



ANZAC MEMORIAL

HYDE PARK SYDNEY

Fiona Hall captures the geographic reach of the call to serve

Four pairs of sloping, pre-cast concrete walls line the Anzac Memorial's Hall of Service; their surfaces blanketed with hand-finished bronze plaques etched with the locations where First World War enlistees came from and where so many never returned. Alongside these place names, samples of soil, in all their different textures and myriad of colours, document these locations, reminding us that no place in New South Wales was left untouched by the Great War.

This astounding work by Australian artist Fiona Hall functions as both an informative place, and as a hallowed space to enable visitors to reflect on the enormity of the service and sacrifice given.

In all, the artwork acknowledges 1,701 places that First World War enlistees from NSW provided as their home address. The local community soil collection program, launched in Bathurst in March 2017, received a fantastic response from across the State capturing the support of descendants of Anzacs, and an army of volunteers from school children, historical committees, local councils and RSL members through to the NSW Premier, Members of Parliament and the Governor of NSW. Within the Hall of Service, the locations are presented in alphabetical order enabling visitors to easily search for specific places.

In the words of Fiona Hall: "It encapsulates in its spectrum of names our early colonial history, and registers the country's long time indigenous presence. It displays the geographical reach of the call to serve, and signals the willingness and enthusiasm of so many from diverse regions who answered the call to join the war. It contains the incalculable loss and grief of communities across the State whose men did not return. It is a list of service offered, which leaves its legacy to us today."

Fiona Hall worked with the project architect, Richard Johnson to create the installation, continuing the tradition of integration of architecture and art forged by the architect Bruce Dellit and the sculptor Rayner Hoff, who worked on the original Anzac Memorial.

A ring acknowledging 100 sites of significance to NSW's military service, with samples of earth collected (where possible) from those locations has been embedded into the Hall's floor. The list of 31 countries and jurisdictions from across the world, many of them engraved in our national psyche, extends from 19th Century battles through to modern-day Australian peacekeeping missions and honours more than a century of service.

The soil symbolises the ground on which the service was given, on sites where many who made the ultimate sacrifice still lie. The intention is not to glorify war, but to acknowledge the common experiences of loss and grief of all people involved in conflict as a basis for empathy and understanding, and as a way to remember our joined history, honour heroes and heal our spirits.

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