

Standing Strong on Country: Fire and Flood Disaster Vocabulary

Disaster	A disaster is a serious disruption to the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events. This happens when hazardous events occur where people and places are at risk and not well-prepared, leading to loss or damage to life, property, the economy and the environment. (UNDRR , 2024).
Disaster risk	A disaster risk is when the potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets could occur to a society or a community in a specific period of time. Risk is usually judged on a range of factors, by looking at what hazards are likely to happen, where people live, how they live, how vulnerable they are and their ability to respond. (UNDRR , 2024)
Ecosystem(s)	Ecosystem(s) are the interacting system of a biological community, both plant and animal, and its non-living surroundings. (AIDR , 2024)
Floodplain	A floodplain is flat, or nearly flat land, close to or near a stream or river that experiences occasional or periodic flooding. (BOM , 2024)
Hazard	A hazard is a process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation (UNDRR, 2017). Weather-driven natural hazards include bushfires, floods, heatwaves, tropical cyclones and severe thunderstorms. Geological hazards include earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes (Australian Climate Service , 2024)
Inundation	Inundation is an overflow or deluge.
Mitigation	Mitigation is a reduction in damages or minimising adverse impacts from a hazardous event. Mitigation measures include engineering techniques and hazard-resistant construction, as well as improved environmental and social policies, and public awareness. (UNDRR , 2024)
Preparedness	Preparedness is the capacity to be ready for disasters by having the knowledge and tools needed to deal with them. Governments, organisations, communities and individuals all work together to prepare, using disaster risk analyses. They plan how to respond quickly and recover after a disaster happens. This includes making plans for emergencies, gathering necessary equipment and supplies, setting up ways to warn people early, providing public information and practising what to do through drills and training. (AIDR , 2024)

Prevention	Prevention encompasses the steps that are taken to avoid disasters or to reduce their impact. Prevention aims to remove or lessen the risks by making sure people and places are less vulnerable to hazards. For example, building dams to prevent flooding, developing regulations to avoid building in dangerous areas, designing buildings to withstand earthquakes or vaccinating people to prevent diseases. Some prevention measures are also used during or after a disaster to prevent further hazards, such as keeping water clean after a flood. (UNDRR, 2024)
Recovery	Recovery is helping a community or society recover after a disaster by restoring and supporting people's health and access to employment, and rebuilding homes and other important parts of life. Part of a recovery process is ensuring life is 'built back better' to avoid or reduce future disaster risk. This includes rebuilding in a way that is safer and more sustainable. (UNDRR, 2024)
Resilience	Resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner. (UNDRR, 2024)
Response	A response includes the actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and provide essential needs of food and shelter for the people affected. A disaster response mostly focuses on immediate and short-term needs and is sometimes called 'disaster relief'. Effective, efficient and timely responses rely on disaster risk-informed preparedness measures and planning, including having people and groups ready to act quickly. This includes emergency services like firefighters, police and other specialised agencies that play a key role in protecting us during emergencies. Sometimes, the things we do to respond to a disaster, like providing temporary housing, can continue into the longer-term recovery phase. (UNDRR, 2024)
Risk reduction	Risk reduction includes strategies and careful planning that reduce the likelihood of a hazard or disaster occurring, or lessen the damage if it does happen.