Recent Natural Disasters

Newcastle Earthquake

On 28 December 1989, one of Australia's most serious natural disasters occurred. An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 shook Newcastle in New South Wales. The epicentre was only about 15 km south of the central business district. Only one aftershock, magnitude 2.1, was recorded. Devastatingly 13 people lost their lives and more than 160 were injured.

The earthquake caused damage to more than 35 000 homes, 147 schools, and 3000 buildings. The damage bill was estimated at \$4 billion.



On 29 November 1934, 140 mm of torrential rain fell in Melbourne over a 48-hour period. In South Gippsland (east of Melbourne) 350 mm fell over the same two-day period ending on the 1st of December.

The storm caused the Yarra and other rivers to burst their banks. The large torrent caused roads to be submerged and houses flooded. Some towns became isolated as the high water level made it difficult for people to use bridges, trains and tramway lines. The Yarra Valley, Latrobe River District and South Gippsland areas were all flooded.

The flood resulted in 36 deaths and massive losses of livestock. Six thousand people were left homeless and over 400 buildings were damaged.

Cyclone Yasi

On 3 February 2011 severe tropical Cyclone Yasi crossed the Far North Queensland coast with wind gusts of around 285 km/h and a diameter of 1450 km. It was one of the largest and most powerful cyclones to hit Queensland's coast.

The category 5 cyclone damaged communities between Cairns and Townsville. Countless buildings, homes, boats, wharfs and other infrastructure were destroyed or significantly damaged. The cyclone was so powerful it completely flattened sugar cane and banana plantations.

One person lost their life and approximately 1100 people were left homeless in the immediate aftermath of the storm. Some believe the damage bill was around \$3.6 billion.



