

# Plaque honors former Colac shire councillor

A commemorative plaque was unveiled on Tuesday at the Barongarook Creek Reserve to mark the contribution to the area of former Colac Shire Councillor, Mr D. Thomas.

The Mayor, Cr Carol Davie, local councillors and around 25 residents attended the ceremony and saw Mrs Valmai Atkinson-Grimshaw, grand-daughter of the late Cr. Thomas, unveil the plaque in his honor.

Cr. Thomas is remembered for his efforts in the late 1800's towards the planting of trees, especially in the area along Barongarook Creek from Murray Street to the lake.

The plaque is situated under a tree which was planted by Mrs Atkinson-Grimshaw several years ago on the west side of Barongarook Creek near the Chapel Street bridge.

In introducing Mrs Atkinson-Grimshaw to unveil the plaque, Cr. Davie read extracts from Isaac Hebb's

"The History of Colac".

These described how in 1879 Cr. Thomas had instigated the beautification of the Barongarook Creek area and the areas along Gellibrand, Gravesend and Hesse Streets with the planting of elm trees, many of which still stand today.

One of the extracts reads, "the reserve in question is sometimes slightly referred to as 'Thomas' folly', but that gentleman can usually afford to laugh at his would be critics, knowing that the townspeople have much to thank him for."

In unveiling the plaque, Mrs Atkinson-Grimshaw praised her grandfather for his love of trees and ideas for improving the town.

"The vision I had when planting this tree several years ago was that others would follow my lead and make the area one of beauty and peace for the elderly," she said.

Cr. Davie said the council was following the lead of Cr. Thomas some one hundred years ago, having engaged landscape architects, Green, Dale and Wright, to prepare a plan of development to ensure that the vision of Cr. Thomas is projected into the future.

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