



Environment Institute
of Australia and
New Zealand Inc.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE AND NATURAL DISASTER RESILIENCE

EIANZ Position Statement | April 2021

Natural assets (terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems including landscapes, seas, oceans, lakes, rivers, wetlands, marshes, lagoons, streams and swamps) are impacted by natural disasters. More significantly, the way that natural assets are used and managed, along with their interface with settlement patterns and infrastructure have a significant impact on the ability of communities to be resilient to natural disasters.

There is clear evidence that natural disasters are increasing in frequency, intensity and costs with rising temperatures, more frequent and longer heatwaves, reduced but more intense rainfall events, and rising sea levels.

Across the globe, environmental practice is recognised as one discipline in a coordinated approach to support our communities, economies and environments to be natural disaster resilient. There are important cross-dependencies with other disciplines and practitioners including land use planning, architects and building codes, incorporation of climate change into decision making, design of infrastructure, and planning for and managing emergency responses.

Given the current status and likely increase in the effects of natural disasters, much more coordinated planning, mitigation and recovery is required to build resilience to natural disasters both now and into the future.

Environmental practitioners, EIANZ [Divisions & Chapters](#) and [Special Interest Sections](#) have a key role in facilitating targeted action across the full range of policy and implementation arrangements at all jurisdictions to improve natural disaster resilience. This includes using natural assets to reduce the

impacts of natural disasters on the environment itself, our communities and infrastructure, to understand environmental impacts of new development and to manage environmental assets and values within the context of natural disaster resilience.

Within this action framework, the EIANZ sees three key themes that are adapted from the internationally adopted [Sendai Framework](#) for action by the environmental profession:

- 1. Ensuring that the right data and information are available** in a useable format by providing transparent data and information to determine natural disaster hazard (from bushfires, storms, earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, floods, etc.) and to understand the exposure, vulnerabilities and post impact assessment of communities, infrastructure, habitats and natural assets.
- 2. Collaborating with other disciplines, while learning from our past**, to guide the way we deliver natural disaster resilience using a “convergence of solutions” philosophy, and applying multidisciplinary approaches to delivering multi-objective outcomes.
- 3. Improving the understanding, application and management of natural resources** and the way environmental and landscape management are considered in preparing for, preventing, responding to and recovering from natural disasters.

See [“Suggested Actions for environmental practitioners, Divisions and Special Interest Sections”](#) for the role of environmental practitioners on a day-to-day basis with support from EIANZ Divisions, Chapters and Special Interest Sections for delivering environmental practice and natural disaster resilience.

The EIANZ is a not-for-profit, professional association for environmental practitioners from across Australia and New Zealand. The Institute has a certification scheme that recognises ethical and professional practice which assures government, industry and the community of practitioners’ professional standing. It is represented by jurisdictional Divisions, a New Zealand Chapter and supported by Special Interest Sections covering climate change, heritage, contaminated land, ecology, and impact assessment. Its membership is drawn from all areas of environmental practice, and includes practitioners with industry, government, community and academic careers.