Effective risk communications - warnings
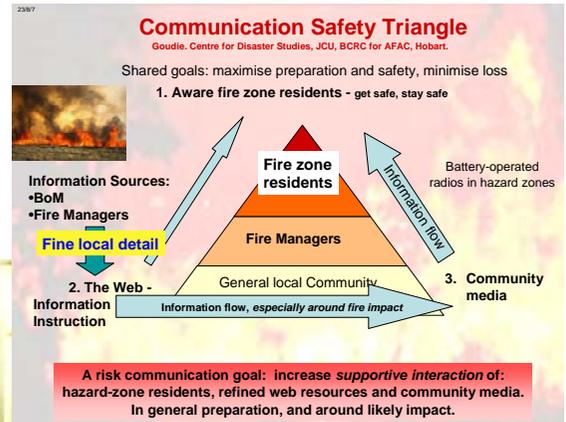
Community preparedness, emergency information transfer and uptake

Dr Douglas Goudie

Centre for Disaster Studies, School of Earth and Environmental Science, James Cook University, Queensland.

The *24 hours around likely fire impact* is critical to community safety. Douglas Goudie's research builds on the evidence that effective emergency warnings do not happen in a knowledge or social vacuum. The August '07 Greek fires show the cost of such a vacuum. Thus, emergency fire and recovery information into the future will be best delivered by:
• The Communication safety triangle, within
• The Seven steps to community safety on
• The preparedness continuum

Communication Safety Triangle
Goudie. Centre for Disaster Studies, JCU, BCRC for AFAC, Hobart.
Shared goals: maximise preparation and safety, minimise loss
1. Aware fire zone residents - get safe, stay safe

Information Sources:
• BoM
• Fire Managers

Fine local detail

Fire zone residents

Fire Managers

General local Community

Battery-operated radios in hazard zones

Information flow

2. The Web - Information Instruction

Information flow, *especially around fire impact*

3. Community media

A risk communication goal: increase *supportive interaction* of: hazard-zone residents, refined web resources and community media. In general preparation, and around likely impact.

The Communication safety triangle
• Publicly identify/map "Hazard/Fire Zones" and help residents 'internalise' the threat.
• Engender greater fire zone (fire prone areas) community engagement.
• Web-deliver Authorities' fine detail (time, space, threat development, local advice) into hazard zone homes and to local media.
• During the warning, impact and early recovery phases, that 'from source' information will then flow directly, via local media, to impact-zone residents via battery-operated radios. It worked around Cyclone Larry.

Seven Steps to community safety

Goal: **Maximise safety and minimise loss** in fire zones.

For disaster managers

1. Encourage those in fire zones (fire-prone areas) to accept that the risks are real. Use maps, stories and images.
2. Help create an aware, informed community, predisposed to safety-oriented action, as a precaution; as a practice.
3. Encourage information-sharing and support among friends, neighbours, family.
4. Provide 'what to do' (action) information and warnings, via reliable sources, including web and community media delivered for background & 'ramp-up' preparation in the 'warnings phase.
5. Encourage people to 'listen up' for and share warnings, and think right through the impact to recovery.
6. When a threat starts, warnings will clearly convey: *this is real, this is coming at me. I need to make safe where I am, or move early to somewhere much safer. I will not travel during the impact period.*
7. Provide timely, effective threat warnings and fine location and forecast weather detail, and recommended local responses.

Warnings on the preparedness continuum

IMPACT

Warnings

Background preparation

Ramp-up Preparations

Recovery information

Reality acceptance

Get safe Stay safe

Douglas.Goudie@jcu.edu.au - *Disaster management and risk communication specialist,* 2nd post Doc.

Thanks to Prof. David King, Director, CDS; the ~1000 people interviewed over 13 years; employing state and local governments; the many community group members who have contributed and participated; BoM and the BCRC for prior and current post Doc. funding on Effective Risk Communication.

Ninety-two fire zone households, and community groups in 5 regions in SE Aust. have been surveyed on bushfire preparedness, media, messages and insights. Data processing, web reviews and liaising with local media is next in this Sustainability Implementation Research.
Friends, neighbours and fine local detail are VERY important.

CRC AUSTRALIA   JCU