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MEDIA RELEASE

1 December 2006

Indigenous heritage a vital part of environmental works

A new training program devised by the North East CMA will help to ensure that important environmental works do not impact on the Region's cultural heritage.

Staff from the CFA, Department of Primary Industries, Greening Australia, Wangaratta Council and the North East CMA will attend an Indigenous Site Training program at Gateway Island, Wodonga next week (December 4 & 5).

The North East CMA's Indigenous Liaison Officer, Richard McTernan, developed the course in partnership with the Murray CMA and local Indigenous organisations, Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and the Bangerang Cultural Centre Cooperative.

"Environmental works on rivers, roadsides and farms have the potential to impact on important cultural sites which contain artefacts and other items of great significance to Indigenous people," explained Richard.

"It's important that this part of our Region's heritage is protected but not everyone has the confidence or skills they need to identify artefacts".

Mr McTernan said the course was devised because there is a need to build a network of skilled people in the natural resource industry who are capable of identifying artefacts and Indigenous sites and understanding the present archaeological record for the North East Region.

The Indigenous Site Training will include a mix of practical sessions and briefings where participants can:

- examine artefacts such as stone tools,
- learn how to identify scar trees,
- hear the views of local Indigenous people regarding the protection of Indigenous objects and places, and
- receive a briefing about the latest changes in Victorian Heritage legislation.

"By the end of this course, participants should be able to identify an Indigenous site, record its content and comply with heritage legislation. Most importantly, they will know who they can contact within the local Indigenous community if they need help," concluded Mr McTernan.

The development of the Indigenous Site Training was funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust program.

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:
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In addition to the Indigenous Site Training, the North East CMA has recently undertaken cultural awareness training for its staff and Board, initiated a creative arts project at Middle Indigo School involving members of the local Indigenous community and Landcare groups and organised a variety of talks and cultural awareness activities for Landcare groups across North East of Victoria.