

# Cyclone Tracy essay sample



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According to the bom. gov. au Cyclone Tracy was relatively small but intense at landfall and was rated a category 4 tropical cyclone. The destruction was so forceful that wind gauges were destroyed but before that winds speeds got up to 217km per hour. Cyclone Tracy had a radius of 50km and the diameter of the eye was over 12km.

### Preparedness of the Area

Cyclone Tracy was first detected in the Arafura Sea (as shown on map above) on 20th December 1974. The cyclone turned east-southeastward and headed straight to Darwin on 24th December. Warnings were issued but as 24th December is Christmas Eve people did not pay too much attention and were caught unprepared. Darwin had previously been hit by cyclones in 1897 and 1937 but appropriate building codes had not been introduced. Building design at the time of Cyclone Tracy was loose and the combination of this construction and the powerful cyclone made the destruction probably inevitable.

### Amount of Devastation

Health issues: 71 people were killed, including 49 on land and 22 at sea, 13 of which were children. Over 650 were injured, including 145 serious injuries and over 500 minor injuries. Due to high scale destruction the city was left with no power so disease grew. Social issues: Although 7/10 houses were destroyed completely the relief efforts provided by the rest of Australia and around the world assisted the people of Darwin with serious social issues resulting from Cyclone Tracy. The population of Darwin dropped 75% from 47, 000 down to 12, 000 after the cyclone due to evacuation and death. Most

people were evacuated to Adelaide, Whyalla, Alice Springs and Sydney, many people did not return back to Darwin. Major General Alan Stretton was the commander of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Operation. He flew into Darwin on Christmas day and was responsible for leading the evacuations and the relief effort. Stretton introduced a permit system where the people who were in the Cyclone Tracy Relief Operation could stay behind, and the rest of the population had to evacuate. Environmental issues: The environmental issues of Cyclone Tracy are still felt today.

Issues at the time included a lack of water supply, cut sewage lines, trees were uprooted and gardens were destroyed and animal habitats across the land and in the sea were ruined. Political/economic issues: Military aircraft flew the majority of people evacuated from Darwin to safety. Due to the cost of relief provided the government at the time dedicated a number of resources to the cause. Gough Whitman was the Prime Minister of Australia at the time. In February 1975 he created the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The Commission's role was to rebuild the city of Darwin within five years. The cost of the government was large, according to the Insurance Council of Australia the insured cost of Cyclone Tracy was \$365 billion.

#### Reconstruction since Cyclone Tracy

Reconstruction took some time as decisions were delayed on how to rebuild. Money was raised through many ways and many people. At the Boxing Day test cricket match, the players went around the sidelines holding buckets to raise money for the relief effort. Not one house had been completed by September 1975. The Commission received a lot of criticism as the population of Darwin was slowly increasing. At first the building codes were

too strong and houses were taking too long to be built. A second building code was introduced which allowed for faster construction but still strong buildings. Darwin is now fully rebuilt and is in the same location as it was before the cyclone.