

Foreword



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For tens of thousands of years Indigenous peoples have cared for our lands and waters, forming intimate and reciprocal bonds between people and place. Before European expeditions crossed the Atlantic, Polynesian people conquered the Pacific Ocean. Before Egyptians built the pyramids, Indigenous peoples from western New South Wales created a complex system of aquaculture. Bhiamie Ngunnhu [Brewarrina fish traps] continue to be regarded as the world's oldest human construction.

In recent times, our peoples have experienced immense loss, suffering and trauma. Colonisation changed our worlds like nothing before. While processes of colonisation have resulted in a deep sense of cultural loss, it has also brought forward an undeniable, and powerfully compelling, sense of resilience. This sense of resilience continues to support our peoples as we respond to the devastating result of a referendum for constitutional recognition in Australia in 2023 and recent attempts to erode Māori rights through reviewing and revising Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi).

It is with this sense of antiquity and a spirit of resilience that we are proud to present this special edition of the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*.

Given the broad and profound ills inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in Australia and Aotearoa over the last few centuries, we have chosen to not limit contributions to Western conceptions of 'disasters'. Rather, our call for contributions was an opportunity for Indigenous researchers, practitioners, public servants and community leaders to define resilience in their own sense. The result of this broad call for contributions is a diverse content that considers issues of cultural burning, cultural responses to COVID-19, climate change effects and environmental contamination.

All contributions to this edition are either authored or led in authorship by First Nations people. This was a deliberate and important choice to demonstrate that Indigenous peoples' voices are not marginal or supplementary in disaster resilience; they are central.

This edition demonstrates the indelible contributions Indigenous people are already making in emergency management and disaster resilience. It also highlights what is possible by embracing and upholding Indigenous leadership.

Despite the deep cultures of resilience our peoples possess, we remain in a state of recovery from the harms of colonisation; harms that continue to be inflicted upon our peoples. And so it is that we face the reality of a changing climate with temperatures reaching and breaching the 2°C target while still seeking to (re)define our sense of identity in a changed, and changing, world.

It is at this juncture that we pause and reflect on the place, purpose and contributions of Indigenous peoples in emergency management and disaster resilience. We thank all contributors for their willingness and trust. We hope to have honoured your leadership with a brave, yet careful, journal edition.

We thank the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience for investing in this themed issue and for shining a light on Indigenous leadership and excellence. We thank in particular, Dr Margaret Moreton, who possessed the seed of vision for this edition.

May this journal offer a beacon of light in what might feel like dark times.

Mauri ora / Yalu