

Other Names	N/A	
Street Address	Birralee Street	Collinsville
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	1MPH13509	

Historical Context

Coal was discovered in the region in the 1870s, but it was not until the early 1910s that the Queensland government expressed interest in the coal. Collinsville No.1 Mine, a State-owned coal mine was opened in Collinsville in the late 1910s. Government interest led to private interest and prospecting groups flocked to the area, including local landholders. A Labor government was elected to the Queensland parliament in 1915, partly on a platform of establishing state-owned mines – in order to supply coal to industry and the railway. The government immediately reserved land in the Collinsville area and the prospecting companies were forced to work land to the west of the mine, eventually creating the town of Scottville and establishing the Bowen Consolidated Colliery. The Collinsville No. 1 mine, an underground mine, was located immediately to the south-west of the town. The state-owned mine continued operating until the 1960s, when it was replaced by newer mines. Collinsville remains a coal mining town.

The Collinsville War Memorial was erected in c1954, to commemorate the men who enlisted (and fell) during World War II. This is relatively unusual, as most war memorials in the Australian landscape were erected after World War I; the fact that there is no World War I memorial in Collinsville reflects the fact that the town was established after that war. Nonetheless, the memorial continues the general approach to the physical memorialisation of war that marked community efforts after World War I. Generally, each town formed a memorial committee that established a process to determine the appropriate form of the memorial (subject to funds) and to commission the masonry firm to build it. There are broad similarities between monuments from town to town, but each monument is fundamentally unique; a local expression of a national desire to commemorate the district’s contribution to the war. In the case of Collinsville, it appears that the Returned Services League (RSL – at the time referred to as the Returned Sailors’, Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Imperial League of Australia) and the Wangaratta Shire Council were responsible for the memorial – the Council supplied the design for the memorial and both organisations shared the cost.

The war memorial was erected in front of the RSL Anzac Hall, which has only recently been demolished. It appears that the hall was built in 1928, one year after a Collinsville branch of the RSL was formed. (Thus, there were returned servicemen living and working in Collinsville, but no one enlisted from that area until World War II.) Anzac Day ceremonies were therefore held at hall. So too was the funeral service for the miners who died in the 1954 mine disaster. An outburst of carbon dioxide occurred in the No. 1 mine on the 13th of October 1954, leading to the deaths of seven miners. This was one of the worst coal mining disasters in Queensland’s history. The tragedy was a terrible blow to the Collinsville community; over 2000 people took part in the funeral procession (out of a total population of 2300), marching from the Anzac Hall to the Collinsville Cemetery three kilometres away. A proposal has been recently put forward to move the war memorial to the site of the Collinsville Miner’s Memorial because the Anzac Hall no longer remains.

Physical Description

The Collinsville War Memorial is located in a grassed area on a road reserve on the corner of Birralee and Belmore Streets, fronting the site of the former Anzac Hall. The memorial is set at the kerb in a small area paved with interlocking pavers and surrounded by a concrete border. A flagpole is located at the rear of the memorial.

The memorial consists of a painted obelisk with a square profile surmounted on a three-tiered base. A thin metal chain is attached to an eye bolt on each corner of the second tier. There are three marble plaques attached to the front and sides of the obelisk. The Roll of Honour at the front lists nine names and the plaques on the sides show the names of men who enlisted for World War II from the Collinsville district.

The site of the former Anzac Hall consists of a levelled grassed area bounded by Belmore Street to the east and Birralee Street in the south. A stone wall on the western boundary secures a rise in level height. A number of mature trees are located along this side. The northern side borders onto a vacant block.

Integrity	Fair	Condition	Fair
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	Queensland War Memorial Register		
Inspection Date	15/4/2014		

References

Inglis, K, 1998. Sacred Places: war memorials in the Australian landscape. The Miegunyah Press, Brisbane.

Heritage Significance

Criteria	Definition
A	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region’s history.</i>
Statement	The Collinsville War Memorial is important in demonstrating the pattern of the region’s history, as communities across the region and nationally erected war memorials to commemorate local soldiers who enlisted and died during Australia’s involvement in overseas conflicts.
B	<i>The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the region’s cultural heritage.</i>
Statement	The Collinsville War Memorial represents an uncommon aspect of the region’s history, as it only lists local men who enlisted in World War II. This reflects the fact that Collinsville did not exist as a settlement until after the end of World War II; nonetheless, this is unusual as other war memorials in the region (and nationally) were almost all erected after World War I.
D	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places important to the region.</i>
Statement	The Collinsville War Memorial is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a regional war memorial. All war memorials are essentially an idiosyncratic reflection of the local community’s desire to commemorate the men who served and died during war.
G	<i>The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons important to the region.</i>
Statement	The Collinsville War Memorial has a special association with the Proserpine ex-service community and the Proserpine community more generally, particularly as a focus of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies held each year. It also has a special association with the community as it was the location of the funeral service for the men who died in the 1954 mining disaster.

Location Map



Whitmore, R. L., 1991. Coal in Queensland: from Federation to the twenties, 1900 to 1925, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane.