



Media release
Thursday 7 August 2014

Selwyn remembers World War One

Commemorations to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the First World War (1914-1918) have begun in Selwyn.

The first of 22 Gallipoli Oak Trees was planted in Sheffield this week to commemorate the sacrifice of local soldiers.

The Sheffield Waddington Township Committee is planning to create an 'Avenue of Remembrance' next to the Sheffield cenotaph, with trees grown from the acorns of the Gallipoli Oak Tree which is in the centre of Christchurch. The acorn for this tree was sent by Lieutenant Douglas Deans to his mother while he was serving in Gallipoli.

Hugh Paterson, of the Sheffield Waddington Township Committee, says it is important for the community to have a place they can gather to commemorate the soldiers that never returned home.

"August is an important time for our communities as it was during this month, one-hundred years ago, that many families' lives changed as fathers, uncles and brothers were asked to leave their homes to travel overseas and fight for their countries," says Mr Paterson.

An additional tree will be planted to commemorate ANZAC Day next year and a further 20 oak trees will be planted over the next four years, the duration of World War One, in memory of each of the local fallen soldiers recorded on the Sheffield cenotaph. Each tree will be accompanied with a cross and plaque.

"By having the oak trees planted here for each of those soldiers, I hope this will be a permanent reminder for locals and visitors for many years to come," says Mr Paterson.

The Darfield Genealogy and Local History Group is also holding a number of sessions in August to let people know about Malvern's World War One soldiers. They will also have some draft copies of soldiers' biographies which the group is currently researching. Sessions are open to the public and will be held at Darfield Library from 10am-12pm on Saturday 9, 16, 23 and 30 August.

During the September school holidays, Selwyn libraries are planning to hold sessions so that children can learn about their ancestors in wartime. These will include competitions and other activities related to aspects of the war. Session details will be available in early September.

Ends

Photos attached:

Image 1 - Selwyn Mayor Kelvin Coe and Hugh Paterson were helped by Sheffield Primary School student Josh Molloy (7 years old) to plant the first oak tree.

Image 2 - More than one hundred people attended the official ceremony next to the cenotaph in Sheffield.

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