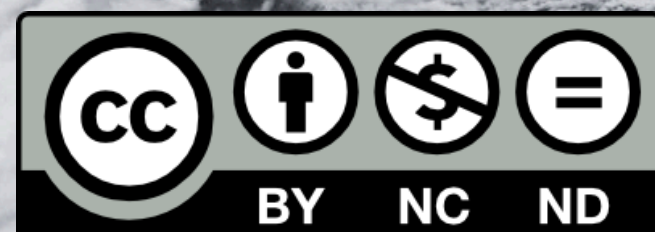


Cyclone **TRACY**

TEACHING INFORMATION

**MUSEUM
AND ART
GALLERY**
NORTHERN
TERRITORY
EDUCATION 2025



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WHAT ARE TROPICAL CYCLONES?

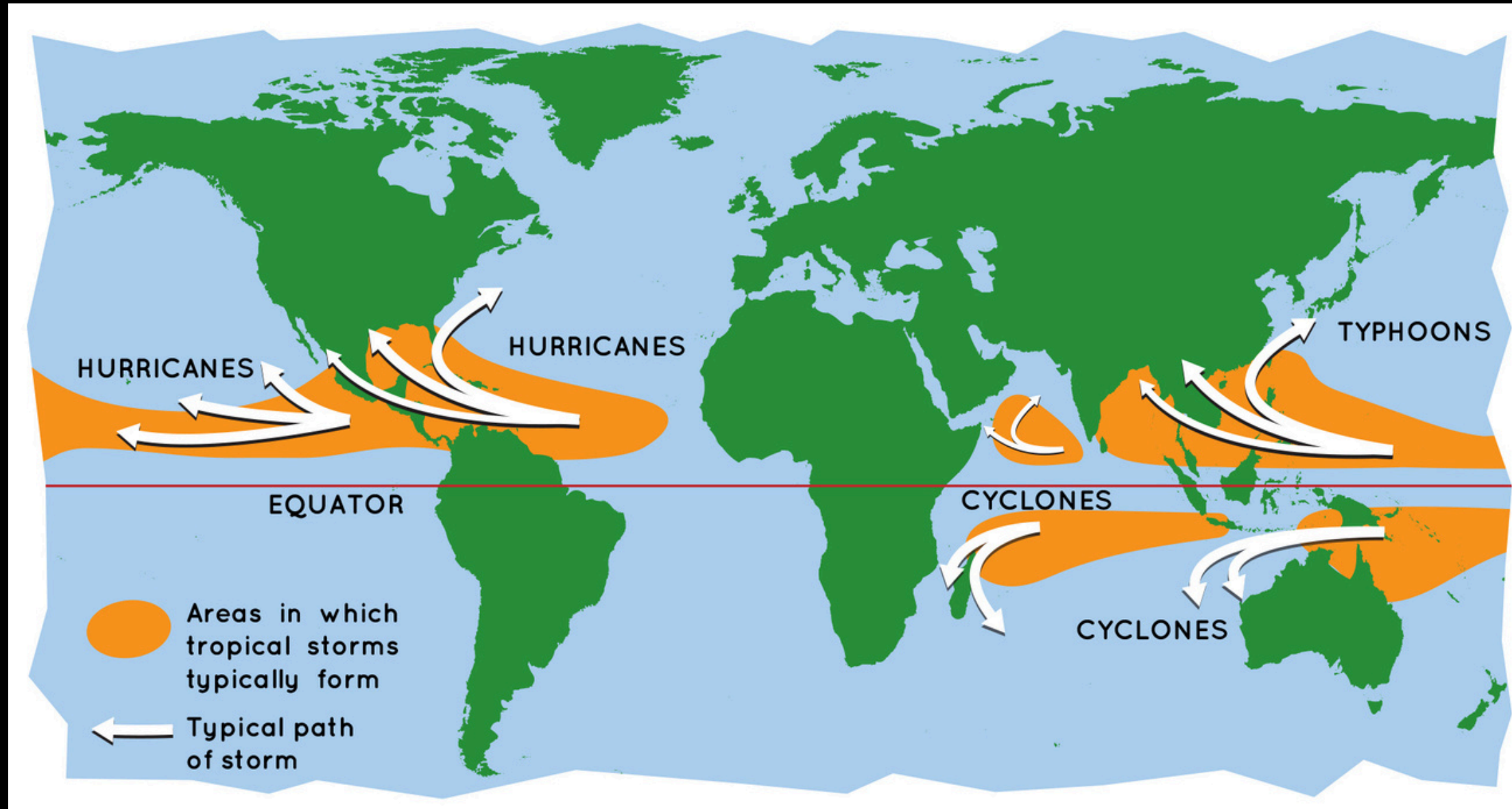


Image from: NASA Space place - Hurricanes. Accessed December 2024
<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/hurricanes/en/>

Tropical cyclones are very strong and dangerous storms. These storms only form in certain parts of the world where the conditions are just right. They develop and get bigger over warm ocean waters in the tropics, but not near the equator.

Depending on where they happen, they might be called Hurricanes (the America's), Typhoons (Asia), or Tropical Cyclones (Australia, Indian Ocean and the Southern Pacific Ocean).

Cyclones rotate anticlockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere due to the Coriolis Effect.

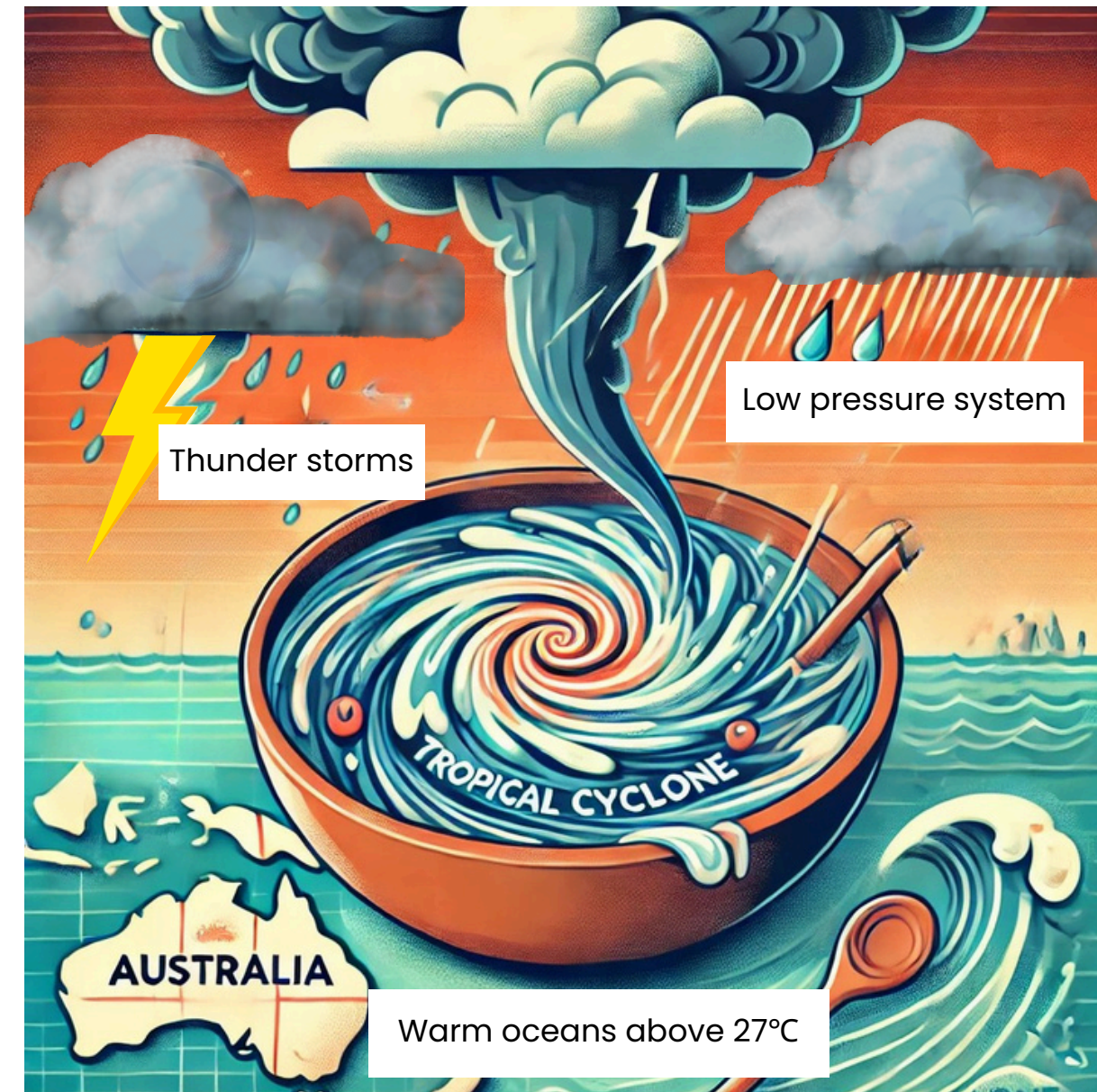
COOKING UP A CYCLONE

Darwin's northern monsoon or 'wet season' occurs between November and April. The Larrakia people call these season Balnba (the rainy season) and Dalay (the monsoon season). It is during these times, Manmanma (cyclones) can form.

Tropical cyclones are giant spirals of cloud around a central 'eye' of extreme low pressure.

To cook one up you need four key ingredients:

- A low pressure system
- Warm oceans with a surface temperature above 27°C
- A humid and unstable atmosphere with thunderstorms
- Be at least 500km from the equator



Source: MAGNT and Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology
<http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/understanding/tc-info/with> (prompt) with the assistance of Naif Alotaibi (2025) [image generator](https://chatgpt.com/g/g-pmuQfob8d-image-generator) [A GPT specialized in generating and refining images] <https://chatgpt.com/g/g-pmuQfob8d-image-generator>

INSIDE A CYCLONE

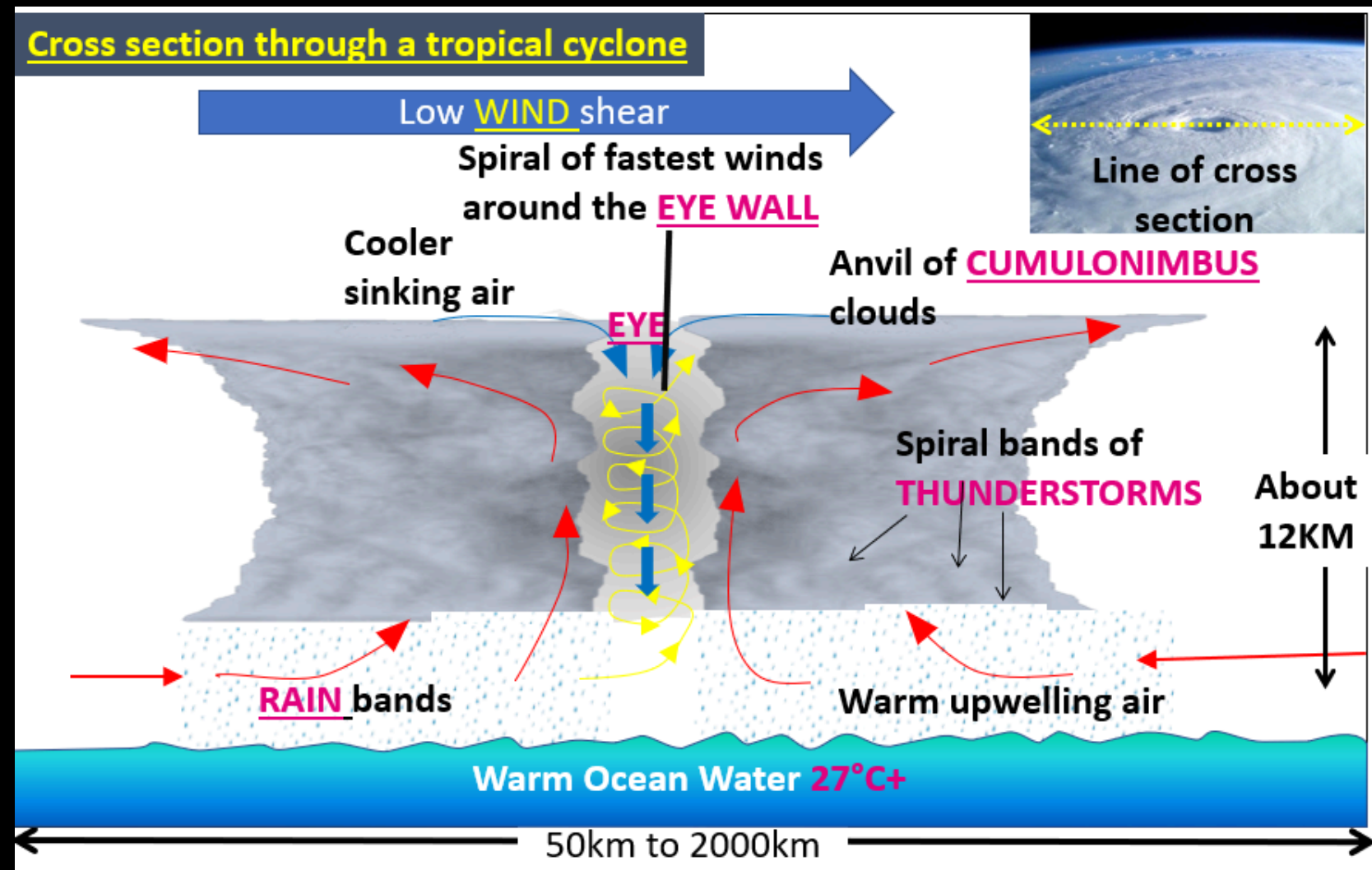


Image from PowerPoint –Tropical Cyclones, Metlink Teaching resources accessed January 2025:
<https://www.metlink.org/resource/20-tropical-cyclones/>

Watch YouTube Video:
How do tropical cyclones form? Bureau of Meteorology
<https://youtu.be/oupQalHJrg?feature=shared>

Over warm tropical oceans, a group of thunderstorms can start spinning because of the Earth's rotation. If the conditions are right, this spinning can grow into a tropical cyclone.

A tropical cyclone works like a giant heat engine in the sky. It uses warm, moist air from the ocean as fuel to create huge amounts of energy.

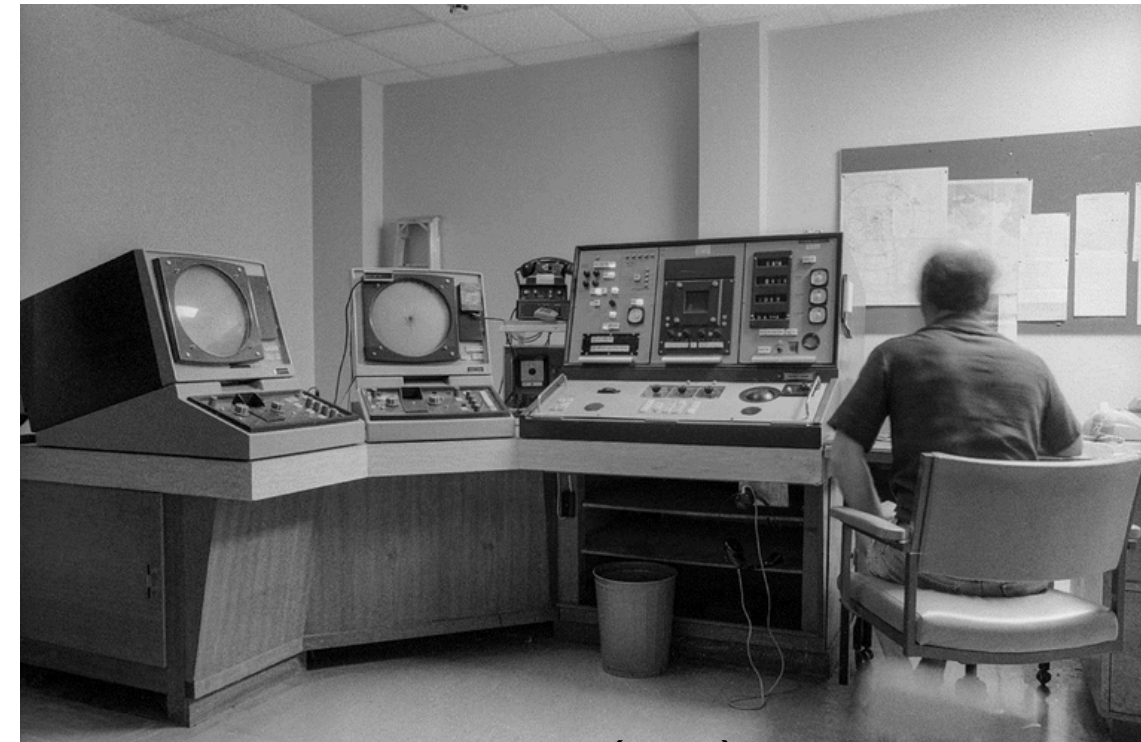
The spinning thunderstorms form bands of rain that swirl around the cyclone's centre, called the 'eye'. The eye is the calm part of the storm. It's usually about 40 kilometers wide but can be bigger or smaller. Around the eye, the winds are the strongest.

The rain clouds carry heat high into the sky, where the cooler, dry air acts like an engine's exhaust. Some of this cool air sinks back into the eye, while the rest spirals outward between the rain bands.

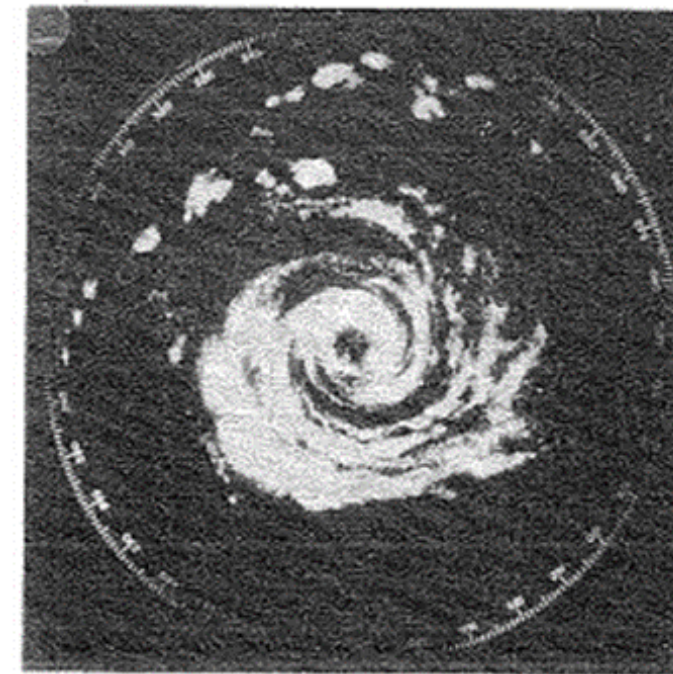
TRACKING A CYCLONE 1974

In December 1974 as Cyclone Tracy was forming in the Arafura Sea, Meteorologists relied primarily on hand-drawn radar images or polaroids, faxed or telexed from the nearest radar station and copied meticulously onto giant plotting maps to track the cyclone.

Satellite imagery was a brand new science, grainy black and white images with a resolution of 10 km were delivered every six hours from orbiting satellites. Other observations were telephoned in and reports were received from ships or planes in the area. Computers in the 1970's were very basic, and mainly used for simple calculations.



The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Darwin, circa 1974
MAGNT, 2024.144.002.004



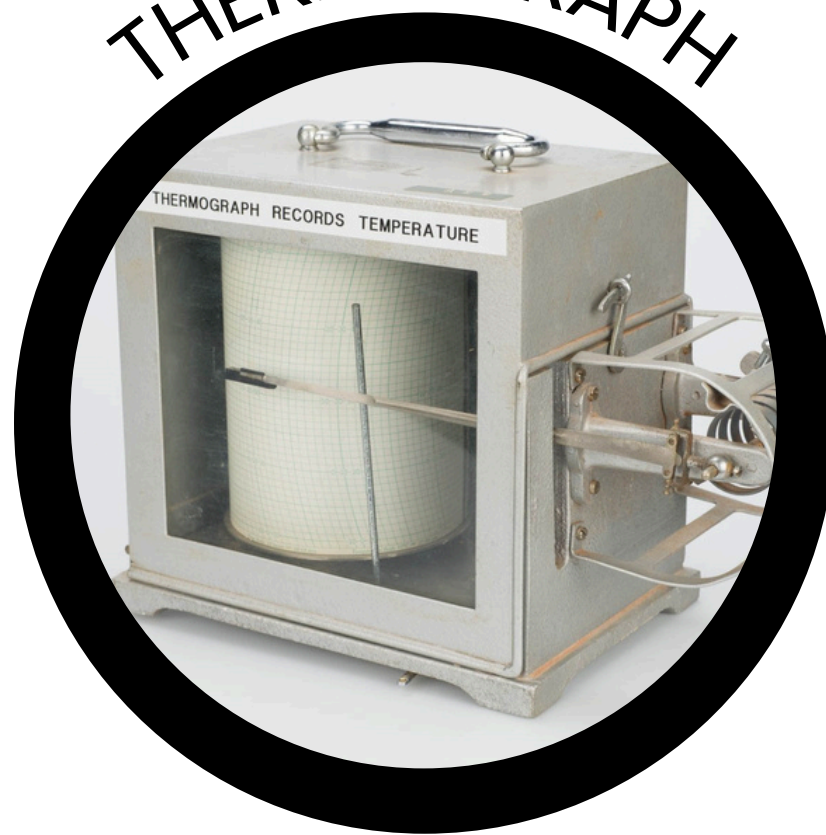
142. 250345CST

60 nautical miles

Radar image of Cyclone Tracy at 3:45am 25th December 1974
Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology 2024

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENTS FROM THE EXHIBITION – BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY CABINET

THERMOGRAPH



Thermographs record the variation in **temperature** over a period of time.

BAROGRAPH



A **barograph** is a **barometer** that records the barometric pressure over time in graphical form which can help predict changes in the weather.

HYGROGRAPH



A **hygograph** measures and records the amount of moisture in the air (**humidity**) over time.

CAMPBELL-STOKES RECORDER



Also known as a sunshine recorder, this device records how many hours of sunshine occurs each day by scorching marks on special paper.

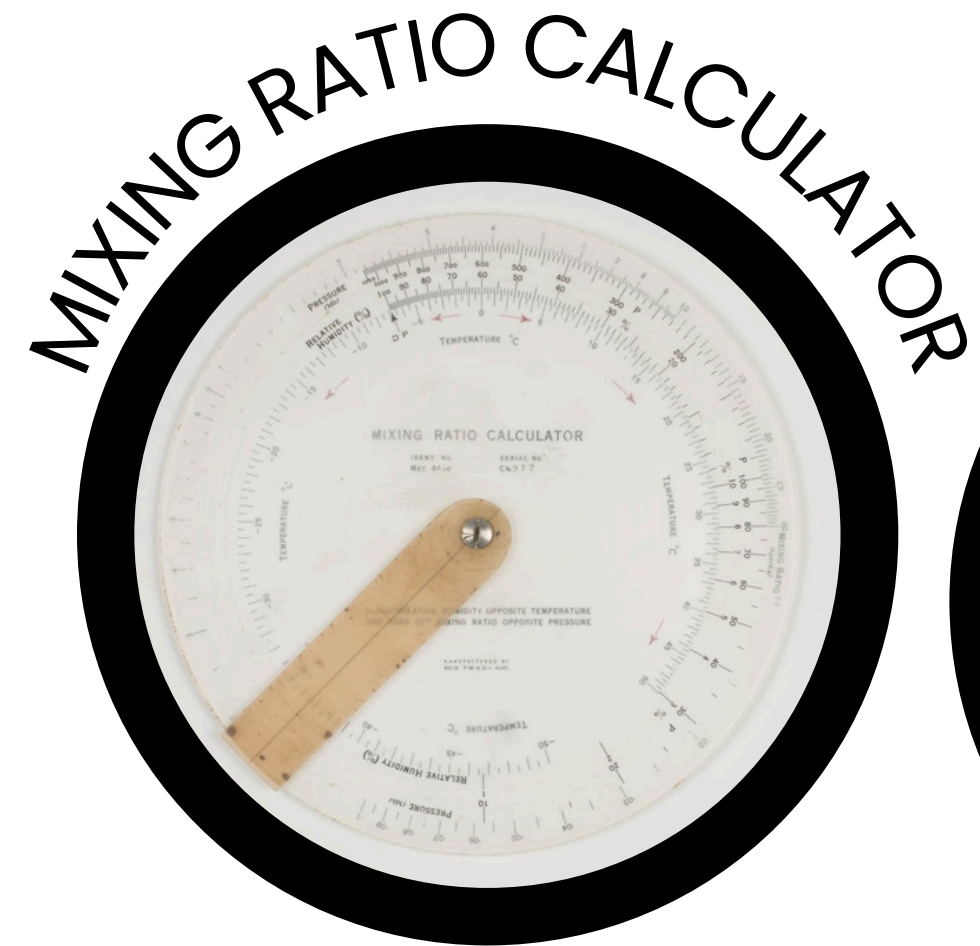
OBSERVATION INSTRUMENTS FROM THE EXHIBITION – BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY CABINET



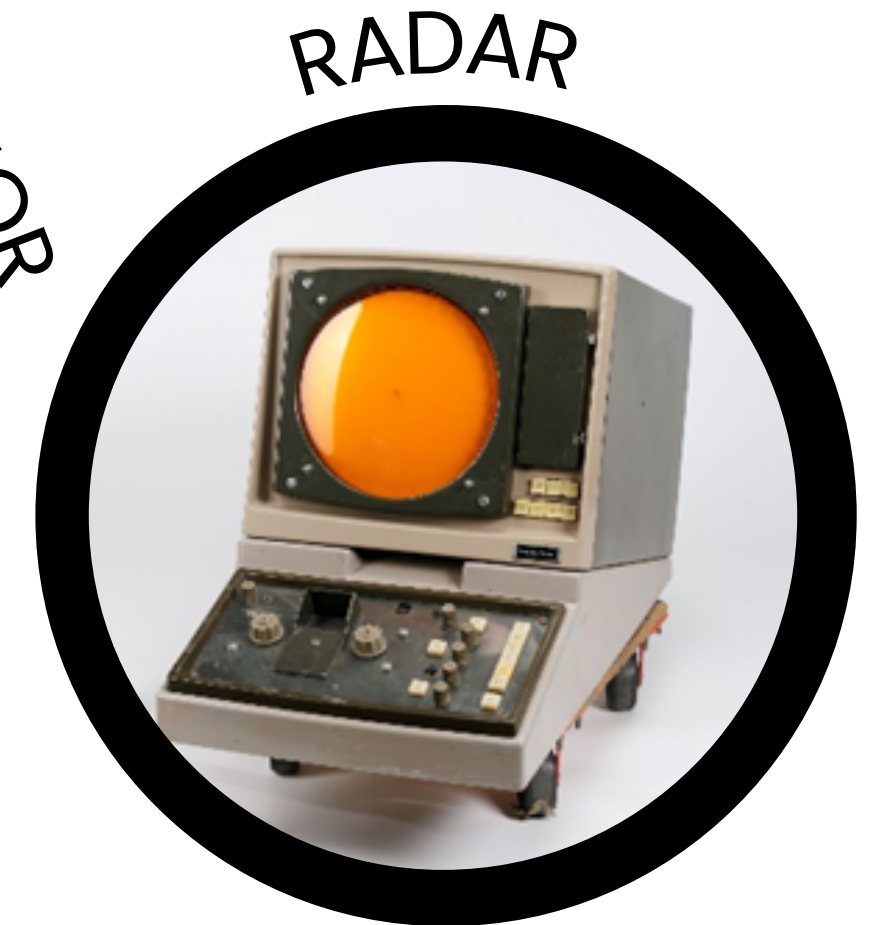
The observers terminal was used to input observation data such as rainfall, temperature and wind speed then send it via coded message to a central database.



The Slide Rule is used to convert the observed **azimuth** and **elevation** readings from a weather balloon into **wind velocity** & direction.

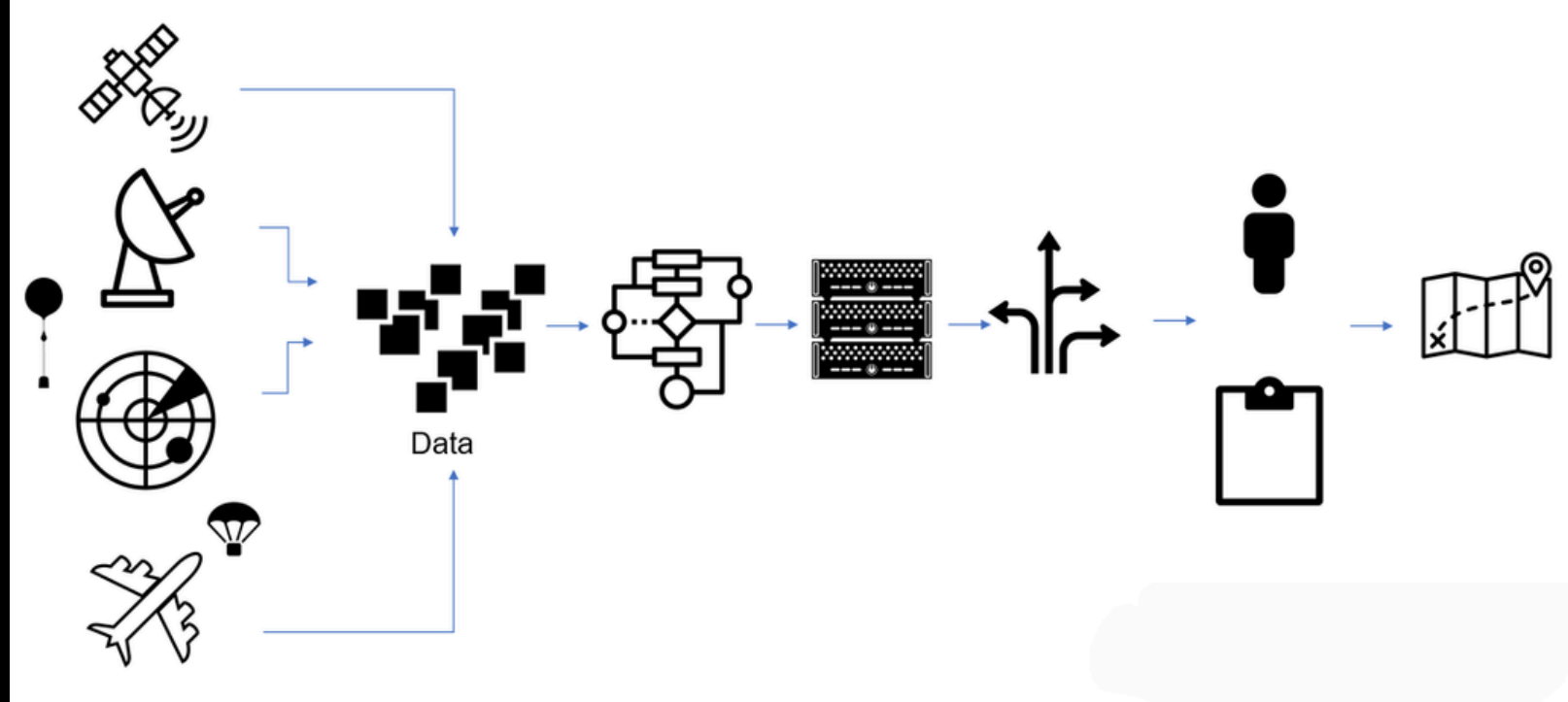


A mixing ratio calculator is used in **meteorology** to compute relative humidity and track the properties of air masses.



Radars in the 1970's were basic, with images displayed on a **cathode ray** tube screen. Images had to be photographed or traced by hand to reproduce them.

TRACKING A CYCLONE 2025



Today, data is gathered from many satellites, ground-based radar, radiosondes, weather balloons, ships and planes. The data is processed on supercomputers, using algorithms with millions of lines of code that model the atmosphere and predict how it will change in the future. Many forecasts are made, and Meteorologists then determine a 'consensus' forecast to prepare weather reports.

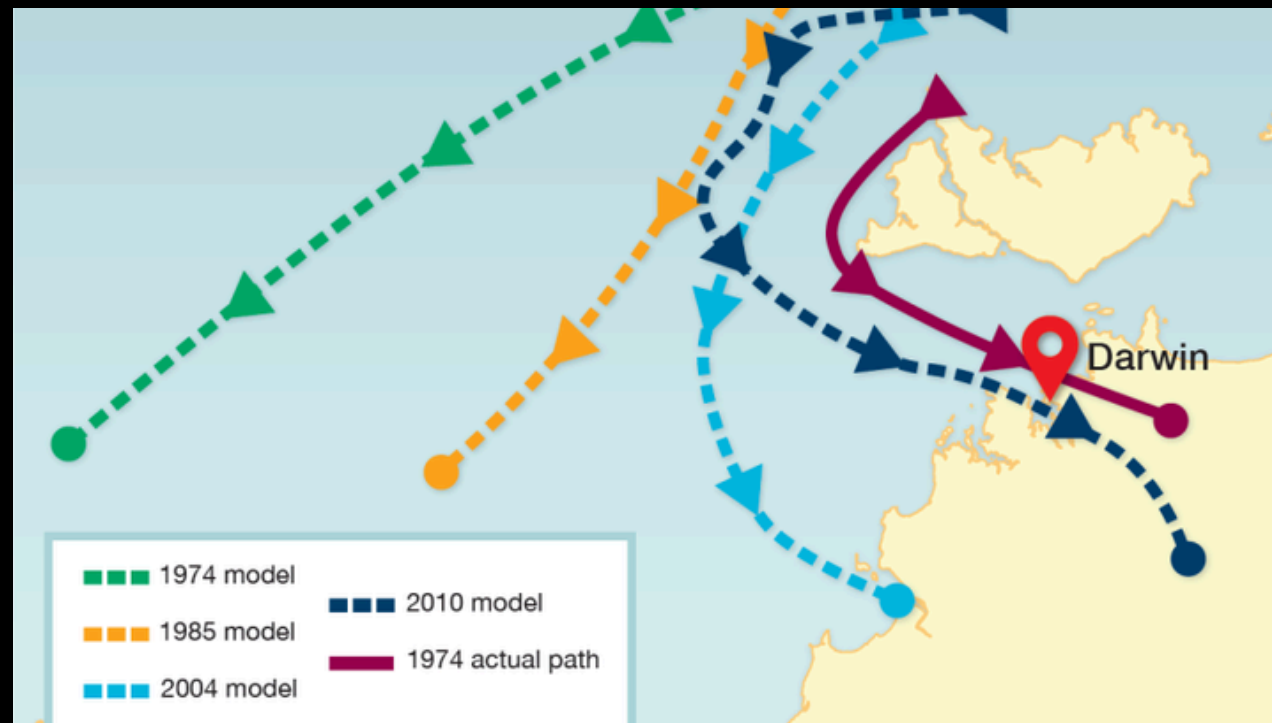
Image from 'Tracking Tropical Cyclones PowerPoint' Metlink, accessed December 2024: <https://www.metlink.org/resource/tropical-cyclone-teaching-resources/>

Predicting Tropical Cyclones – Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) website

<http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/predicting-cyclone/>

The BoM produces a 7 day forecast of tropical cyclones around Australia, Tropical Cyclone advice which includes watches and warnings for communities likely to be affected as well as long term outlooks and expected cyclone activity for specific periods.

BoM – National Weather Service – Tropical Cyclone Knowledge Centre – [Tropical Cyclone warning services](http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/predicting-cyclone/)



How weather models over the decades would have forecast tropical cyclone Tracy's path, showing how these models have improved over time. Source BoM website accessed December 2024: <http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/predicting-cyclone>

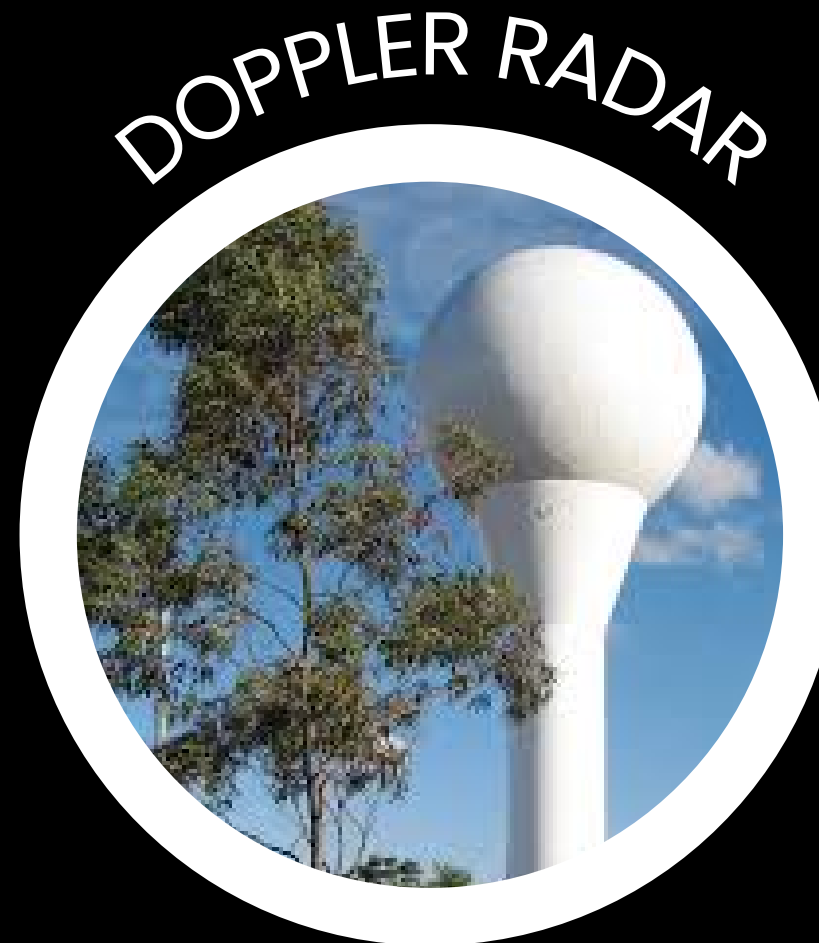
OBSERVATION INSTRUMENTS CURRENTLY IN USE:



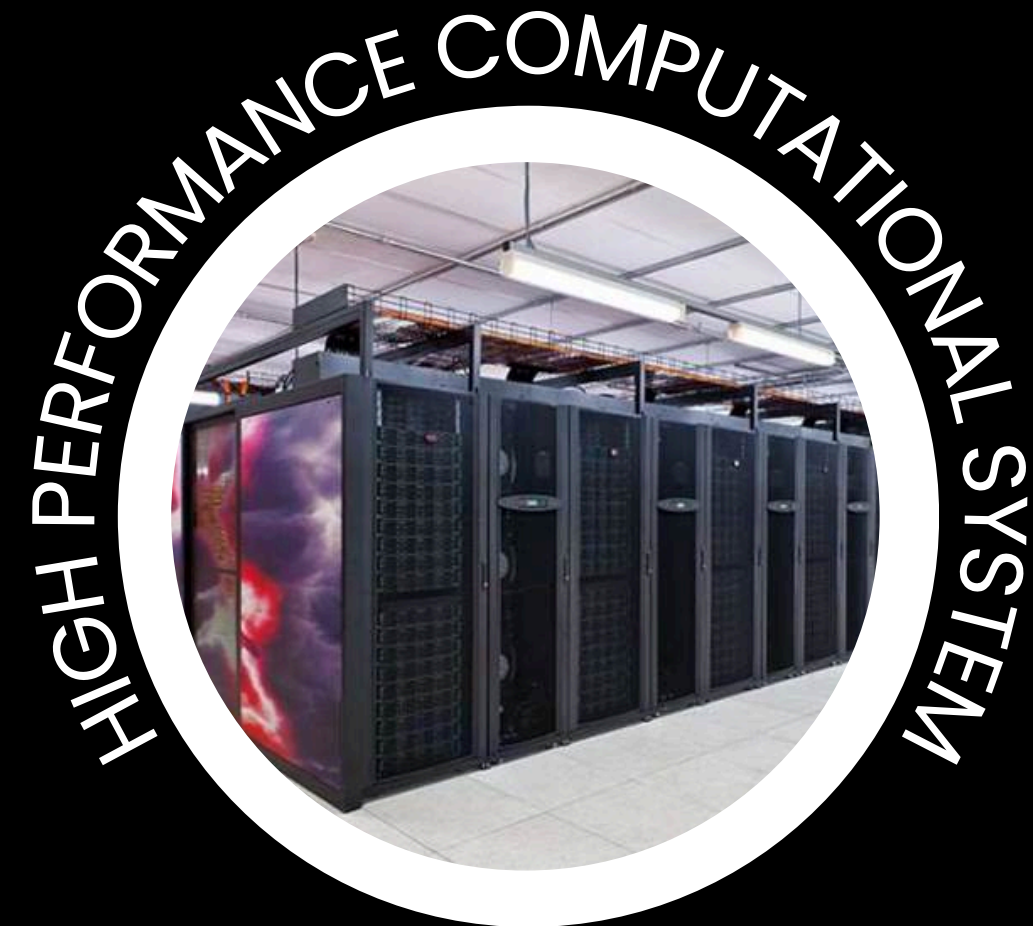
Weather **satellites** provide real-time data on cloud cover, rain, wind speed and temperature to help forecast extreme weather such as cyclones. They can also monitor natural disasters such as floods and bushfires.



Weather balloons provide precise measurements of temperature, pressure, humidity, windspeed and direction.



Doppler weather radars are remote sensing instruments that are capable of detecting the intensity and motion of rain, hail and even insect swarms.



The BoM has a number of supercomputers. These supercomputers are used to help provide weather, water, climate, and ocean services for Australia

WHICH OF THESE OBJECTS MEASURES THE WEATHER?

ANEMOMETER



GALILEO THERMOMETER



BAROMETER



SATELLITE



HYGROMETER



RAIN GUAGE



MANGO



LESSER FRIGATE BIRD



WHICH OF THE OBJECTS MEASURES THE WEATHER?

The answer is none of them.

You need different instruments to take measurements of temperature, wind, precipitation, and other atmospheric factors that accurately describe the weather and climate in a particular area at a particular time. The object closest to predicting weather locally would actually be the mango....

Similar to a 'weather stone' or a 'weather stick', a weather mango can be used to indicate local conditions. Suspended on a string...

- If it is wet, it is raining
- If it is swinging, it is windy
- If it casts a shadow, it is sunny
- If it is blurry, it is foggy
- If it is hanging sideways and swinging wildly, and is wet, and looks a bit bruised, there could be a tropical cyclone

QUESTION: Why is there a picture of a Lesser Frigate Bird? What can it tell you about the weather?



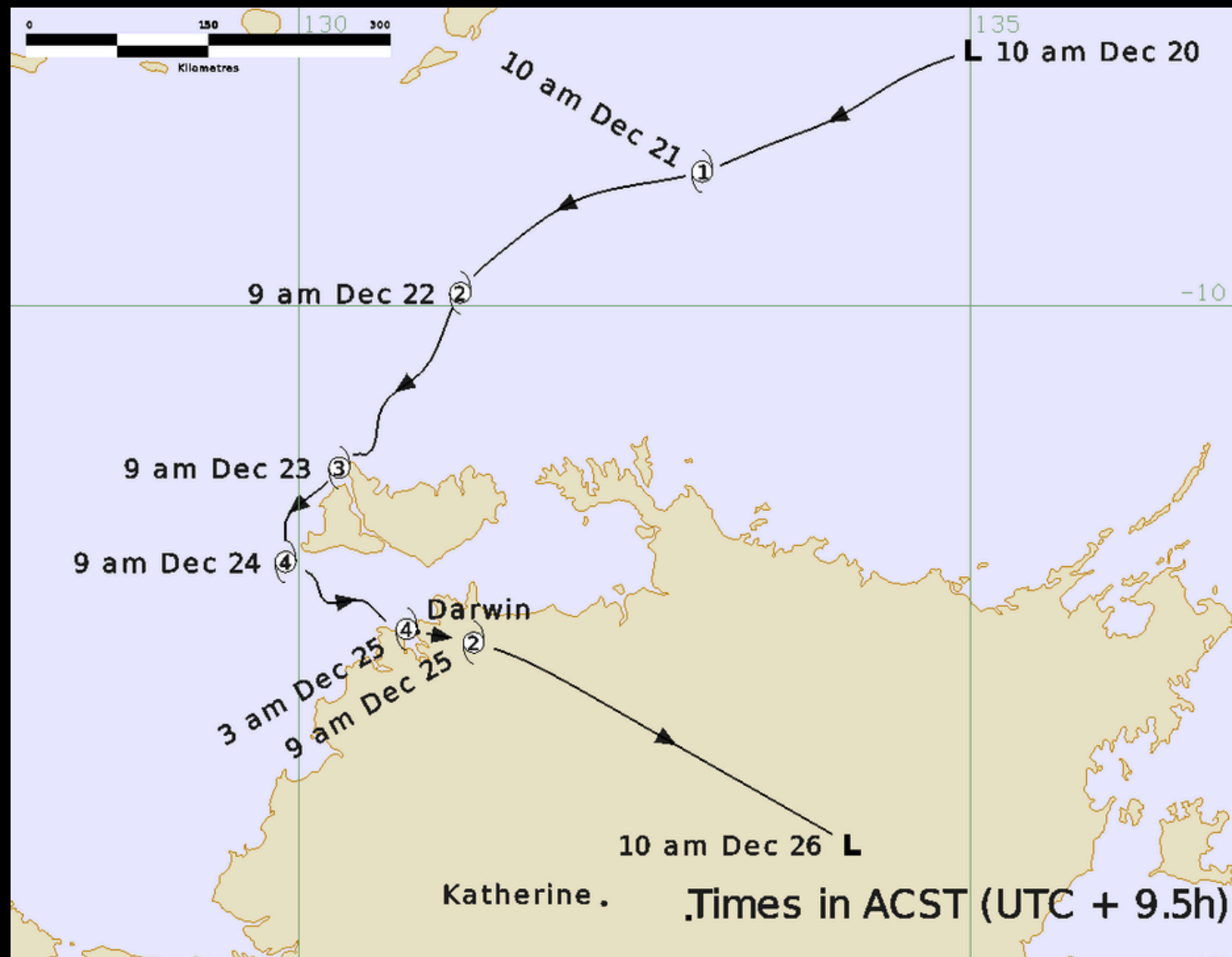
CYCLONE TRACY BY THE NUMBERS

- Category: 4
- Eye diameter (average): 12 kilometres
- Overall average speed of movement: 6 kilometres per hour
- Radius of maximum winds: 7 kilometres (the horizontal distance from the centre of the eye to the ring of strongest winds in the eye wall)
- Radius of gales: 50 kilometres (the horizontal distance from the centre of the eye to the outermost extent of average winds greater than 63 kilometres per hour)
- Central pressure on landfall: 950 hectopascals
- Wind strength: Maximum gust of 217 kilometres per hour (recorded before equipment failure)
- Rate of decay after landfall: Winds decreased below gale force (63 kilometres per hour) within 24 hours
- Rainfall: 280 millimetres in 24 hours at Darwin Airport
- Seas: Rough to high seas in the Beagle Gulf
- Storm surge: 1.6 metres at Darwin Wharf, approximately 4 metres at Casuarina Beach
- Lifetime as a tropical cyclone: 4 days
- Larrakia season: Balnba (rainy season)

Aerial View of Darwin's Northern Suburbs after Cyclone Tracy, 1975. Gift of Terry Dahlenburg, 2023. Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory



CYCLONE TRACY'S PATH



Track and Intensity of Cyclone Tracy source:
<http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/tracy.shtml>

The Darwin Cyclone Warning Centre issued its first tropical cyclone alert at 4pm on 21 December: By the 23 December Tracy had slowly moved south-west, but then began to move south and strengthen. By 9am on Christmas Eve it had reached the south-west tip of Bathurst Island. Then Tracy changed course again, heading south-east straight for Darwin.

A top priority Flash Cyclone Warning was issued at 12.30pm, advising of Tracy's expected landfall early on Christmas morning with very destructive winds. Many who heard the warnings didn't take them too seriously. Only a few weeks earlier, similar warnings had been issued for Cyclone Selma which had narrowly missed Darwin. Many assumed that Tracy would do the same. Many continued with their festive celebrations.

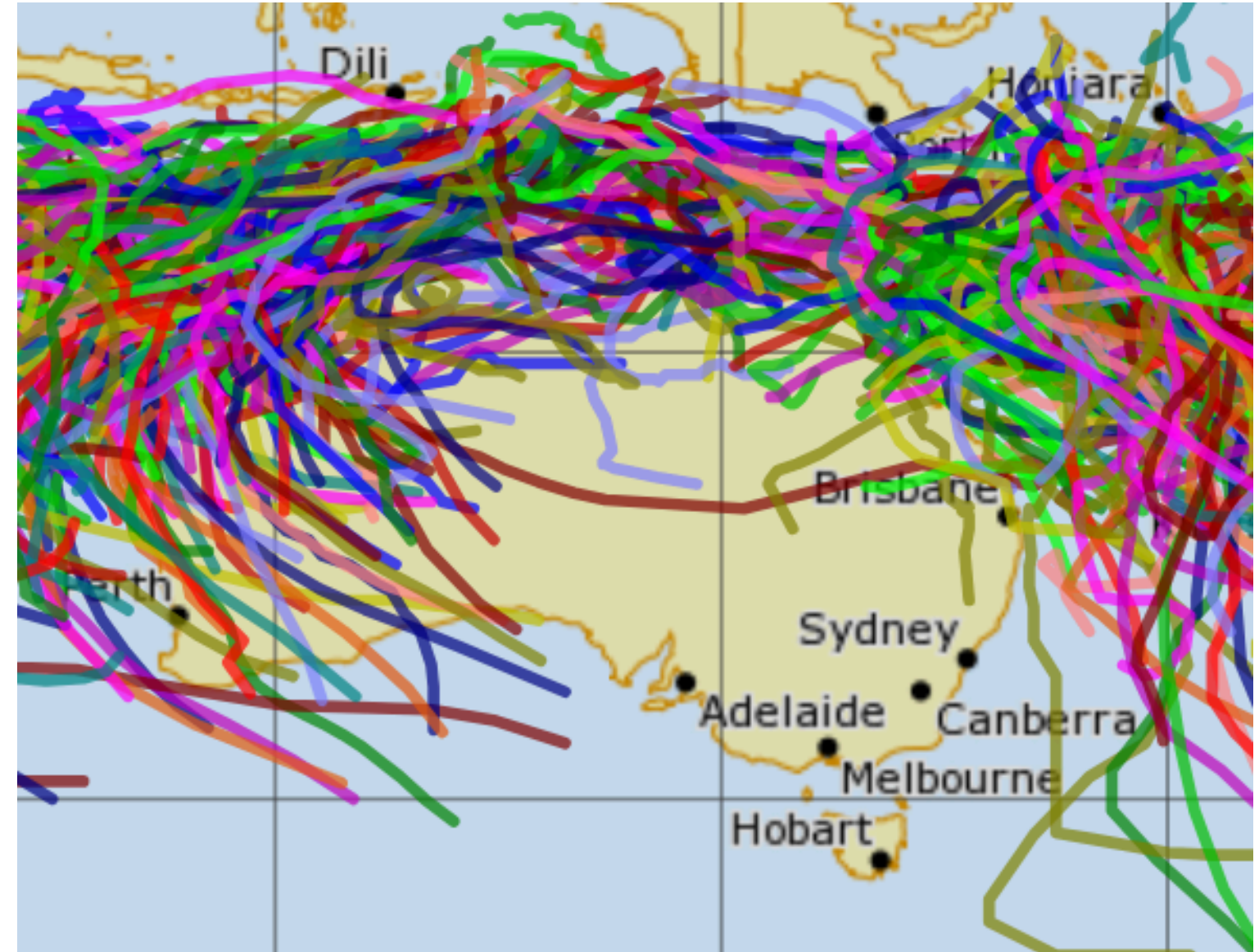
Cyclone Tracy wreaked havoc on Darwin for over six long terrifying hours.

THIS IS CYCLONE COUNTRY

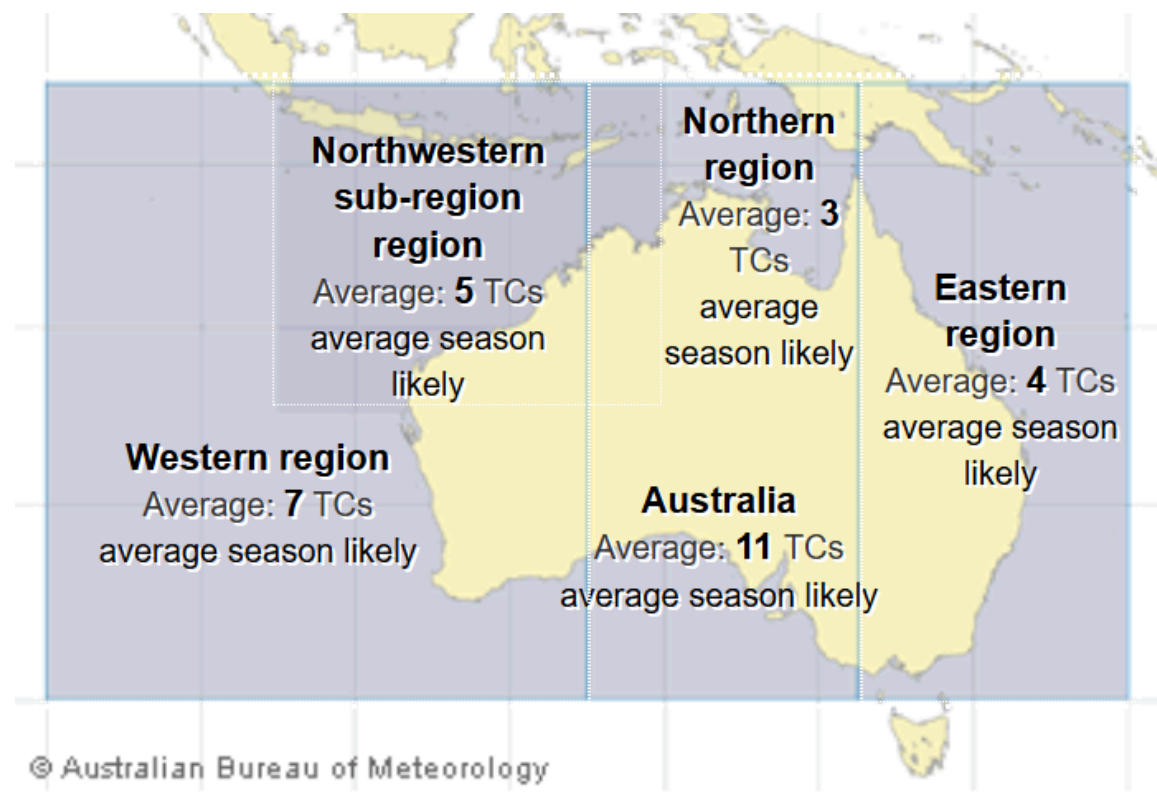
Darwin and the northern coast of Australia is cyclone Country.

The tropical cyclone season typically runs from 1 November to 30 April, although tropical cyclones can, and do, form outside of these dates.

The 2024–25 Australian tropical cyclone season is expected to be the same as the long-term average, in which eleven tropical cyclones may form in the Australian region, four of which may cross the Australian coast.



BoM Cyclone Track maps in the Australian region from 1974–2023 accessed December 2024: <http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/history/tracks/>



Average number of cyclones predicted for the 2024/2025 Cyclone season. BoM website accessed December 2024
<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/cyclones/australia/>

TROPICAL CYCLONE CATEGORIES IN AUSTRALIA

Category 1

Strongest wind gusts
Less than 125 km/h

Potential damage:

- Negligible house damage
- Damage to caravans
- Damage to trees and crops
- Boats may drag moorings

Category 2

Strongest wind gusts
125 - 164 km/h

Potential damage:

- Minor house damage
- Significant damage to caravans, trees signs and crops
- Risk of power failure
- Small boats may break moorings

Category 3

Strongest wind gusts
165-224 km/h

Potential damage:

- Roof and structural damage
- Some caravans and vehicles destroyed
- Power failures likely

Category 4

Strongest wind gusts
225-279 km/h

Potential damage:

- Significant roofing loss and structural damage
- Most caravans and vehicles destroyed
- Dangerous airborne debris
- Widespread power failures

Category 5

Strongest wind gusts
More than 280 km/h

Potential damage:

- Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction

BoM website accessed December 2024 - [Understanding Tropical Cyclone Categories](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTV8Qft6Nco)
(Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTV8Qft6Nco>)

PREPARING FOR A CYCLONE

BEFORE THE CYCLONE SEASON

- Check with your local council or your building control authority to see if your home has been built to cyclone standards.
- Check that the walls, roof and eaves of your home are secure.
- Trim treetops and branches well clear of your home (get council permission).
- Preferably fit shutters, or at least metal screens, to all glass areas.
- Clear your property of loose material that could blow about and possibly cause injury or damage during extreme winds.
- In case of a storm surge/tide warning, or other flooding, know your nearest safe high ground and the safest access route to it.
- Prepare an emergency kit containing:
 - a portable battery radio, torch and spare batteries;
 - water containers, dried or canned food and a can opener;
 - matches, fuel lamp, portable stove, cooking gear, eating utensils; and
 - a first aid kit and manual, masking tape for windows and waterproof bags.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers on display.
- Check neighbours, especially if recent arrivals to your area, to make sure they are prepared.

PREPARING FOR A CYCLONE

WHEN A CYCLONE WATCH IS ISSUED

- Re-check your property for any loose material and tie down (or fill with water) all large, relatively light items such as boats and rubbish bins.
- Fill vehicles fuel tanks. Check your emergency kit and fill water containers.
- Ensure household members know which is the strongest part of the house and what to do in the event of a cyclone warning or an evacuation.
- Tune to your local radio/TV for further information and warnings.
- Check that neighbours are aware of the situation and are preparing.

WHEN A CYCLONE WARNING IS ISSUED

- If requested by local authorities, collect children from school or childcare centre and go home.
- Park vehicles under solid shelter (hand brake on and in gear).
- Put wooden or plastic outdoor furniture in your pool or inside with other loose items.
- Close shutters or board-up or heavily tape all windows. Draw curtains and lock doors.
- Pack an evacuation kit of warm clothes, essential medications, baby formula, nappies, valuables, important papers, photos and mementos in waterproof bags to be taken with your emergency kit. Large/heavy valuables could be protected in a strong cupboard.
- Remain indoors (with your pets). Stay tuned to your local radio/TV for further information.

PREPARING FOR A CYCLONE

ON WARNING OF LOCAL EVACUATION

Based on predicted wind speeds and storm surge heights, evacuation may be necessary. Official advice will be given on local radio/TV regarding safe routes and when to move.

- Wear strong shoes (not thongs) and tough clothing for protection.
- Lock doors; turn off power, gas, and water; take your evacuation and emergency kits.
- If evacuating inland (out of town), take pets and leave early to avoid heavy traffic, flooding and wind hazards.
- If evacuating to a public shelter or higher location, follow police and State/Territory Emergency Services directions.
- If going to a public shelter, take bedding needs and books or games for children.
- Leave pets protected and with food and water or go to shelter area that is suitable for pets. Some shelters require cages for animals.

WHEN THE CYCLONE STRIKES

- Disconnect all electrical appliances. Listen to your battery radio for updates.
- Stay inside and shelter (well clear of windows) in the strongest part of the building, i.e. cellar, internal hallway or bathroom. Keep evacuation and emergency kits with you.
- If the building starts to break up, protect yourself with mattresses, rugs or blankets under a strong table or bench or hold onto a solid fixture, e.g. a water pipe.
- Beware the calm 'eye'. If the wind drops, don't assume the cyclone is over; violent winds will soon resume from another direction. Wait for the official 'all clear'.

PREPARING FOR A CYCLONE

AFTER THE CYCLONE

- Don't go outside until officially advised it is safe.
- Check for gas leaks.
- Don't use electric appliances if wet.
- Listen to local radio for official warnings and advice.
- If you have to evacuate, or did so earlier, don't return until advised. Use a recommended route and don't rush.
- Beware of damaged power lines, bridges, buildings, trees, and don't enter floodwaters.
- Heed all warnings and don't go sightseeing. Check/help neighbours instead.
- Don't make unnecessary telephone calls.

For more information please visit your State or Territory Emergency Service:

NT Emergency Services – <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/>

Emergency WA – <https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au/>

Emergency Services and Safety Queensland – <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>

EMERGENCY PLANS



Preparing for emergencies accessed December 2024,
<https://pfes.nt.gov.au/emergency-service/public-safety-advice/your-emergency-planning/household-planning>
[NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services](#)

Knowing what needs to be done makes it easier to stay calm if an emergency should occur. Preparation is the key to survival and by planning ahead, you can help to reduce the risk of injury and damage to property.

Take the time to prepare for emergencies by:

1. Completing a household emergency plan
2. Making a household emergency kit
3. Prepare a first-aid kit
4. Log on to your local emergency service website, call up if you need further information, tune in to your local emergency radio station and listen out for advice and warnings.

Emergency Advice:

[NT Emergency Services](#)

[Emergency WA](#)

[Emergency Services and Safety Queensland](#)

Emergency Radio Stations ABC local in your area

Darwin – ABC local 105.7 FM

Alice Springs – ABC local 783 AM

WEATHER IMPACTS OF CYCLONES

- **Strong winds:** Cyclones can generate gale-force winds that can extend for hundreds of kilometers. These winds can damage roofs, structures and trees.
- **Heavy rainfall:** Cyclones can cause sustained heavy rainfall over large areas, which can lead to flooding.
- **Storm surge:** Cyclones can cause storm surge, which is when a large volume of ocean water is pushed towards the shore. This can cause flooding, erosion and damage to coastal areas.
- **Coastal erosion:** Cyclones can cause coastal erosion due to storm surge and large waves.
- **Debris damage:** Cyclones can cause damage to infrastructure from debris like timber, metal siding and tree branches.
- **Soil erosion:** Cyclones can cause soil erosion.
- **Lightning:** Cyclones can produce lightning.

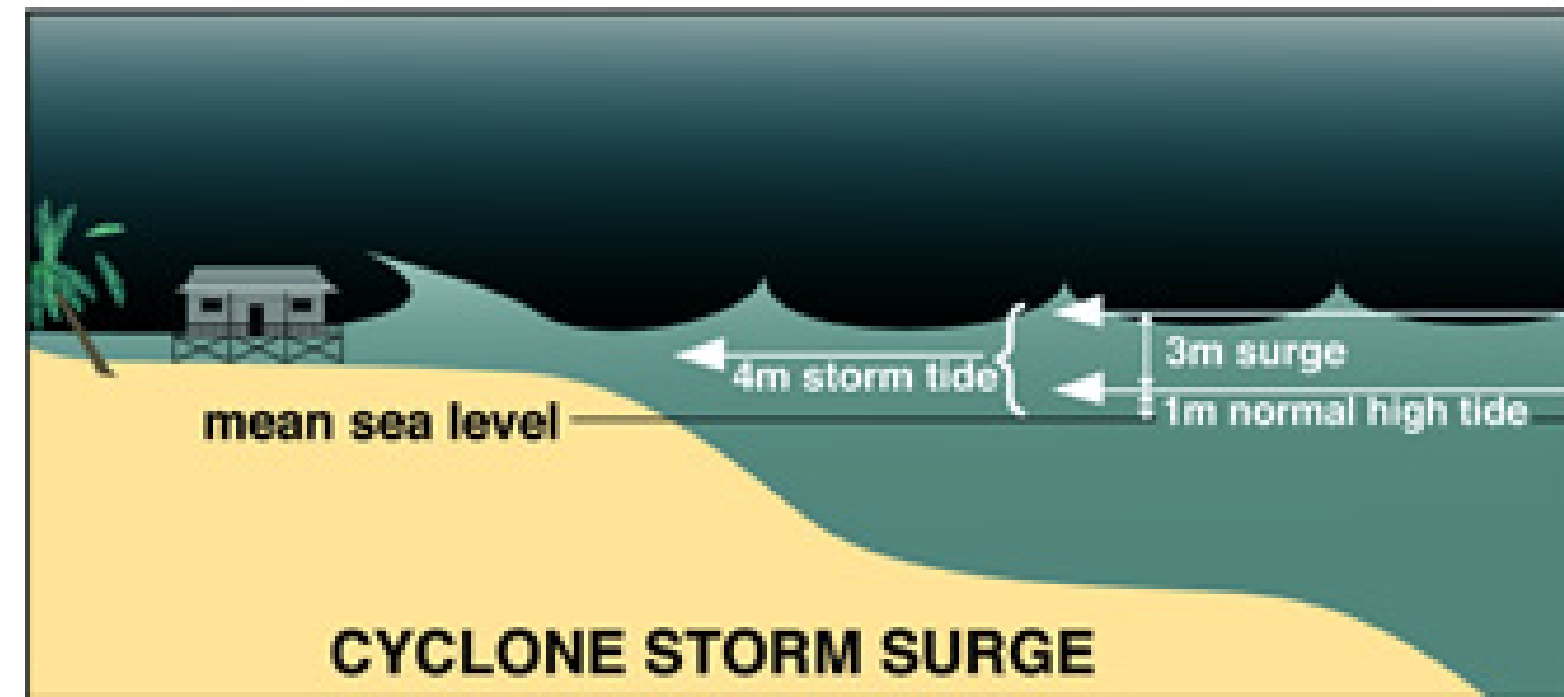


Image reproduced from BoM website accessed December 2024:
Storm Surge <http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/tropical-cyclone-knowledge-centre/understanding/storm-surge/>

Video: Understanding Storm Surge BoM, accessed December 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=an5uDI2ftb8>

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CYCLONES



Darwin Wiped Out – by Tracy, the Killer Cyclone, The Sun, 1974. Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory 2024.119.001

Cyclones can have a significant and long lasting impact on societies including (but not limited to):

- Damage to property and infrastructure
- Loss of life and traumatic injury
- Damage to local economies
- Disruptions to water and power systems
- Risks to public health
- Loss of habitats

Tropical cyclones are one of the most dangerous natural disasters, harming food supplies, health, and biodiversity.

From 1998 to 2017, Cyclones

- Caused approximately 233,000 deaths.
- Affected about 726 million people globally.
- Although the yearly number of tropical cyclones decreased between 1990 and 2020, the damage has increased.
- Climate change is expected to make tropical cyclones stronger, with rising sea levels causing more flooding and heavier rainfall during storms.

STORIES FROM CYCLONE TRACY SURVIVORS

Transcript of stories from the exhibition soundscape:

Russell “Rusty” Smith: Darwin was a brilliant place to live. We loved the lifestyle and the weather. Um, you know, no winter! Imagine that. Imagine living with no winter.

Mirella Fejo: Everybody knew everybody. Not even just in the street, in that whole area. We knew everybody. My childhood memory of walking up Smith Street before it was a mall, it’d take hours because everybody knew everybody and the women would be talking.

Peter Thomsen: Dad took me outside. I remember him coming outside and we went outside and we were in the, we were still in the bush. And he says, can you hear that? And I said sort of, there I was a kid looking around thinking, I can’t hear anything he said “that’s right”. He said, can you hear any frogs? No. Can you hear any cicadas or crickets or all the animals of the night? I said “No”. I said, “I couldn’t”, it was like black still, like there was nothing. And he said, “All the animals know”. He said, “This is gonna be a big storm”. He said, “The Bush is telling us we gotta get ready.”

Gibson Farmer Illortaminni: We always see that bird, that Japarrika bird and the old people said to us when we were young. When you see that kind of bird, you know that a storm is pouring out in the sea.

STORIES FROM CYCLONE TRACY SURVIVORS

Transcript of stories from the exhibition soundscape:

Tanya Peris: The water from the rain in the louvers would come in and I was getting soaking wet just from the window. I got outta bed and I said, "Mum, I'm getting really wet from the rain". And she goes, "Oh, well stay in here". So we all gathered into mom and dad's bedroom and we just waited.

Eddie Josephs: I knew we were in trouble when I looked down the passage and there was a lightning flash, and in that lightning flash I could see my neighbor's residence. And I said, that's funny 'cause we don't have a window down there. And I suddenly realized that our house was coming apart

Alijah Samsam Garner: I just thought that it was gonna stop. And, um, everything was gonna be alright. But then when the first wall went well, we just knew we were in trouble.

Russell "Rusty" Smith: It sounded like about a hundred freight trains....enormous sound. It was just things crashing and smashing.

Mark Dickson: It was like being behind a, like a fighter jet, full blast.

Mark Dickson: Then all of a sudden silence.

STORIES FROM CYCLONE TRACY SURVIVORS

Transcript of stories from the exhibition soundscape:

Peter Thomsen: The middle of the eye was clear and, you know, stars, and it was clear just. Perfectly clear.

Cherry Perron: Looking out the window, and there was this eerie green glow everywhere and then, then you heard it coming again. The roar of it.

Marshall Perron: And the whole house is shaking like a giant, had his hands around it and it was just ripping it back and forward violently.

Mark Dickson: . I actually thought, I'm gonna die here. That's it. It sort of hit you really. Oh well that's at 16 years old, you think? This is the end of my life tonight.

Alijah Samsam Garner: About six o'clock it started to calm down.

Charlie King OAM: But we walked outside and had look and it was gone. I mean, the house across the road was gone. It was just a horror.

Russell "Rusty" Smith: You know, when I came outta my linen press, which was, was blown over and down the road, pushed it open, I saw the house, and I thought, why us?

STORIES FROM CYCLONE TRACY SURVIVORS

Transcript of stories from the exhibition soundscape:

Alijah Samsam Garner: So the first thing was I had to get some clothes. And that was a mission. I remember it was just so wet. Everything was just so wet. It was still raining. I'm sloshing around and I stepped over my wedding dress and I looked down. I thought, mm, okay. I had, uh, a rain raincoat, a shoe with one heel and a thong. It was a real fashion statement. I could tell you that.

Eddie Joseph: And the first few steps I took, I stepped on a nail and it went straight through the sand shoe into my foot and I thought, this is not gonna be very good. And this person that was yelling out for help was trapped in their bathroom. I said, then, mate, there's not much I can do for you myself, and I'll go and get some help.

Eddie Joseph: We got word that there was a 12-year-old boy down Ellengowan Drive that had passed away due to the cyclone. So the other policeman that was with me. He went up there and he carried this boy back and he was placed in the ambulance with the two people we'd got outta the house.

STORIES FROM CYCLONE TRACY SURVIVORS

Transcript of stories from the exhibition soundscape:

Michelle Loble: I just remember being woken up quickly and going and being told that I had to get ready, had to go because we were going for the plane. Now, I got on the next plane and unfortunately we got stuck in Mount Isa because they'd run outta fuel.

Alijah Samsam Garner: We're all Mums. They're on this particular flight and um, so they said, okay, the plane is coming in in the morning. We said, no, we're not waiting here till tomorrow morning. We're going into the airport and wait for the plane because we don't want to miss it. We stayed till the plane came. So it was interesting to find out later on that it was actually world record amount of people on a plane. 674, I think it was. And that probably explains why I felt crowded on the plane and why it was okay to run up and down the stairs with my cousins.

Charlie King OAM: I remember lining up to get fuel 'cause we, we didn't have any money either, but we, we were given 20 litres I think, of fuel, which would get us to Katherine. I got the fuel and then drove out of Darwin.

Geoffrey Goodrich: When the first plane came to land in Melbourne, the Salvos were handing out clothes. We were giving out \$150 to a family, and the Smith family were handing out food vouchers.

STORIES FROM CYCLONE TRACY SURVIVORS

Transcript of stories from the exhibition soundscape:

Helen Haritos: So. It did lose some character, I felt. Um, it was, I guess it grew up a bit, you know, prior to Cyclone Tracy, it was a bit of a frontier town. And then, um, it seemed, uh, the best way is, I think it grew up.

Michelle Loble: I was grateful for the cyclone because then we got the really good skating rink and I realized that it was way better than all the Southerners ones.

Mark Smith: I guess people build a story around what the Territory is, you know, and that story is really, um, arguably built on this idea of resilience. And, um, I mean, I think Territorians would feel like, well, no one else went through something as dramatic as that. I guess it's not in isolation, you know, then you have the Japanese bombing that, again, flattened the town. Tracy then flattened the town it feels like. It's hard to not see weather changing. So it's hard to not expect that something will come, you know, whatever the, what next is and there's always gonna be something else. Um, Tracy will always, I guess, have that moment and, and I guess cyclones for us, you know, we define ourselves by jellyfish, crocodiles and cyclones.

Mirella Fejo: For the Fejo family, not just being Fejos, but Traditional Owners of Darwin, we've always been here. We were here pre-cyclone, pre-colonisation and even after Cyclone Tracy, we're still here as Traditional Owners for Country. We have a responsibility for all people who live on Country, our Country. And that's what I was saying before, you know, our doors are always open. It doesn't matter where you come from, what your background is, whether you're rich or poor. While you're here on Larrakia Country, you become part of our story and that's what makes us.

REBUILDING DARWIN



View from the Parer Drive water tower showing houses under construction or repair in Moil, January 1976.

Gift of Anita Russ, 2021, Frank Hewett Collection, MAGNT, 2024.012.007

After Darwin had been destroyed, it was uncertain whether it would or could be rebuilt.

The Australian Defence Forces were deployed in the biggest peacetime relief effort ever mounted in Australia.

In late January 1975 the Federal Government led by Gough Whitlam created the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. This followed the Prime Minister's promise when in Darwin in after Cyclone Tracy to make "a determined and unremitting effort to rebuild your city and relieve suffering."

The Commission was tasked with rebuilding Darwin within five years. However, it accomplished this in just over three years. By mid-1978, Darwin's population had finally returned to its pre-cyclone levels.

The amazing response from officials and the generosity of the Australian people, remind us how strong we are as a community. Even when terrible things happen, we can get through them by helping each other.

INSIDE THE EXHIBITION



Entrance – This Is Cyclone Country
Cyclone Tracy 50 Years Gallery view MAGNT photographer Georgina Campbell 2024



A Bloody Good Place to Live
Cyclone Tracy 50 Years Gallery view MAGNT photographer Georgina Campbell 2024

INSIDE THE EXHIBITION



The Weather Watchers
Cyclone Tracy 50 Years Gallery view MAGNT photographer Georgina Campbell 2024



Tracey you Bitch
Cyclone Tracy 50 Years Gallery view MAGNT photographer Georgina Campbell 2024

INSIDE THE EXHIBITION



Surviving
Cyclone Tracy 50 Years Gallery view MAGNT photographer Georgina Campbell 2024



A Momentous task
Cyclone Tracy 50 Years Gallery view MAGNT photographer Gina Campbell 2024