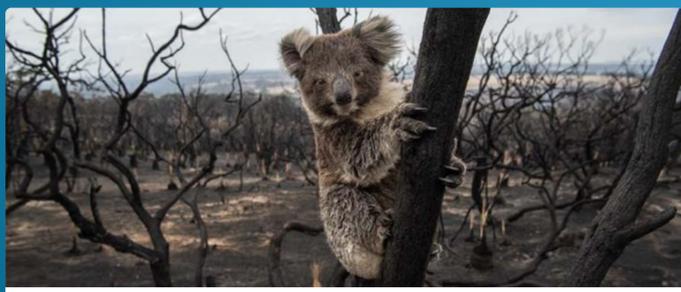


# Australia State of the Environment 2021

Combining scientific, traditional and local knowledge, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have worked together to create this first holistic assessment of the state of Australia's environment.

The report aims to help shape policy and action, influence behaviours, and assess our actions as stewards of the Australian environment.

Our environment is under extreme pressure. Read the report. Make an impact. Heal Country. Our future wellbeing and prosperity depend on it.



## Climate change is affecting every aspect of our environment

Temperatures, extreme events and fire risk are increasing, sea levels are rising, and rainfall patterns are changing across Australia.

[Explore Climate >](#)  
[Explore Extreme events >](#)

## Australia's past is the key to a better future

The oldest continuing cultures in the world, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, know that 'if you take care of Country, it will take care of you'. By continuing to work together, we can heal Country and safeguard our future.

Narrated by Julie Tyson, a proud Meerooni woman of the Gurang people, also Ngugi Nunukal of Quandamooka nation and a descendant of the Kari people.



## Explore all chapters in the report



### Overview

- [Air quality](#)
- [Antarctica](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Climate](#)
- [Coasts](#)
- [Extreme events](#)
- [Heritage](#)
- [Indigenous](#)
- [Inland water](#)
- [Land](#)
- [Marine](#)
- [Urban](#)

ibility  
ralia  
re  
ir  
of  
ion.



### Overview

The Overview chapter presents the overall health of every aspect of our environment – from our rivers and oceans to our land and urban areas. It also looks at how our environment is affecting the health and wellbeing of the Australian community and economy. Importantly, it identifies the areas of greatest need in our environment to help us protect, restore and manage our world.



[Explore Overview >](#)

### Air quality

The Air quality chapter examines the sources and management of our air pollutants. The past 5 years shown us the potential extremes of air quality from bushfire smoke to the reductions in traffic emissions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Air quality is a key aspect of our environment that affects our health and the wellbeing of our species and ecosystems.



[Explore Air quality >](#)

## What is in the report

1 overview

Overview +

- [Air quality](#)
- [Antarctica](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Climate](#)
- [Coasts](#)
- [Extreme events](#)
- [Heritage](#)
- [Indigenous](#)
- [Inland water](#)
- [Land](#)
- [Marine](#)
- [Urban](#)

12 chapters

6 sections per chapter

- [Key findings](#)
- [Outlook and impact](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Management](#)
- [Pressures](#)
- [Resources](#)

The state of the environment report is a comprehensive assessment of the health of every aspect of our environment. Written by independent experts, it analyses the best available evidence every 5 years to guide policy and action.

Each chapter has 5 key sections, as well as supporting information and material.

Find out the main messages of the report. Each chapter has 10 key points that summarise the findings of the chapter.

## New in the report

### Valuing traditional knowledge

Traditional Owners have lived in harmony with the Australian environment for thousands of years. This harmony is at the core of traditional knowledge and customs, sustaining a sense of place and wellbeing.

In 2021, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have worked together to create the first holistic assessment of the current state of Australia's environment. This recognises that Indigenous participation in management of land and sea is important to environmental outcomes. This is in line with the objects of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*—promoting a cooperative approach to environmental management.

[For more information, go to Indigenous >](#)



### Adding new chapters to the report

In 2021, we have added new chapters to the report:

**Indigenous** – We have brought together the voices of our Indigenous co-authors, leaders and communities. We have engaged during SoE's development. The Indigenous chapter tells the story of the deep connection between the environment and people, the challenges of Indigenous stewardship in caring for Country, and the benefits of learning from Australia's Indigenous peoples.

**Extreme events** – The intensity and frequency of extreme weather and related events are changing. Understanding natural events such as cyclones, floods and bushfires, how they impact where we live and work, and their effect on ecosystems helps us to better manage these events in the future.

**Climate** – Our climate is changing. Australia's climate continues to warm, largely driven by greenhouse gas emissions, bringing with it associated changes in climate systems. Climate change is a pressure across all aspects of the environment and amplifies the impacts of other pressures.

[Read more about Climate >](#)  
[Read more about Extreme events >](#)  
[Read more about Indigenous >](#)

### A more holistic approach

This report explores the links between human wellbeing and the environment. We are increasingly aligning the report and its analysis with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach includes outcome-based assessments which provide a common framework that can be used by industry and states and territories. We have also drawn on environmental accounts where available, which apply an economic lens to the costs and benefits for society of environment impacts and actions.

[Read more about Management >](#)

### Artworks from National Gallery of Australia

We have collaborated with the National Gallery of Australia to showcase artists from across the nation. Their art, featured as the main image for each chapter, brings aspects of our environment to life and shows how the environment affects not only how we see our Country, but how we see ourselves within it.

[Read more about Artworks & artists >](#)

