



On October 18<sup>th</sup> 2012, Tablelands Regional Council unanimously approved an application to construct an 'Avenue of Honour', which is situated adjacent to Lake Tinaroo on the Tinaburra Peninsula.

The site is to be maintained in perpetuity as a national memorial in honour of all the men and women who served, as well as to commemorate the memory of all Australian soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country in the fight against terror in Afghanistan. It is one of the few monuments of its type outside of Canberra.

An Avenue of Honour was originally proposed on ANZAC Day 2012 during a speech given by National Serviceman, John Hardy. Motivated by the loss of their son, Ben Chuck, in a helicopter crash in Kandahar Province Afghanistan in 2010, this idea then became an inspiration for Susan and Gordon, his parents.

The Avenue will forever reflect the respect and pride our nation has for all those courageous and dedicated Australian soldiers who have given their lives in the line of duty in Afghanistan.

A modest concept initially, tremendous public support expanded the idea to become a significant national monument dedicated to the memories of our Australian soldiers lost in the Afghanistan conflict. Like other community initiated projects, the successfulness of the project was wholly reliant on generous funding.

Financial and inkind support came from Tablelands Regional Council, Federal and State Governments, corporate and business sponsorships; as well as from RSL's, numerous community organisations/clubs and from a substantial number of individual personal donations.

Located within the Avenue is a sculpted memorial depicting the contributions made by the Australian Regular Army, the Special Forces Commando Regiment, the Special Air Service Regiment, Naval personnel and the Royal Air Force, as well as the unsung heroes in bomb detection dogs. Plaques, in memory of, and honouring each of the fallen soldiers, have been placed on an 'Honour Board' in close proximity to the memorial.



Adjoining areas have been landscaped to allow visitors to enjoy the opportunity for reflection and interpretation. Emphasis is focused to the living and open aspects of the trees, its natural setting, close proximity to the water of Lake Tinaroo and the enhancement of the existing natural environment.

The Avenue stretches for some 250 meters and consists of a meandering path, bordered by two rows of 59 Flame trees. Why Flame trees? They are a native species - they are hardy, suited to the Tablelands region and flower in November, generally around Remembrance Day. They will create a spectacular showing of beautiful flame red flowers and represent the 'circle of life'.

The Avenue of Honour consisted of three separate and integrated stages:

- Firstly, the surveying of the site, preparation of the land and the planting of trees. It was imperative that this phase was completed by early January so as to take full advantage of the oncoming wet season.
- The second stage was the commissioning of the sculptured memorial and the installation of all other infrastructure.
- Stage three consisted of an architecturally designed sail structure that provides a place of solace for visitors to sit, reflect and remember.

The Official Opening of the Avenue of Honour was held on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2013 and the memorial was unveiled by General David Hurley AC DSC and Victoria Cross winner, Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith.

This event was attended by the then Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the Federal Opposition Leader Tony Abbott, the Commander of the Australian Defence Force General Hurley and a number of senior Defence Force officers and political representatives. Numerous family members and friends of those who are honoured travelled from all parts of the country to be there for the dedication of the memorial.

