

Extreme Events

According to the Australian State of the Environment Report, 2021, “the intensity and frequency of extreme weather-related events - including heatwaves, droughts, bushfires and floods - are changing. Since the 2016 State of the Environment Report, ongoing increases in land and sea temperatures across Australia driven by climate change have coincided with multiple extreme weather events.”



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According to the Australian State of the Environment Report, 2021,“(extreme events) have had devastating impacts on many of Australia’s unique natural ecosystems and caused the death of many individuals of many species, while also bringing new growth and stimulus for reproduction.”



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According to the Australian State of the Environment Report, 2021, “for example, floods associated with massive rainfall in northern Australia in early 2019 caused extensive social and economic cost in northern and western Queensland (estimated at \$5.68 billion), but also reached the Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre system and filled the northern lakes, triggering large pulse-breeding responses in wildlife such as birds, and freshwater fish and frogs.”



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There is growing recognition of the role Indigenous people can play in dealing with extreme events and mitigating impacts on their communities, and cultural and environmental values. Significant areas of land are returning to Indigenous ownership or joint management through land rights, native title and Indigenous Protected Areas. The role of Indigenous peoples into the future will continue to grow.



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The population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples exist across the continent in remote, rural and urban areas. Unfortunately, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are often disempowered due to factors such as housing and infrastructure, location, education, health disparity, socio-economic status, social disadvantage and the continuing impacts of colonisation in comparison to all other population groups.



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For over 65,000, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have continued to survive and thrive as the oldest living cultures in the world. As the most disadvantaged marginalised minority group in Australia's population, First Nations peoples stand united and empowered with connection to Country, community and cultural knowledge. First Nations communities' traditional practices are used to assist in planning, response, recovery and resilience to climate change and extreme events experienced in Australia.



Baiame's Ngunnhu (the Brewarrina fish traps) on the Barwon River, NSW, Australia, were designed to work in times of low and high water flow.

Cresswell ID, Janke T, Johnston EL (2021). Overview: Climate change and extreme events. In: Australia State of the environment 2021, Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, <https://soe.dcceew.gov.au/overview/pressures/climate-change-and-extreme-events>, DOI: 10.26194/f1rh-7r05, ISBN: 978-0-646-86427-3