

FOREWORD

Mt Macedon 50th Anniversary

When opening the Australian Civil Defence School on 2 July 1956, the Hon Allen Fairhall, MP, the then Commonwealth Minister for the Interior and Works, emphasised the need for a civil defence program aimed at offering maximum protection from the effects of hostilities on Australian soil to all Australians. He highlighted the need for the greatest co-operation between the Commonwealth and State Governments; the important role of local government; and the need for students to be drawn from all walks of life so that the nation would be provided with a nucleus of trained civil defence workers.

The sentiments expressed by Allen Fairhall fifty years ago are just as valid today for the now Emergency Management Australia Institute as they were then for the Australian Civil Defence School.

As the Institute celebrated its silver jubilee in 1981, it paused to reflect on a quarter-of-a-century of development and achievement as a leading educational establishment whose primary focus has always been, and remains, on measures to mitigate, minimise or alleviate human suffering in the event of an emergency. The provision of education and training programs for the Australian community through the Institute is one of the important ways in which Emergency Management Australia (EMA) fulfils its mission to create "safer sustainable communities".

These programs address key aspects of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery through the provision of structured training on a range of topics, including emergency planning in evacuation, business continuity management, establishing an Emergency Coordination Centre, and managing recovery. Specialised training activities are also conducted to enhance the capability of States and Territories to manage the consequences of the newest emergent threat to community safety – acts of terrorism. Through these programs, EMA continues to provide national leadership in the development of measures to reduce the risk to communities and manage the consequences of emergencies.

The sharing of anecdotes and experience (story-telling) is acknowledged in adult learning as a valuable means of exchanging knowledge and is encouraged amongst the course participants during their temporary residence at the Institute. The environment created is conducive to the enhancement of learning outcomes and aids in strengthening the skills and knowledge of the emergency managers of both today and the future.

Research is vital for developing the capacity to identify and respond pro-actively to changing risk, and to provide the evidence base for best practice emergency management. The main purpose of studying past events, records and experiences is to broaden or improve background knowledge and understanding in order to contemplate the future appropriately, and to prepare for the events it may bring. The EMA Library and Resource Centre, situated within the Institute, assists to further the educational outcomes and information available to the emergency management sector. 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. It is therefore often the first point of reference for researchers in the subject area.

As risks continue to evolve and governments and communities change, the sound body of knowledge and expertise and the strong partnerships built by individuals who have participated in activities at the Institute, as well as those who will do so in the future, will continue to be of benefit to all Australians.

My predecessors and I are justly proud of the work of the EMA Institute and its committed group of staff. The past fifty years have seen an exponential growth in the challenges faced by our very important sector and therefore the services offered by EMA through the Institute. Its continuing work to research future directions in emergency management and to position emergency managers to deal with yet unseen challenges will assist the sector to continue to meet its responsibilities and to assure the safety of all communities. I wish the Institute well for its next 50 years of service to emergency management.

Tony Pearce
Director General
Emergency Management Australia

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