



Communication challenges in complex events

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Source: New South Wales (NSW) SES.



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- ❑ Non-linear relationship between hazard warning & instruction; individual comprehension & behavioural intention; and action
- ❑ Multi-channel messaging critical in the face of phone & power outages
- ❑ Inter-agency operability - multiple fronts
- ❑ Preparedness is difficult to facilitate 'in the moment'
 - People struggle to prioritise in preparatory phase
 - Decision making under pressure often flawed
- ❑ 'Shelter in place' Bathurst likely to require ++ multi-agency post-event support
- ❑ How best communicate/support a mass gathering?
 - Communication with organisers
- ❑ Contradictory cue's add additional layer of challenge [media; social media; environment]
- ❑ Vulnerable sub-populations warrant careful attention
 - Mobilising social support agencies



Source: Angus Veitch (CC BY-NC 2.0). Hazard: 2011, Brisbane flood on Nash St, Rosalie Village.

- ❑ Most peer reviewed literature focuses on health hazards during mass gatherings [outdoor music festivals, religious events etc]
- ❑ Cochrane systematic review [Novaks et al 2019] indicates that the evidence is strongest on the importance of localised, contextualised risk information & acknowledges the need for research on strategies and tactics to improve participation and engagement of the public
- ❑ Following National Review of Warnings and Information for Australia, 'total warning concept' and emphasis on people-centred communication [Anderson-Berry et al 2018]
- ❑ Must understand 'embodied uncertainty' ie: response capacity influenced by social identity, lived experienced & is highly individualised [Sword-Daniels et al 2016]
- ❑ BHNCRRC research has demonstrated that revision of formal emergency messaging can alter comprehension and behavioural intention [Tippett et al 2014-2020]



Source: Country Fire Service (CFS) Promotions Unit.



KEY PRINCIPLES

- Plain English and easy to understand/logical layout – avoid all technical/operational language
 - Group related information together
 - Personalise risk and potential impacts
 - Clear geo-location information
 - Must be issued by credible, respected, trusted source
 - Clear information about hazard type, severity, likelihood, timing, possible impacts, location, timeframe & reliable source for additional information.
 - Clear instruction re: action requested
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