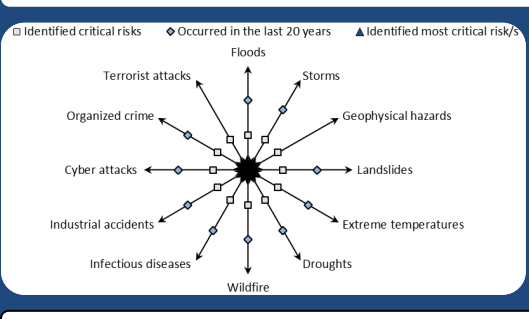
Australia

Australia: Critical risks at a glance

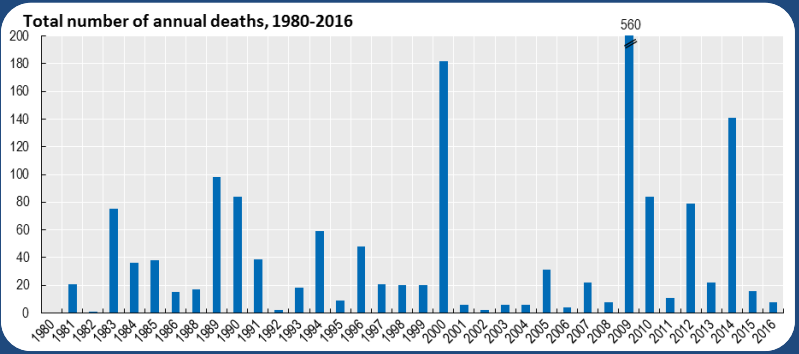


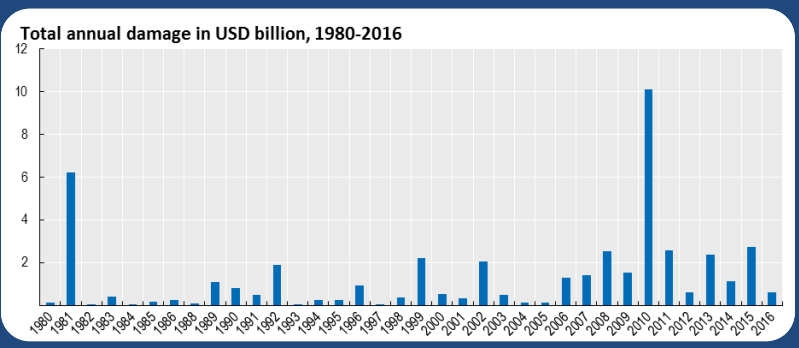
Natural hazards: tropical cyclones and floods in Northern and Eastern Australia, bushfires in low densely populated areas. Earthquakes and tsunamis are rare, but could potentially cause severe damages. Severe droughts and heat waves also represent a threat. Infectious diseases are also considered a critical risk.
Man-made risk: industrial accidents such as chemical accidents and oil spills, and cyber-attacks have happened in the past and are identified as critical risks.
Most critical risk: not identified

Sources: OECD Survey on the Governance of Critical Risks, 2016; Government of Australia, 2017

Disaster-related socio-economic losses

Deaths: significant spikes in the number of deaths were caused by the heat wave in 2000, wildfires such as in 2009, floods such as in 2010 and technological disasters such as the transport accidents. The country average of deaths per million inhabitants for the period 1995-2015 was below the OECD average.
Damage: the Queensland floods caused the highest damage recorded, followed by storms and tropical cyclones. Although wildfires occur frequently, they only contribute a small percentage share to average annual losses from natural hazards. Overall, damage from disasters as a % of GDP was above OECD average.



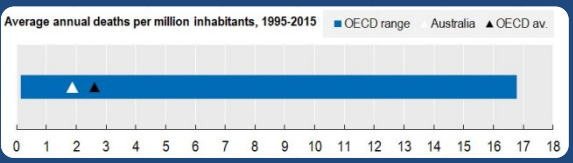


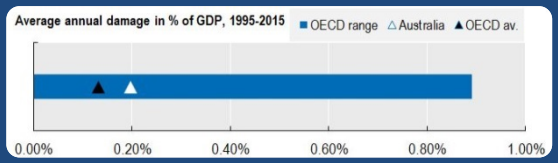
Major disasters

The Queensland Floods
- December 2010, Brisbane
- 35 deaths
- 7,3 US$ billion damage (est.)

The Black Saturday bushfires
- February 2009 in Victoria
- 180 deaths
- 1.3 US$ billion damage (est.)

The Sydney hailstorm
- April 1999 in New South Wales
- 35 deaths
- 24 000 houses damaged
- 1.5 billion US$ damages (est.)





Notes: For 38.39% of disaster events registered in EM-DAT between 1995 and 2015, data on economic damages are not recorded. Owing to differences in the measurement of damage, estimations for individual events may differ across sources. Due to methodological differences in the attribution of deaths to heatwaves, the figure comparing average deaths per million inhabitants against the OECD average excludes these deaths.
Sources: https://www.emknowledge.org.au/; OECD Survey on the Governance of Critical Risks, 2016; EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database, 2017; GTD: The Global Terrorism Database, 2016; OECD Statistics, 2017

Institutional lead for risk management

Risk Assessment
- Communities

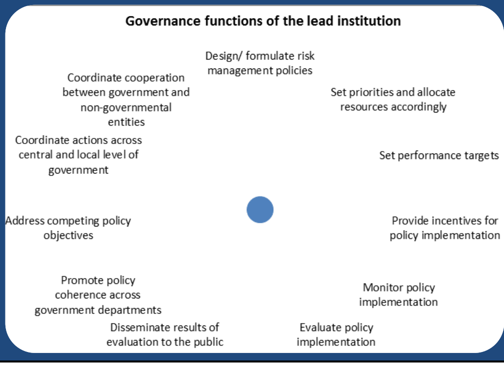
Prevention and Mitigation
- Sub-national governments

Preparedness and Response
- Sub-national governments

Crisis Management
- Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre

Recovery and Reconstruction
- States and territories with federal assistance

In Australia, there is no central lead institution for the governance of critical risks, but the central government has a key strategic guidance function and is responsible for monitoring risks. The states and territories have primary responsibility for disaster risk management. When a disaster is beyond the capacity of a state or territory, there are arrangements among state and territory to share resources. States and territories support local governments and communities in risk assessments and risk reduction investments. Sub-national governments are responsible for risk communication and ensuring necessary emergency response capacities at local level. Local governments are responsible for adequate emergency preparedness. Communities are responsible for risk assessments and ensuring their results feed into risk reduction investment planning.



Sources: OECD Survey on the Governance of Critical Risks, 2016; Government of Australia – Attorney-General's Department,2017

Risk anticipation

Yes / No	Horizon scanning exercises	Emergency response exercises	National Risk Assessment	Local risk assessment	Research on risk interlinkages	Research on emerging risks
Australia	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Responding Countries						

Risk communication

Yes / No	Target vulnerable population	Media briefings	Platforms for two-way communicaton	Information to stimulate investment in self-protective measures	Information on protective measures against imminent major hazards	Public education system
Australia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Responding Countries						

Critical infrastructure protection

Yes / No	Critical infrastructure protection programme	Standards/ toolkits for business continuity	Capabilities to ensure function following a shock	First responders required to be stationed	Information on exposure to natural hazards provided	Information on exposure to terrorist threats provided	Mandatory emergency preparedness requirements	Mandatory information sharing about vulnerabilities	Voluntary information sharing about vulnerabilities
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Responding Countries									

Source: OECD Questionnaire on the Governance of Critical Risks, 2016
Note: Data from the OECD Survey on the Governance of Critical Risks is only available for 33 OECD countries plus Colombia and Costa Rica.