

Hay, Toni¹ and Courtney Williams¹

¹ Indigenous Environmental Specialists

Effects on Australian Aboriginal Remote Homelands of Northern Australia

Abstract:

Aboriginal populations in northern Australia have been identified as a vulnerable group. Due to the destructive impacts of climate change, the current homeland sites in remote areas are experiencing an increase in environmental changes. Climate change issues that would affect northern Australia include sea level rise, a differing storm and cyclone pattern, increased flooding and temperatures. The impact of these climate change issues on the Aboriginal populations in remote homelands would be considerable.

The risks faced by Aboriginal people in northern Australia include population displacement, exacerbated food and water insecurity, loss of traditional sources of food, exposure to infectious illnesses, and natural disasters. At least 8,000 Aboriginal peoples in the Torres Strait Islands are going to lose their homes if the sea levels increase by one meter. Rising sea levels over the coming five decades are estimated to flood over 4 million hectares of coastal freshwater wetlands in northern Australia.