

News Release

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Historic red gum log for botanic gardens providing insights into climate change

Adelaide's Botanic Garden is today taking possession of an historic 1500 year old River Red gum log which will help scientists learn more about climate change.

The sixteen metre log, weighing 15 tonnes, was recovered by ForestrySA from the Para River at Mount Crawford, after it was left exposed on an eroded bend following torrential rain and flooding in the Adelaide Hills in November, 2005.

ForestrySA workers were called in to reinforce the eroded riverbank in March 2006 and noticed the newly exposed log. Suspecting the log might be significant, ForestrySA notified the Adelaide Museum.

Director for Science and Conservation for the Department for Environment and Heritage, Stephen Forbes said that subsequent soil tests and carbon dating placed the age of the River Red Gum at between fifteen hundred to two thousand years old.

"The main interest in the tree will be to examine its growth from ring markings which will provide an indication of climatic conditions during its lifetime between 0 and 500AD.

"This helps scientists to build a better understanding of historical climatic fluctuations within Australia and how the environment coped with these events at the time," Mr Forbes said.

The tree is thought to be part of an ancient Red Gum forest in the Mount Crawford area. Large River Red Gums can still be found growing at Mount Crawford today.

The Adelaide Botanic Garden will place the log on permanent display in the Australian Forest adjacent to the cascade fountain at the south end of the Bicentennial Conservatory.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

ForestrySA will transport the forest giant from Mount Crawford to the Botanic Gardens on a low loader today (Wednesday, February 21) and lift it into position in the Australian Forest at the Botanic Garden at 11 am.

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