



Aboriginal health and wellbeing in public health planning

Objective 3: Protect – Protect against public and environmental health risks, effectively manage emergencies, reduce disaster impacts and lessen the health impacts of climate change

Objective 3 of the *State Public Health Plan 2025–2030* recognises the health of the environment, animals and humans, are deeply interconnected.¹ As such, Objective 3 is concerned with managing the effects of climate change on people's health, reducing the health system's environmental footprint, responding to notifiable infectious diseases, providing sustainable disaster and emergency management, reducing harms due to current and future health hazards, enhancing pandemic preparedness and response and ensuring access to safe food and water.

Local spotlight: The Shire of York used a grant awarded by the *National Disaster Risk Reduction 2022–23 Competitive Grant Program*, administered by the *State Emergency Management Committee*, to deliver a *Traditional Aboriginal Mosaic Burning Program* on Ballardong Country within the Shire. By incorporating mosaic burning into the Shire's vegetation management and bushfire mitigation strategies, Aboriginal cultural heritage is respected and revived, setting a new standard in sustainable land management.

Theme	POTENTIAL STRATEGIES		
	<i>Fundamental</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Emergency preparedness, response and recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote resources and provide support to enable Aboriginal people and communities to prepare and respond to climate health risks and related emergencies. Invite ACCHS to participate in local inter-agency emergency standing committees (e.g. Local Emergency Management Committees) to ensure the development and testing of local and regional emergency plans consider the needs of Aboriginal people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the delivery of culturally responsive emergency education and readiness sessions (e.g. related to bushfires, cyclones and heatwaves). Undertake risk assessments and emergency response planning, with Aboriginal stakeholders to ensure the specific needs of Aboriginal people are addressed in times of public health emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish agreements which ensure Aboriginal community leaders share decision making power on key decisions which affect Aboriginal people and communities in emergency preparedness, response and recovery.
Environmental and public health protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and address identified issues with air and water quality in Aboriginal communities. Partner with ACCOs on animal and pest management strategies. Promote resources developed by ACCOs which relate to environmental and public health protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the delivery of the Aboriginal Environmental Health Program in partnership with preferred service providers. Collaborate with ACCOs to develop a community safety plan which strengthens the Aboriginal community's ability to identify and mitigate environmental health risks specific to their areas. This may relate to water quality, sanitation, and access to safe housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Aboriginal communities to implement and improve waste management solutions.
Climate change mitigation and adaption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support community education through the promotion of culturally responsive materials which demonstrate how climate change affects health. Promote culturally responsive materials which support Aboriginal people and communities to prepare for heatwaves and/or unexpected weather changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Aboriginal communities to increase green canopy and/or install other shade solutions in places to reduce the impacts of heat waves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal rangers to embed caring for Country in land management.

Supporting resources

AHCWA designed resources on Climate Health

Aboriginal Environmental Health

Aboriginal Environmental Health Co-designed Model of Care

My healthy home: home health factsheet series

References

¹ Department of Health, Government of Western Australia (2025). *State Public Health Plan 2025–2030*. Available from: <https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/About-us/Public-Health-Act/State-Public-Health-Plan-2025–2030.pdf>

Acknowledgement of Country and people

WA Health acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia. It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

Using the term Aboriginal

Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and Indigenous may be referred to in the international context. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

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