

**Heritage Overlay No.:** 077  
**Citation No.:** 211  
**Place:** War Memorial, Melton

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**Other Names of Place:** N/A  
**Location:** High Street, Melton  
**Critical Dates:** 1920s, 1998.  
**Existing Heritage Listings:** None  
**Recommended Level of Significance:** LOCAL



**Statement of Significance:**

The First World War, Second World War, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials, on High Street Melton have significance as important memorials to the local soldiers who fought and died in these wars.

The obelisk war memorial on High Street Melton is aesthetically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.1, E.1). It demonstrates important visual qualities that include the smooth finished granite obelisk supported by the stepped rough faced and tooled granite pedestal on a concrete base.

The war memorials on High Street Melton are historically and socially significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A.4, H.1, G.1). They are associated with the local soldiers who fought and died in the First World War (1914-1919), the Second World War (1939-1945), the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1962-1973). The earlier obelisk memorial is of the predominant and instantly recognisable form of war memorial erected all over Australia following the First World War. The recent memorial is also expressive of a veterans-led 1990s movement to heal social divisions created by the Vietnam War, and to accord due recognition to those who served in it. It was opened by the Australian Deputy Prime Minister in 1998. The prominent location of the memorials in the Melton townscape is attests the high cultural and commemorative value in which they are held by the local community.

Overall, the First World War Memorial and Vietnam War Memorial off High Street, Melton, are of LOCAL significance.

### **Description:**

The war memorials at High Street, Melton, are situated on the rise on the hill within the median strip. Both are located within two circular grassed beds bordered by narrow flower garden beds and bluestone edging. A timber flat pole is situated to one side of the earlier memorial.

The earlier memorial consists of a smooth finished granite obelisk that is supported by a stepped rough faced and tooled granite pedestal on a concrete base. Inscribed on three sides of the obelisk, under a wreath with the inscription ‘Melton District Heroes’, is a list of some 100 Melton District soldiers who fought in ‘The Great War’; on the other side, under the heading ‘Fallen Heroes’, is a list of some 30 names of locals who died in the First World War. There are also plaques, without individual names, to those ‘Fallen Comrades’ of the Second World War, Korean War, and South East Asian War. It is inscribed also ‘Lest we forget’.

The second grassed bed contains the Vietnam War Memorial. It comprises two pointed double-sided cream brick piers with red brick cappings. The piers rest on a tiled triangular base that has commemorative plaques on each of the three triangular points. It has plaques which record sentiments such as: ‘The people of Melton remember all who served suffered and died, Vietnam 1962-1973’, and ‘Vietnam 1962-1973: Together Then, Together Again’.

### **History:**

The war memorial movement across Australia at the end of the First World War generally commemorated not only ‘the fallen’, but also the living ‘heroes’ who had served in the Australian Defence Forces. In nearly every township across the nation ‘Diggers’ on pedestals, ‘cenotaphs’, ‘Soldiers Memorial Halls’, memorial arches, park pavilions, towers, and crosses appeared. By far the most popular form of memorial was the obelisk, which was cheap, practical (with ample surfaces for names and inscriptions), non-sectarian, simple, appropriate and ‘lasting’.<sup>1</sup>

Memorial committees organised, raised money, and commissioned the work. Most committees raised money for memorials by appeals in the press, door-to-door canvassing, fetes, dances and anything else they could imagine. Some rural towns were assisted by ‘gifts from squirely pastoralists’.<sup>2</sup> Most memorials were opened or unveiled in the early 1920s, some a little later.

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<sup>1</sup> Inglis, KS, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (MUP Miegunyah, Melbourne, 1998), pp.154-179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.130

As at Melton, obelisks and statues were often erected in front of the Town Hall, or Council Offices.

The unveiling of the early Melton war memorial in front of the Mechanics Institute cum Shire Hall is recorded in a series of photographs taken by Edgar Greig, probably in the early 1920s. They show a large crowd forming a semi-circle around the obelisk draped in the Union Jack. The crowd includes defence force sailors, and many people (apparently members of the Victorian Motor Club) gathered around motor cars (which appear to considerably outnumber horses and carts), and peppercorn and elm trees.<sup>3</sup>

Melton's war memorial is a substantial monument for such a small community (comparing for example with that in North Melbourne<sup>4</sup>), and is today proudly brimful of names.

The adjacent Vietnam War Memorial is a much rarer prominent local memorial to the personnel engaged in that conflict. It is expressive of the belated recognition within Australia of the Vietnam War veterans, symbolised by the 1992 national Vietnam War Memorial in Canberra.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently there was a strong veteran-led campaign for community recognition and healing of the social divisions generated by that war, resulting in other memorials and commemorations throughout Australia in the 1990s. The Melton memorial is a prominent expression of this movement. It was opened on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1998 by Australia's Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer MP.

Another Melton war memorial is the iron gate to the Melton Primary School, in the shape of the AIF rising sun, inscribed with the words 'Lest we forget'.<sup>6</sup>

### **Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:**

*Melton Historical Themes: 'Community'*

*Known Comparable Examples in Victoria:*

Numerous First and Second World War Memorials and Vietnam War Memorials were constructed throughout Victoria and Australia from 1919 until the late twentieth century. A more unusual War Memorial in the Shire of Melton is the Art Nouveau-inspired First World War Memorial off Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road, Toolern Vale.

A comparable Vietnam War Memorial is situated on Melbourne Road North Geelong. Opened in 1995, this comprises a simpler but similar brick wall, and also features the words 'Together Then Together Again'.<sup>7</sup>

*Known Comparable Examples in Melton Shire:*

The other war memorial at Toolern Vale is also recommended for heritage overlay protection.

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<sup>3</sup> Starr, J, *Melton: Plains of Promise* (Shire of Melton, c.1985), pp.244-247.

<sup>4</sup> Parsons M, Trigellis-Smith, Bradley H, Christey B, Cook D, Williams C, *War Memorials of Victoria: A Pictorial Record* (The Returned & Services League, Victorian Branch, Melbourne, 1994), p.105

<sup>5</sup> Inglis, *op cit*, pp.406-411

<sup>6</sup> Parsons *et al*, *loc cit*.

<sup>7</sup> Authentic Heritage Services, *Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study, Stage 2, 1998-2000*, p.40f1-4.

**Condition:**

Good

**Integrity:**

Substantially intact

**Recommendations:**

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>Yes</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>No</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>No</i>