



Indigenous Peoples and Recovery Capitals

About this resource

This resource is part of the **Recovery Capitals (ReCap)** project, which aims to support wellbeing after disasters with **holistic, strengths-based resources**.

In Australia, few resources exist to guide recovery workers and organisations in **supporting Indigenous peoples impacted by disasters**. We have drawn upon emerging evidence and consultations to create this resource, which we hope will provide a useful starting point.

The experiences of Indigenous peoples are unique in many ways, but some disaster recovery issues are relevant for many people and communities. This resource can be used alongside the Guide to Disaster Recovery Capitals, which outlines key evidence and considerations in disaster recovery more generally, and includes a focus on Indigenous peoples.

For more information: recoverycapitals.org.au

Understanding unique experiences

When disasters damage Country, the harm felt by Indigenous peoples can be particularly profound due to the deep connections between land, culture, history, colonisation and identity. Trauma can also arise from needing to relocate, and losing or being separated from loved ones and community.

This trauma can be worsened by disaster response and recovery services, including through racist encounters and culturally unsafe processes. Mainstream services and grants often fail to account for the particular experiences of Indigenous peoples.

These systemic issues produce vulnerability, and it is the systems that must be fixed. Instead of describing Indigenous people as 'vulnerable' in disasters, we need to focus on these systemic problems, and the strengths that Indigenous peoples possess in spite of them.

Focusing on strengths

The resilience and resistance of Indigenous peoples in the face of colonisation and ongoing marginalisation clearly demonstrates the many strengths within Indigenous communities. These strengths are **powerful resources** that can enable recovery from disasters. For example, the strong social bonds and existing organisations within Indigenous communities can be drawn upon to support recovery. Some of these strengths are highlighted over the page.

Community strengths after disasters can be understood as 'recovery capitals' – cultural, built, natural, social, human, political and financial. These are all **deeply interconnected**.

The artwork highlights the particular importance of this holistic understanding for Indigenous peoples. The Guide to Disaster Recovery Capitals contains the artist's descriptions of each of the icons.

Suggested citation: Quinn P, Williamson B, Gibbs L. Recovery Capitals and Indigenous Peoples Resource. Melbourne, Australia: Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre. April 2021. Retrieved from <recoverycapitals.org.au>

Acknowledgements: We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all who provided input into this resource and the underlying research including: Bushfire Recovery Victoria Aboriginal Cultural and Healing division, Australian Indigenous Health Infonet, Australian Red Cross, Dr Jessica Weir (University of Western Sydney) and ReCap project contributors.

Artwork by Frances Belle Parker. Design by Alana Pirrone.



resilience

Cultural



diverse economies

Social



Financial



spirituality

Natural

community

Elders

Indigenous organisations

traditional & contemporary knowledge

self-determination & leadership'

food, fibre & medicine



Human



Political



Built

caring for Country

culture & identity

gathering places

healing

connection