadwork completed by then.



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