

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
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Minister for Veterans



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SHEPPARTON'S WWII ITALIAN OSSARIO MAKES HERITAGE REGISTER

Greater Shepparton's Italian Ossario has been added to the Victorian Heritage Register, as part of commemorations to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War Two.

The site, also known as the Murchison Ossasio, is one of only two foreign war cemeteries in Victoria and the only Australian war cemetery dedicated to Italian civilian internees and Prisoners of War (POWs).

It sits within the south-east corner of the Murchison Cemetery and is located close to the largest group of WWII POW and internment camps constructed in Australia, consisting of seven camps, which housed more than 8,000 civilians and POWs largely from Germany, Italy and Japan.

The Italian Ossario, developed in stages from 1958 to 1974, was an initiative of the Italian Consulate working with an Italian returned servicemen's organisation and a Kyabram man, Luigi Gigliotti.

The Victorian Heritage Register noted its significant cultural values, evidenced by the Ossario itself and built in traditional Italian architectural style, the Murrchison POW camp memorial, a memorial avenue of Italian cypress trees and the entry gates with bronze bas-relief plaques.

The mausoleum allowed for the reburial of 130 Italian internees and POWs (129 men and 1 woman) who died while detained in Australia during WWII.

Murchison is a small community located 35 kilometres from Shepparton on the banks of the Goulburn River.

The heritage listing forms part of this year's commemorations to mark 75 years since the end of WWII. A series of online and virtual experiences are available at vic.gov.au/75th-anniversary-end-world-war-two-wwii.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans Shaun Leane

"Murchison's Italian Ossario is symbolic of the relationship that developed between Italy and Victoria soon after the end of World War II."

"This sacred site is part of our war history and a place of great importance to our Italian community – we are proud to announce its addition to the Victorian Heritage Register."

Quotes attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"The Italian Ossario is a site of great importance to the Murchison and Greater Shepparton community. It holds so much of our local history and provides a place for remembrance and reflection."

"We are thrilled that it will now be preserved for future generations."