



The SES getting ready to rescue a driver stuck on a flooded bridge. Photo: Davina Pearson

- Key Topics:
- communication [2]
  - flood [3]
  - warnings [4]

Flood risk communication [5]


This project focused on the two behaviours most frequently associated with flood fatalities: driving into floodwater in a motor vehicle, and recreating in floodwater. As the project comprised a number of studies it generated a substantial number of findings and insights, which have been condensed into a series of practitioner-focused Research into Practice briefs and a series of short videos to showcase key research findings and augment the briefs. Based on the research findings, the project team have led the co-development of National Community Service Announcements for flood with AIDR, the ABC and AFAC. Survey tools and findings about how people behave, perceive risks, and make decisions around floodwater were developed through this project and the research findings can be used to inform more targeted communications and safety-related training. The survey tools themselves can be used as an engagement tool both with communities and SES personnel. Surveys with SES personnel about entering floodwater included evaluation of organisational safety climate as well as risk taking behaviour, and the data provides a baseline against which a number of SES jurisdictions could evaluate work health and safety improvements and the effectiveness of a range of safety interventions.

Project: detail Notabs

Research team

Research leader


[6]



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# Description

The project commenced in July 2017 to develop an understanding of the motivations, beliefs, decision-making processes and information needs of at-risk groups for flood fatalities. State Emergency Services (SES) from around Australia have worked closely with the research team from the onset of the project, taking particular interest in the behaviours of their own personnel when it comes to risk taking and driving into floodwater, as well as their attitudes to the public entering into floodwater.

To look at the extent to which entering floodwater is influenced by behaviour, the research team conducted extensive survey and quantitative research to investigate the conditions in which people drive through floodwater and the decision-making around what was being thought at the time and why they chose to go through instead of turning around. Risk is often difficult to assess and a poor ability to perceive risk is likely to result in increased engagement in risky driving behaviours. To better understand the decision-making processes involving drivers' decisions to enter floodwaters, the research team explored the ability to recognise floodwater hazard and adequately assess the level of associated risk, in a newly developed online tool, EXPERTise 2.0 (Expert Intensive Skills Evaluation).

[Read the final project report here.](#) [33]

In conjunction with AFAC and SES research end-users, the results of this research has informed the co-development of a set of public communication guidelines and the establishment of a set of national community safety announcements for use by the ABC in emergency broadcasting. [Read the utilisation project report here.](#) [34]


[35]

# Related News



Taking protective action during floods and storms  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

08 DEC 2021

# Communication and war

## Evolution of communications and warnings emergency preparedness, disaster response and recovery

24 AUG 2021

Protecting communities with better warnings and communications – an online guide to using the latest research  
COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITIES

[37]



22 MAR 2021

Why do people try to drive through floodwater or leave it too late to flee? Psychology offers some answers  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

[38]



New online - February 2021  
COMMUNICATION, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

23 FEB 2021

[39]



New online - January 2021  
COMMUNICATION, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

28 JAN 2021

[40]





Would you drive into floodwater?  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

21 DEC 2020

[41]



Assessing floodwater and communicating risk  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

17 NOV 2020

[42]



06 NOV 2020

Latest AJEM edition features CRC research on post-disaster management  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, MULTI-HAZARD

[43]



08 MAY 2020

Communicating and perceiving flood risks and warnings  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

[44]



19 FEB 2020

New online - February 2020  
COMMUNICATION, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

[45]



13 DEC 2019

New online – December 2019  
COMMUNICATION, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

[46]





CRC science making national impact  
FIRE, FIRE SEVERITY

19 NOV 2019

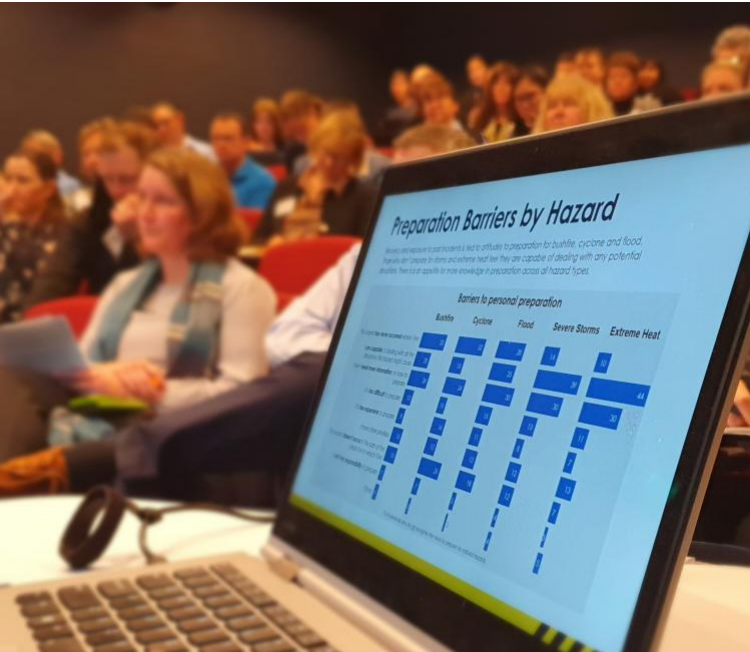
[47]



AFAC19 research front and centre in Journal  
DECISION MAKING, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

07 NOV 2019

[48]



Research guides communications with community  
CHILD-CENTRED, COMMUNICATION

01 OCT 2019

[49]



Leading the way in pet preparedness  
ANIMALS, COMMUNITIES

26 SEP 2019

[50]



11 SEP 2019

New online - September 2019  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, MULTI-HAZARD

[51]



19 AUG 2019

Collaboration is key for communications cluster success  
CLIMATE CHANGE, COMMUNICATION

[52]





24 JUL 2019

Vehicle related flood deaths - practice brief two July 2019  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

[53]



28 JUN 2019

Is it floodwater, a wet road or just a puddle?  
COMMUNICATION, DECISION MAKING

[54]





Flood research on show  
DECISION MAKING, ENGINEERING

27 JUN 2019

[55]



Community engagement research picks up prizes  
COMMUNICATION, WARNINGS

27 JUN 2019

[56]



30 MAY 2019

National award for warnings research  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

[57]



15 MAY 2019

New online - May 2019  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, FIRE

[58]



10 MAY 2019

Community and economic impact of Black Saturday investigated in Journal  
COMMUNITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

[59]



13 MAR 2019

Developing partnerships to inform media  
COMMUNICATION, FIRE

[60]





13 FEB 2019

Science informing media  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, FIRE

[61]



21 DEC 2018

Driving into floodwater - practice brief one December 2018  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

[62]





15 NOV 2018

New online – November 2018  
EARTHQUAKE, MODELLING

[63]



21 AUG 2018

New online - August 2018  
CHILD-CENTRED, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

[64]



Flood warning research leading impact  
COMMUNICATION, FLOOD

04 OCT 2017

[65]



New natural hazards science for Australia  
MENTAL HEALTH, RESILIENCE

31 AUG 2017

[66]



21 JUL 2017

Lismore floods, did you stay or did you go?  
CYCLONE, DECISION MAKING

[67]



22 MAR 2017

New science set to dazzle


























[68]

Publications

Year	Type	Citation
2021	Report	Taylor, M. [8] <b>Development of a national set of Community Service Announcements for flood risk</b> [34]. (Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, 2021). Google Scholar [69] BibTeX [70] EndNote XML [71]
2021	Report	Taylor, M. [8], Tofa, M. [10] & Haynes, K. [6] <b>Flood risk communication - final project report</b> [33]. (Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, 2021). Google Scholar [72] BibTeX [73] EndNote XML [74]
2020	Journal Article	Taylor, M. [8] <i>et al.</i> <b>Driving into floodwater: using data from emergency responders to inform workplace safety policy and practice</b> [75]. <i>Australian Journal of Emergency Management</i> <b>35</b> , 26-34 (2020).
2020	Journal Article	Ahmed, M. Arifa [79], Haynes, K. [6] & Taylor, M. [8] <b>Vehicle related flood fatalities in Australia, 2001–2017</b> [80]. <i>Journal of Flood Risk Management</i> <b>13</b> , (2020). DOI [81] Google Scholar [82] BibTeX [83]
2020	Journal Article	Ahmed, M. Arifa [79], Haynes, K. [6], Tofa, M. [10], Hope, G. [85] & Taylor, M. [8] <b>Duty or safety? Exploring emergency service personnel's perceptions of risk and decision-making when driving</b> [86]. <i>International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction</i> <b>31</b> , 100566 (2020).
2019	Journal Article	Taylor, M. [8] <i>et al.</i> <b>Behaviour around floodwater: challenges for floodwater safety and risk communication</b> [91]. <i>Australian Journal of Emergency Management</i> <b>34</b> , 40-47 (2019). Google Scholar [92] BibTeX [93] EndNote XML [94]
2019	Journal Article	Fountain, L. [95], Tofa, M. [10], Haynes, K. [6], Taylor, M. [8] & Ferguson, S. [96] <b>Older adults in disaster and emergency management: What are the priority research areas in Australia?</b> [97]. <i>International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction</i> <b>31</b> , 100566 (2020).
2019	Magazine Article	Taylor, M. [8] & Haynes, K. [6] <b>What do we really mean by 'floodwater' and is it ever ok to enter?</b> [102]. <b>32</b> , (2019). Google Scholar [103] BibTeX [104] EndNote XML [105]
2019	Report	Taylor, M. [8], Haynes, K. [6] & Tofa, M. [10] <b>Building resilience through flood risk communication annual report 2018-2019</b> [106]. (Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, 2019). Google Scholar [107] BibTeX [108] EndNote XML [109]
2018	Journal Article	Taylor, M. [8], Haynes, K. [6] & Ahmed, M. Arifa [79]. <b>Driving into floodwater: A systematic review of risks, behaviour and mitigation</b> [110]. <i>International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction</i> <b>31</b> , 10 (2020).
2018	Journal Article	Haynes, K. [6], Tofa, M. [10], Avci, A. [115], Van Leeuwen, J. [116] & Coates, L. [117] <b>Motivations and experiences of sheltering in place during floods: Implications for policy and practice</b> [118]. <i>International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction</i> <b>31</b> , 100566 (2020).



Presentations & Resources

DATE [123]	TITLE [124]	DOWNLOAD	KEY TOPICS
18 Apr 2017	Flood Risk Communication [125]	 354.87 KB	[126] (354.87 KB) [2], flood [3], wa
07 Jul 2017	Communicating and warning: getting the message across more effectively [127]	 4.79 MB	[128] (4.79 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
31 Aug 2017	Fire Australia Issue Three 2017 [129]	 5.22 MB	[130] (5.22 MB) [131], prescribed
16 Apr 2018	Building resilience through flood risk communication [134]	 2.13 MB	[135] (2.13 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
19 Sep 2018	Defining floodwater -expert and public perspectives [136]	 2.1 MB	[137] (2.1 MB) ion [2], flood [3], wa
21 Dec 2018	Driving into floodwater - practice brief one December 2018 [138]	 417.72 KB	[139] (417.72 KB) [2], flood [3], wa
30 May 2019	Warnings that save lives [140]	 0 bytes	[141] (0 bytes)
15 Jul 2019	Community preparedness, warnings and response to 2017 NSW fires [142]	 0 bytes	[143] (0 bytes) ion [2], communitie
24 Jul 2019	Vehicle related flood deaths - practice brief two July 2019 [145]	 1.11 MB	[146] (1.11 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
27 Aug 2019	Behaviour around floodwater: Dilemmas for floodwater safety and risk communication [147]	 4.06 MB	[148] (4.06 MB) management [149]
24 Sep 2019	Flood Risk Communication [150]	 2.5 MB	[151] (2.5 MB) management [149]
30 Apr 2020	When is water on the roads dangerous? - practice brief three April 2020 [152]	 1.56 MB	[153] (1.56 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
30 Apr 2020	Public survey of driving and recreating in floodwater - practice brief four April 2020 [154]	 948.94 KB	[155] (948.94 KB) [2], flood [3], wa
30 Apr 2020	Evaluation of flood risk communication materials - practice brief five April 2020 [156]	 1.51 MB	[157] (1.51 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
30 Apr 2020	SES personnel's experiences of driving in floodwater - practice brief six April 2020 [158]	 2.99 MB	[159] (2.99 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
01 Oct 2020	Developing and validating a tool to assess expertise in the assessment of floodwater - practice brief seven October 2020 [160]	 2.34 MB	[161] (2.34 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
05 Oct 2020	Download the Research into practice brief series [35]		communication [2], flood [3], wa
16 Nov 2020	When is water on the roads dangerous? – Perspectives of emergency service professionals [162]	 0 bytes	[163] (0 bytes) ion [2], flood [3], wa
16 Nov 2020	Driving and recreating in floodwater – What does Australia think? [164]	 0 bytes	[165] (0 bytes) ion [2], flood [3], wa
16 Nov 2020	Evaluating flood risk communication messaging – Analysing flood risk communication campaigns [166]	 0 bytes	[167] (0 bytes) ion [2], flood [3], wa
21 Dec 2020	Fire Australia Issue Four 2020 [168]	 4.58 MB	[169] (4.58 MB) on [2], fire [170], fl
13 Aug 2021	The evolution of communications and warnings in emergency preparedness, response and recovery [171]	 0 bytes	[172] (0 bytes) ion [2], communitie
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13 Aug 2021	Driving change: the evolution of communications and warnings in emergency preparedness, response and recovery [175]		communication [2], communitie
13 Aug 2021	Hon A/Prof Mel Taylor interview: flood risk communication [176]	 0 bytes	[177] (0 bytes) ion [2], flood [3], wa
13 Aug 2021	Response 2: Flood risk communication [178]	 0 bytes	[179] (0 bytes) ion [2], flood [3], wa
04 Nov 2021	Development of a national set of Community Service Announcements for flood risk - practice brief eight November 2021 [180]	 1.46 MB	[181] (1.46 MB) on [2], flood [3], wa
30 Nov 2021	Taking protective action during floods and storms [182]		communication [2], flood [3], wa

Posters

30 JUN 2017

Flood risk communication: building resilience through flood risk communication [183]  
COMMUNICATION [2], FLOOD [3]  
Project objectives:Develop a detailed understanding of the motivations, beliefs, decision making processes...



[184]  
Flood risk communication to reduce vehicle related flood fatalities [184]  
COMMUNICATION [2], FLOOD [3]

If imagery in public risk communication always presents a fast flowing, clearly dangerous body of water, how...



[185]  
"If it's flooded..." Occupational exposure to floodwater - what contributes to decisions to drive through? [185]  
FLOOD [3]  
Just under half of all flood-related fatalities in Australia (45%) are attributed to people entering...



[https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/maylor%20\[9\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/maylor%20[9]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/asafa%20\[13\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/asafa%20[13]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/apeden%20\[14\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/apeden%20[14]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/royal-life-saving%20\[15\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/royal-life-saving%20[15]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/dlamb%20\[16\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/dlamb%20[16]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/ssessa%20\[17\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/ssessa%20[17]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/erae%20\[18\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/erae%20[18]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/nswses%20\[19\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/organisations/nswses%20[19]) [https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/gemma-bellenger%20\[20\]](https://www.bnhrcr.com.au/people/gemma-bellenger%20[20]) 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