



Australia's Warning Principles

Ten principles guide the development and use of warnings in Australia

They outline why warnings are important and how warnings are provided most effectively. Find out more in the Public Information and Warnings Handbook on the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub.

1 Life-saving

Warnings can save lives and protect people from harm. They prompt and encourage protective action to minimise the social and economic impacts of an emergency. Warnings are an essential element of effective emergency management.

2 Empowering

The provision of warnings enacts a national commitment to building shared responsibility for disaster resilience, by empowering people to make decisions about their own safety.

3 Trusted, authoritative and verifiable

For greatest effect, warnings must come from a trusted source and be verifiable through multiple channels. Warnings should therefore be easily and widely shared to recognise the diversity of potential trusted sources. The official authority issuing a warning should always be clearly stated.

4 Scaled based on risk

Scaled warning frameworks should guide the delivery of all warnings and support the consistent risk assessment of a hazard, its impact and its consequence.

5 Timely, targeted and tailored

Warnings should be timely, targeted to communities at risk and tailored to provide detail and relevance. Specific consideration should be given to harder to reach and vulnerable members of the community.

6 Conveying impact

Warnings should describe the expected impacts and consequences of an approaching or current hazard, to assist people to understand and be motivated to take protective action.

7 Including a call-to-action

Warnings should include practical calls-to-action using language tailored to the level of risk, ranging from advice and persuasive recommendations to authoritative direction.

8 Clearly communicated

Warnings should be easy to understand and use a consistent structure to provide information. Both written and visual information should be considered to assist with clearly conveying risk and encouraging protective action.

9 Readily accessible

Warnings should be disseminated via multiple channels, tailored to suit each channel, and consider accessibility for diverse audiences. Ease of sharing and rapid dissemination should be supported with use of nationally agreed technical standards, and dissemination strategies should be in place to adapt to failure of technology or other systems.

10 Part of a bigger picture

Warnings are one component within a systems-based approach to community safety. Community engagement, education and awareness programs better prepare communities to receive, understand and act upon warnings.

Find out more: www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/warnings-handbook





Australia's Total Warning System

Australia's Total Warning System defines the essential elements of delivering warnings effectively, with a lifecycle of action before, during and after emergency.



Elements of Australia's Total Warning System

Always	SITUATIONAL AWARENESS	Continuous attention to and connection with the past, current and emerging situation.
Before	BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS	Engagement and education with communities well prior to any emergency about their risk, shared responsibilities and options for protective action.
	ORGANISATIONAL READINESS TO WARN	Setting organisational capability, systems and arrangements in place to warn effectively.
During	MONITORING AND PREDICTION	Detecting conditions that can lead to threat to life and property and predicting the likelihood, timing, level and nature of impact.
	INTERPRETATION	Understanding the impact as predicted and deciding whether and how to warn.
	MESSAGE CONSTRUCTION	Devising the content of a message to inform and warn people of their risk, including recommended or required action.
	COMMUNICATION	Disseminating timely, targeted and tailored warnings through multiple channels to all who may be affected.
	COMMUNITY RESPONSE	Seeking assurance communities have received, understood and are acting upon warnings.
After	CONTINUOUS REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT	Examining all aspects of the total warning system through evaluation, research and engagement.

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