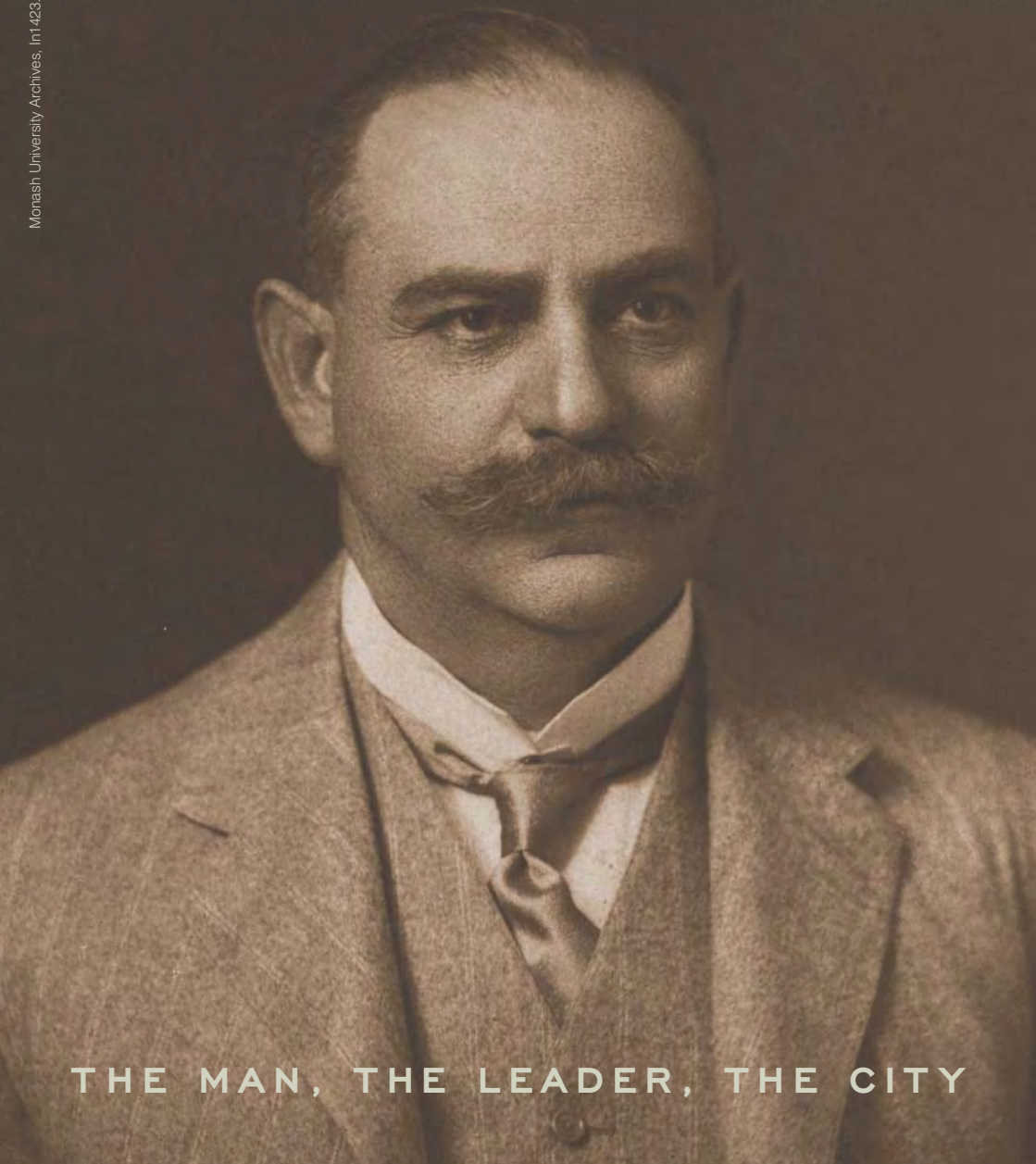


# MONASH

Monash University Archives, In1 423.



THE MAN, THE LEADER, THE CITY



## GENERAL SIR JOHN MONASH

The City of Monash is named after a man regarded as one of Australia's greatest heroes. General Sir John Monash was a civil engineer and volunteer soldier who rose to the highest rank in the Australian Army by the end of World War I. His life and career represent the opportunity that Australia provides for migrants and their children to excel and contribute. He is a model of leadership, community service, and achievement for everybody living and working in the City of Monash today.

## THE YOUNG MAN

John Monash was born in West Melbourne in 1865 to immigrant Prussian parents, when the Victorian Colony was barely 30 years old and the population was just 40,000. Monash's was one of the first Jewish families who arrived in Australia seeking refuge from terror, discrimination and poverty in Europe. In Melbourne, Jews had no work prohibitions. They entered Parliament in significant numbers, and they had educational opportunities and social freedom. John Monash's story represents the extraordinary fortune of Australian Jewry.

Monash's father took the family to Jerilderie, N.S.W in 1875 to open a general store. This is possibly where the young boy began his life long appreciation for the Australian landscape and for the 'down to earth spirit' of the locals. Contrary to a story that he neither confirmed nor denied, Monash was not in Jerilderie in February 1878 when the Kelly gang came and terrorised the community and raided the bank vault. Monash may have held the Bushranger's horse on a previous occasion, but by 1878 he had returned to Melbourne with his mother and sisters to go to school. The suggestion that two of Australia's most famous personalities met is an intriguing historical possibility.



1870 – aged five.

Monash was scholarly and particularly talented at mathematics. He matriculated at 14 and two years later he was equal Dux of Scotch College. At the University of Melbourne he studied Law, Engineering and Arts and became involved in broader cultural activities, such as debating, politics, theatre and journalism. He co-founded the Melbourne University Union. Monash also painted and spoke French and German. He enjoyed chess, carpentry and bushwalking and was an accomplished pianist.

When his mother was dying he discontinued his studies to support his family and worked on the construction of Princes Bridge over the Yarra River. He eventually completed his university studies and in 1888 he assumed responsibility for construction of the Outer Circle railway, which terminated at Oakleigh. He also purchased property in the district beside the railway line.

In 1891 he married Hannah Victoria Moss, a charismatic woman with whom he had a turbulent relationship. They had one daughter, Bertha, two years later.



1881 – equal Dux of Scotch College.

## THE ENGINEER

In 1891 Monash was employed by the Melbourne Harbour Trust and was retrenched during the 1894 depression. He then developed an enterprise with J.T. Noble Anderson specialising in civil, mining and mechanical engineering and patents. In 1905 Monash and associates formed Reinforced Concrete and Monier Pipe Construction Co Ltd.

This company developed an expertise in reinforced concrete construction, yet another innovation that he embraced. Monash first faced failure, and then success, as a bridge builder, and as the director of a major concrete construction company.



Public Record Office Victoria, 1978-183. Monash is on the right.



Anderson Street bridge, designed by Monash, during construction.





## THE SOLDIER

Monash's time in the military began while at university, when he joined the 4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles. He was a volunteer, not a professional soldier. He rose through the ranks of the Militia, the reserve army.

At the outbreak of World War I he became the Chief Censor before taking command of the 4th Infantry Brigade. His career included command in Egypt and the landing at Gallipoli. In France his unit played a significant role in breaking through enemy lines in 1918 at Amiens, and was decisive in the victories at the battles of Villiers-Bretonneux and Hamel which involved the collaboration of infantry, artillery, tanks and aircraft. Monash was credited with the success of the August 8 offensive on the Western Front, regarded as the crucial battle of World War I. In a rare gesture by King George V he was knighted in the field in 1918.

As a military strategist General Monash was way ahead of his time. His approach was innovative and modern, informed by his civilian experience and training. His guiding principle was to avoid needless loss of life, and his motto was to "feed the troops on victory". He followed it literally arranging for hot meals to be delivered to his men during battle.

Monash remained in Europe at the end of the war and, as Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation, efficiently managed the repatriation of 160,000 Australian soldiers. He organised professional and trade skills training for the repatriated soldiers. By the time he returned home to a tumultuous welcome at the end of 1919, he was respected by senior Allied military men and politicians, and was feted by the public. He attracted criticism from traditionally minded officers, but won the approval of his men and commanders who worked closely with him. He had distinguished himself as a fine administrator with a genius for strategy.

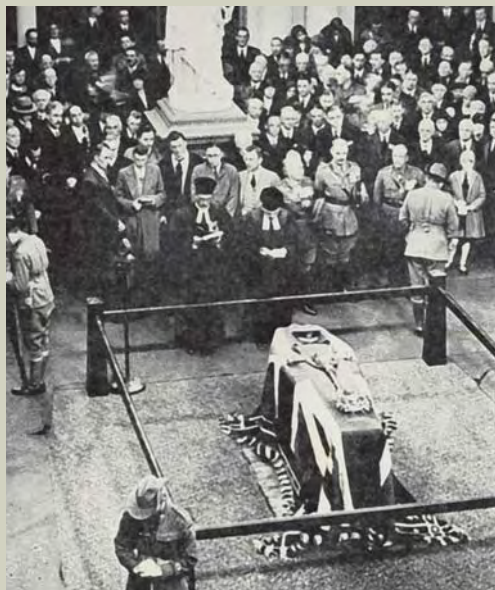
## THE STATESMAN

After World War I, Monash returned to his engineering business. He became restless and sought a public role, eventually becoming Chairman of the State Electricity Commission as it began to mine coal and generate electricity from Victorian sources.

In the 1920s he was Australia's most revered public figure. He enjoyed the status and responsibility his career brought him. He knew his was an unusual position for a Jew. General Monash led many ANZAC parades and was the driving force behind the building of the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.

He lectured at the University of Melbourne and was its Vice-Chancellor for two years from 1923. Monash became the President of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. He was also President of the Victorian Institute of Engineers and active in the Boy Scout movement.

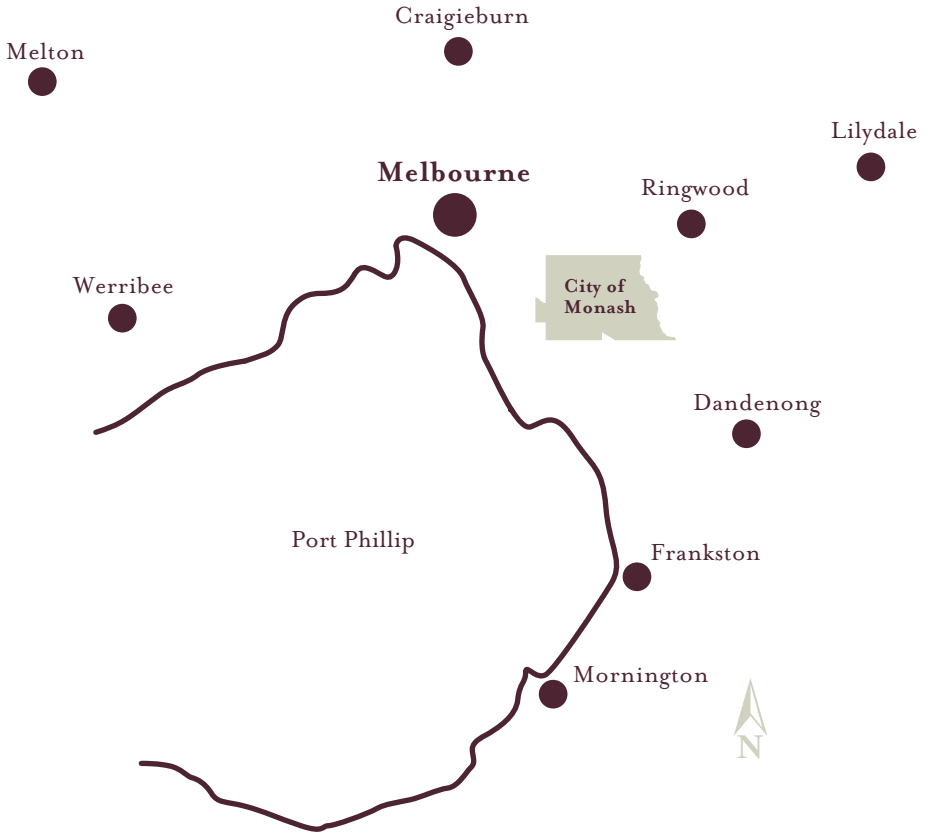
Family was important to him, and in retirement he spent time with the younger generations at the family home, Iona. He died on 8 October 1931, at the age of 66, and an estimated 250,000 mourners attended the state funeral to pay their respects.



1931 – Monash lay in state for two days at Parliament House, Melbourne.







- ① Monash University
- ② Monash Medical Centre
- ③ Victoria Police Academy
- ④ Jells Park
- ⑤ Australian Synchrotron



## THE CITY OF MONASH

The City of Monash is 20 km southeast of Melbourne and contains all or part of 14 suburbs. The City's landmarks, within its 82 square kilometres, include Monash University, Monash Medical Centre, the Victorian Police Academy, the Australian Synchrotron and Jells Park. The population of the City of Monash exceeds 165,000 residents.

In 1994, with the amalgamation of the two former cities of Oakleigh and Waverley a new name was needed for the new municipality. The name Monash was suggested by Councillor Eric Sekfy of Oakleigh and the Local Government Board approved it.

The City of Monash has developed a reputation as a 'high tech' centre for industry with a number of major international companies based in the area. It is an employment hub for Melbourne's south east region and has a highly skilled and well educated workforce.

Monash is a multicultural city with over 40 per cent of its residents born overseas. It has a high level of home ownership and its population growth is slowing as it shifts to an older profile.

Travelling from Melbourne to the City of Monash, the Monash Freeway passes Richmond where the young John Monash lived, Scotch College where he was educated, and embraces the City's entire length.

Because Melbourne's second university and its major south eastern freeway are named after him, Monash's name is familiar to many, but his story is not as well known. His humanity, creativity and energy make him a fitting model of citizenship in modern Australia.

Monash residents have every reason to be justifiably proud that their City is named after such an outstanding Australian.



Monash University Archives, In1425.



CITY OF  
MONASH

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