

# Discover the history of Corowa

## The Birthplace of Federation

In 1893 a conference held by the Federation League of Australia, saw a resolution passed that paved the way for the formation of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901. Today the township of Corowa is often referred to as the 'Birthplace of Federation'.

Immerse yourself in the rich history as you uncover the stories behind twenty five historic sites and landmarks across the township of Corowa. Each site has its own unique story, taking on the journey from yesteryear to the present day. Allow yourself some time to soak up the information along this self-guided tour.

The tour takes approximately three hours by foot or one hour by car.

*Federation Council would like to thank all those who contributed to the research completed for this guide, in particular Allan Handberg of the Corowa District Historical Society and Federation Museum.*



**1. The John Foord Bridge**  
*Bridge Road*  
 This bridge was named after one of Wahgunyah and Corowa's pioneer founders, Mr John Foord. He operated the original punt across the Murray River and was instrumental in building the first bridge. The original piles are still visible from the bank in Rowers Park. The current steel bridge was completed in 1892.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located in Rowers Park.



**2. The Water Fountain**  
*Bridge Road*  
 Now located at the entrance to Ball Park Caravan Park and privately owned, this water fountain was originally donated by Mayor A.A. Piggin in 1907 to commemorate the opening of Corowa's town water supply. The Fountain was originally placed on the corner of Sanger and Mary Streets before being moved to where the War Memorial is now situated. It was then moved to the front of the old Council Chambers on the corner of Bow Street and Honour Avenue before being relocated to Ball Park in 1922.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located opposite at 1 Sanger Street.

**3. The Bank of New South Wales / Easdown House**  
*1 Sanger Street*  
 Originally planned to be a hotel but never used as such, it was a Bank of NSW branch from 1875-1938. During the 'crisis' caused by rumours that the Kelly Gang could be crossing the Murray River via the John Foord Bridge, holes were cut in the stable loft of the Bank of NSW so that Bridge Road could be watched and fire could be directed along the road if necessary – the Kelly Gang never arrived. It was then purchased in 1938 by Mr Easdown, an accountant, who used it as his office and residence until his death.



**4. The Globe Hotel / Sanger Street**  
*2 Sanger Street*  
 The hotel was originally built as the Bridge Inn around 1860. Its name was changed after the original canvas and timber building was consumed by fire. Towards the end of the century, Mrs Mary Chenhall turned the hotel into a huge building which also housed stables and shops. In her 1905 obituary she was hailed as one of Corowa's outstanding business people. The hotel's balcony (removed in the 1960s) was the venue for the evening banquet on Monday 31 July 1893, for 180 delegates and politicians attending the Corowa Federation Conference. In 1942, it was temporarily taken over by the Air Force.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located opposite at 1 Sanger Street.

**5. The Corowa Free Press**  
*21 Sanger Street*  
 This was the original home of the Corowa Free Press which published its first edition on 8 October, 1875 and operated from here until 1911 when it relocated to 111 Sanger Street.



**6. The Federation Time-line**  
*95 Sanger Street, outside the Royal Hotel*  
 A detailed storyboard stepping through the Federation story year by year.



**7. The Corowa Memorial Hall**  
*86-88 Sanger Street*  
 This building was the site of the original School of Arts in 1873, the Literary Institute in 1898, Façade 1914 and Memorial Hall in 1966. It was also the venue for the Celebratory Federation Banquet with Mr Edmund Barton and Mr John Quick in 1900.

• **Federation Information Plaque** located opposite at 85 Sanger Street.



**22. The Calvary Uniting Church**  
*Corner Church and Queen Streets*  
 Originally the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the original building was built on this site in 1884. The present building was built in 1967. A community garden is now located at the rear of the church.




**24. St John's Anglican Church**  
*Federation Avenue*  
 The first Anglican Church was built on this site, as a memorial to Colonel Bladen Neill who had been killed in Melbourne in 1859. The current Church was built between 1883 and 1911 and features a large stained glass window, donated by Mrs Elisabeth Hume, sister-in-law of the explorer Hamilton Hume, in memory of her and her son, Andrew.


**25. The Corowa Aerodrome**  
*Redlands Road*  
 The Shire Council purchased the site in 1939 and in 1940 developed a 1000 yards runway within seven months. After the Federal Government took over the operations in 1942 the RAAF enlarged the aerodrome but then vacated the site at the end of that year. In 1944 it was used as a satellite training strip by Liberator bombers working out of Tocumwal. Post-war, until 1963, commercial flights used Corowa Airport, however, it was then transferred back to an aerodrome.



**23. St. Mary's Catholic Church**  
*Parade Place*  
 The original church was built on this site in 1878. The existing Church was built on the same site and was opened in 1921 by Dr Mannix.



**FEDERATION COUNCIL**



# Corowa History Trail

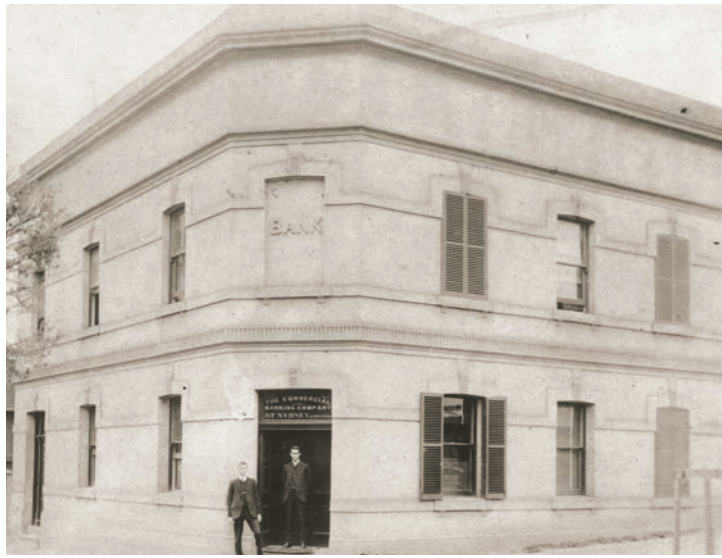
Upon request of the individual owners of the privately owned buildings on the trail visitors are asked to please be respectful when visiting. The premises may not be entered unless prior arrangements have been made with the property owners.

**Corowa Visitor Information Centre**  
 100 Edward Street, Corowa Civic Centre, Corowa NSW 2646  
 (02) 6033 3221  
[tourism@federationcouncil.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tourism@federationcouncil.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.visitcorowaregion.com.au](http://www.visitcorowaregion.com.au)

Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm  
 Saturday 10am - 3pm  
 Sunday Closed

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### 8. The National Australia Bank

Corner Sanger & Church Streets

Previously the site of the Commercial Hotel and then a Blacksmith, it was then rebuilt for the Commercial Bank of Sydney in 1901. The National Australia Bank opened its first Corowa branch in 1910 next to the Globe Hotel and then relocated to this site after the Commercial Bank of Sydney moved, in 1912.

### 9. The Circa 1936 Hotel

145 Sanger Street

Built in 1936 originally for the Rural Bank of NSW in 1880 it was the second bank to be established in Corowa in a leased premises next to Mr Harvey's watch-making shop between the Literary Institute and Church Street. In 1885 the present premises was built on the site of the old Commercial Hotel (destroyed by fire in 1878). It is now currently an art deco boutique accommodation and day spa, Circa 1936.



### 10. The Australian Post Office

117 Sanger Street

Opened in 1881 this building was a postal and telegraph office. Renovations preserving the original façade and removing the original tower were completed in the 1920s following a dispute over the size of the clock. The first telegraph was sent in 1873 and the first telephone call from Wodonga to Wahgunyah occurred in 1878. In 1913 Corowa's first powerhouse was built behind the post office at a cost of \$415 to provide direct current to consumers and street lighting. The lighting was turned off at 11.30pm every day, except for Sunday's when it was turned off at 10.00pm. In 1926, Sir John Monash, the Chairman of the State Electricity of Victoria switched on the new power supply from the SECV.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located opposite at 1/8 Sanger Street.



### 11. The Rex Theatre

186 Sanger Street

Mr Amot Leslie and Mr Guy Leslie (former owners of the Corowa Free Press) started 'Austral Pictures' in 1915, with an Open Air theatre located at the current Shell Service Station site. The Rex Movie Theatre opened in 1936 and closed in 1964. The interior 'décor' is largely original.



### 12. The Soldiers Memorial

Junction of Federation Drive and Honour Avenue

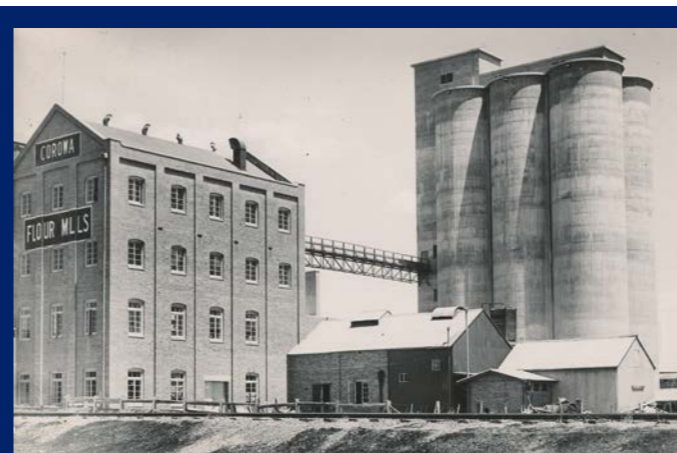
The memorial with its clock tower was unveiled in 1922. An avenue of trees was planted along Albury Road which was then renamed Honour Avenue. In the World War I, 187 men lost their lives. In World War II, 22 paid the supreme sacrifice, including one woman, Sister D.G. Elmes.



### 13. The Newmarket Hotel

Corner Honour Avenue & Walker Street

Built in 1888 on land adjacent to the original sale-yards and the railway.



### 14. The Flour Mill

Steel Street

The Mill was built in 1921 after the Netherby Flour Mill in Albury Road burned down. This mill closed down in 1970 after experiencing failures in overseas markets. Following forty years of neglect, it was purchased from the Council on the agreement that it would be turned into a tourist attraction. It is now the Corowa Whisky and Chocolate Factory.

### 15. The Federation Museum

56 Queen Street

Built as a hall for the Border Brass Band in 1915. The band was established in 1874 but they vacated the building during the Great Depression. During World War II it was taken over by the Air Force and subsequently became a clothing factory and then a woolskin storage facility. Far sighted citizens established the Federation Museum in 1973 when it was at risk of being demolished. It is now one of Australia's leading rural museums. Highlights include Australia's Federation Story, the story of Tom Roberts' 'Shearing of the Rams' painting, Tommy McCrae's sketches, historical costumes and more.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located opposite, adjacent to Ellerslie Gardens.

### 16. The Corowa Court House

Corner Church & Queen Streets

The middle section of the building opened in 1888, with the side sections being completed in 1890. The official proceeding of the Federation Conference on July 31st and August 1st 1893 were held in this Court House. It is still functioning as a court house today.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located on the corner of Queen and Mary Streets.



### 17. The Corowa Public Hospital

Guy Street opposite Evelyn Street

The hospital opened after the Corowa Free Press started advocating for a hospital in 1878. Funds were raised from many sources including the Border Brass Band's Hospital Sunday concerts. The Hospital opened in 1893 with its first medical officers - Drs Lang and Shortt. Since then it has been greatly expanded. Part of the original hospital can still be seen and is currently being used for administration purposes.

### 18. The Corowa Private Hospital

Betterment Parade

The original weatherboard building was opened in 1901 by Ms Farquharson. The building was later relocated to the outskirts of Corowa. Originally located alongside 'Braeside' the home of Mr J Leslie, former owner of the Free Press. The building is now a private residence.



### 19. The Corowa Railway Station

John Street

The Culcairn to Corowa railway line opened in 1892 and ceased operating in 1988. The end of the line turntable is 50 feet diameter and can still be seen. The Station Master's residence is currently used as a toy library. The old tracks have been covered and converted into a walking and cycle path and the surrounding gardens have been developed and are maintained by the Corowa RSL as a community support project.

• **Federation Information Plaque** – located at the front of the Station.

### 20. The Corowa Pioneer Cemetery

Federation Avenue

Oldest headstone is dated 1859 - when Andrew Hume, nephew of Mr Hamilton Hume of Hume and Hovell fame, was interred here. A memorial wall remembers those whose graves cannot be identified.

### 21. The Old Catholic Cemetery

Cemetery Lane

The oldest identified headstone at the cemetery dates back to 1883 and the lawn cemetery was opened 1970.