

Refurbished Education and Heritage Centre welcomes visitors

Executive Director Dave Caporn said the centre located in Western Australia's first purpose built fire station now represented the whole FESA family.

"This wonderful heritage listed building showcases the collective efforts of generations of firefighters and emergency services volunteers whose dedication and commitment have made, and continue to make, our communities safer," Dave said.

"It is a great place for people to visit and learn more about our state's emergency services and the range of hazards and emergencies we face.

"It also reflects on the important contribution the traditional landowners of Western Australia have made to the fire and emergency services since the 1800s, a contribution that continues today."

Director Community Engagement Suellen Shea said the two storey centre provided a wonderful link between past and present emergency services.

"The appliance room and dedicated fire services heritage gallery present a nostalgic look at the WA Fire and Rescue Service, while the upper gallery is all about modern museum learning," she said.

"The area provides informative and interactive exhibits on all hazards and emergencies faced in Western Australia, from bush and structure fires to storms, search and rescue, cyclones, tsunamis and earthquakes.

"This year the wind and earth natural hazards exhibits will be designed and installed, completing the community hazard education gallery.

"The centre also supports FESA's role in providing community safety information to the public through an internet kiosk, interactive hazards map and take home resources."

Suellen added that the project had taken the best part of six years to complete and FESA was very happy with the exhibition themes and interior design.

"It's particularly satisfying to know that the building will continue to be an important part of Perth's educational,



Launch guests check out some of the many exhibits on view at the Centre.

social and architectural heritage into the future," she said.

Two new school curriculum programs introducing all the operational services of FESA also coincided with the launch (*Emergency Services in the Community and Me*).

Schools programs set to be launched in 2010 are part of *The Wild West* program series: *Bushfire and My Community and Understanding and Preparing for a Tropical Cyclone*.

Manager Fire and Emergency Services Education and Heritage Centre Su Ferreira said the facility had proven extremely

popular with visitors of all ages since it re-opened late last year.

"Although only open 18 hours a week, close to 5000 visitors have passed through the doors, 1000 of which were school children," she said.

"The other visitor demographics comprised local families, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, seniors, special needs groups and many interstate and international tourists."

Suellen was keen to recognise the many dedicated people who had played a crucial role in getting the new centre up and running.

FESA's Education and Heritage Centre has reopened following a \$1.6 million refurbishment.



“The project has involved wide collaboration from volunteers, designers, architects, curriculum experts, scientific organisations and researchers,” she said.

“Organisations such as the Attorney General’s Department have assisted FESA with funding, and we also received support from the Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience and the Curriculum Council.

“The efforts of the FESA Community Engagement team and the Centre and Vintage Fleet volunteers in particular have been outstanding.

“Opening of the Centre would also not have been possible without the enthusiasm and commitment of our new volunteer service delivery team. We are fortunate to have this exceptional group offering a professional customer service to our visitors.”

Two long serving volunteers who had generously devoted their services to the previous museum over several decades, the late George and Pam Stewart, were honoured at the opening celebration. The couple’s musician grandchildren were on hand for the occasion, performing keyboard and drums.



Emergency Services Minister Rob Johnson, assisted by CEO Jo Harrison-Ward, cuts a ribbon to mark the official opening of the FESA Education and Heritage Centre.