

I have been working with the Bureau of Meteorology in Adelaide since 1988, developing the flood warning service. Flood Warnings require the integration of scientific information from the Bureau, with the perceptions of the people who are in the path of a flood or have to provide emergency response.

I have watched the development of the science of warning, from the late 1980s when the prevailing wisdom said that a flood warning should be issued, and its success judged by the accuracy of the height prediction and the time to peak. We were not required to consider whether anyone had received the warning or responded to it.

In the current environment, flood warning in South Australia, we have tried to develop an understanding of the people who are required to receive and respond to warnings. These fall into 2 groups:

1. General public, particularly those in the path of floods, who need to know the threat, how it is likely to affect them, and what they should do about it. This is an amorphous group, including residential housing and businesses, and institutions each group requiring special attention;
2. Emergency response agencies, which are easier to define, and to educate.

With the assistance of a talk by Garry Egger at Mt Macedon, 1991, I learnt of the need to consider the flood problem from the perspective of the person standing in the path of a flood. Garry's catch phrases "Pick up the Brat! Roll up the Mat! Get out of the Flat!" and "Kids, keys, car" were most useful in making us focus on the need of people at the bottom end.

I later spent a major part of my Masters Thesis research program talking, learning and teaching people in the business community in Mile End, to work out what was best for them in a Flash Flood situation, and this was the major part of my Thesis.

As part of that program I visited Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins and saw for myself the effects of the catastrophic floods at Fort Collins and Big Thompson. I had the opportunity to meet some of the people involved. Next year I plan to travel to Grenoble to meet others from Europe and collaborate in the development of flood warning, and in particular the effectiveness of flash flood warnings on a threatened community.

I am committed to working in inter-disciplinary teams, particularly the interface between Meteorologists and decision-makers in an emergency situation. I am very interested in better communications between scientists-engineers and the people who we serve and would be delighted to participate in the WAS*IS program. It would be really useful to learn how to measure our progress with warnings, after a flood we are not good at assessment. Preparation of post-flood surveys would be of great interest. We are about to start on Adelaide's first Flood Awareness Program, for Unley and Mitcham Councils on Brownhill and Sturt Creeks. This will involve development of focus groups to extend flood awareness within the community.