

Million year old tree testament to longevity of EMA Institute

On 3 July 2006, the Emergency Management Australia Institute at Mt Macedon in Victoria celebrated 50 years of delivering emergency management services to Australia. During a ceremony to recognise the achievements of the Institute on 20 October 2006, the Attorney-General, the Hon. Philip Ruddock MP, unveiled a time capsule contained within a box frame which is scheduled for opening in 2031.

Invited guests included senior representatives from the Attorney-General's Department, the local community, and the current and former Directors-General of EMA and Directors of the Institute.

In an earlier informal ceremony to mark the anniversary, the Director General Emergency Management Australia, Mr Tony Pearce, planted a Wollemi Pine in the gardens of the Institute. The tree, which is an offshoot of the rare Jurassic Australian pine discovered in 1994, was chosen as it signifies the growth and long-term survival of the Institute.

The Australian Civil Defence School at Mount Macedon, forerunner to the Australian Counter Disaster College, the Australian Emergency Management Institute and more recently the Emergency Management Australia Institute, was officially opened on 2 July 1956 by the then Minister for the Interior and Works, the Honourable Allen Fairhall, MP.

Instructional courses began in 1956 and until the late 1960s training centred on matters relating to protection of the civil population against hostile acts. After this time, the teaching focus changed to dealing with natural and man-made disasters.

Marking the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Institute (or College as it was then referred) on 3 July 1981, His Excellency, the Right Honourable Sir Zelman Cowan, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia unveiled a plaque on a cairn bearing a remnant of Skylab, formerly a manned orbital research space laboratory.

The EMA Institute continues to provide training and education to emergency management personnel. Today, the Institute is a Registered Training Organisation conducting a range of activities designed to improve Australia's capabilities in managing emergencies.

The Emergency Management Australia Information Centre is also situated within the Institute and is a national resource that promotes and supports all aspects of emergency management. This facility is a national reference centre for specialist information relevant to the work of the emergency management community and is unique in Australia as it covers the entire spectrum of emergency management issues.



Attorney General, Director of EMA and Former Directors General with the time capsule at the 25th Anniversary event. L-R: Brig. Alan Hodges, Maj Gen. BW (Hori) Howard, Maj Gen. Kevin Latchford, The Hon. Philip Ruddock, MP Attorney General, Tony Pearce, Director General, Emergency Management Australia, Rear Admiral Rothesay Swan, and David Templeman.



Tony Pearce, Director General, Emergency Management Australia, planting the Wollemi Pine in the gardens of the Institute.