

## Guidelines for Photographing War Memorials

Photographs are an important part of recording your war memorial. They provide a record of the condition of the memorial that helps to identify conservation and repair issues.

These guidelines will assist you in ensuring that the photographs you take for the survey are in a suitable format and quality, and indicate which areas of the war memorial you should photograph.



Braidwood War Memorial. (Source: NSW Public Works 2016)

### Format, Quality and Resolution

High resolution photos will help ensure any inscriptions, decorative details and areas of damage can be clearly seen.

Please use the highest quality setting on your camera or device. Set the image quality to high or fine. The minimum resolution should be 150dpi. Photos should be in jpeg, png or gif format.

### General Tips

- Look out for the name of the maker/artist who completed the memorial.
- Once you've uploaded your digital photographs, name them clearly so you can easily remember which memorial they feature.
- Remember: you may need permission to take photographs on private property, such as schools and hospitals.

### What to Photograph

Your photographs should show, as a minimum:

- **Setting:** Photograph the war memorial in its wider surroundings, including any gardens, trees or plaques nearby.
- **Front:** Take a photo of the front of the memorial, straight on.
- **Sides:** Pictures of each side of the memorial, clearly showing any details, inscriptions or decorative elements, are important to understand the whole memorial in the round.
- **Damage:** Take close-ups of any areas where there is damage or areas of concern you have noted in your condition assessment. This may include graffiti, cracks, plant growth, unstable stonework, deteriorated mortar joints etc.
- **Plaques:** If the war memorial has multiple plaques, additional photographs are very useful. A photograph should be taken of each plaque, showing as much close-up detail as possible. If there are soldiers' names listed on the war memorials, a photo of each name plaque is also highly desirable.
- **Anything else** you think is important to show about your war memorial.

## Tips for Photographing War Memorials

### Lighting

- The two factors that need to be taken into account when taking a photograph are **environment** and **subject matter**.
- This is an example of a well-exposed image:



- When possible, shoot with your back to the sun, as opposed to facing towards the sun; this will avoid potential overexposure and lens flare.  
  
Some honour rolls may be located within secure glass cabinets. Using the camera flash tends to generate large amounts of glare off glass surfaces, so this should generally be avoided. You may have to use

a tripod or brace the camera against a solid surface in order to avoid camera shake.

- Generally, plaques or honour rolls/boards are made from materials that produce a reflection when a light source hits the surface, eg metal and polished wood. Keep this in mind when taking a photograph. If the reflection is too bright and washes out the image, take the photo from a slight angle in order to minimise reflections.
- If there isn't enough light to take a well-exposed image, the options are:
  - Use a flash and take it from a slight angle to reduce the glare of light bouncing off the surface.
  - Use a tripod, turn off the flash and then use the timer (to avoid vibrations caused by pressing the shutter button).
  - Brace your camera against a solid object, pressing the shutter button smoothly.

## ISO (Brightness Control)

- If you are using a digital camera, there is an option to change the ISO setting. ISO determines how sensitive the camera sensor is to light. The lower the ISO number (eg 100 ISO), the slower the speed. The higher the ISO number (eg 800 ISO), the faster the speed.
- Use an ISO of 100 or 200 when taking photographs outside in sunny conditions. If the sky is overcast or it is evening time, then use an ISO within the range of 400 to 800.
- If you set your digital camera to a low ISO, for example 100, the resulting photograph will be better quality than one set at 1600. The higher the ISO, the more grainy the photo will look. Therefore, use a low ISO whenever possible.
- Because monuments, cenotaphs and gates are generally situated outside, the weather—be it sunny, overcast or rainy—is the main variable that may affect your camera's ISO setting.
- If it's a sunny day and there is enough light on the subject matter, shoot the subject as is.
- If the lighting is too harsh and creates shadows, use the flash and shorten the shutter speed.

- If it is overcast or raining:
  - use the flash; or
  - turn off the flash and use a tripod (otherwise, brace the camera against a solid object), then lower the shutter speed to let more light in.
- Avoid shadows wherever possible, especially in strong light.

## Composition

Generally centre your subjects in the middle of the photograph, creating a nice horizon line three quarters of the way down the photograph. See the example below:



## Focus

Make sure the camera focuses on the main subject matter. Automatic focus sometimes focuses on the wrong element. Check your focus points and settings.

If your image looks blurry, it is generally because the camera is misfocused, or your hands are producing camera shake. To avoid this, use a tripod or bracing against a solid object.

## Example Photos

The following pages show examples of the type of photographs that you should submit with your survey.



## Example Photographs

### 1. War memorial in its setting



### 2. All sides of the memorial, taken front on





### 3. Close-ups of plaques and inscriptions



### 4. Any areas of concerns or special interest



These photographs are of the Waterloo War Memorial, Waterloo, NSW. (Source: GML)