

WOULD YOU DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATER?



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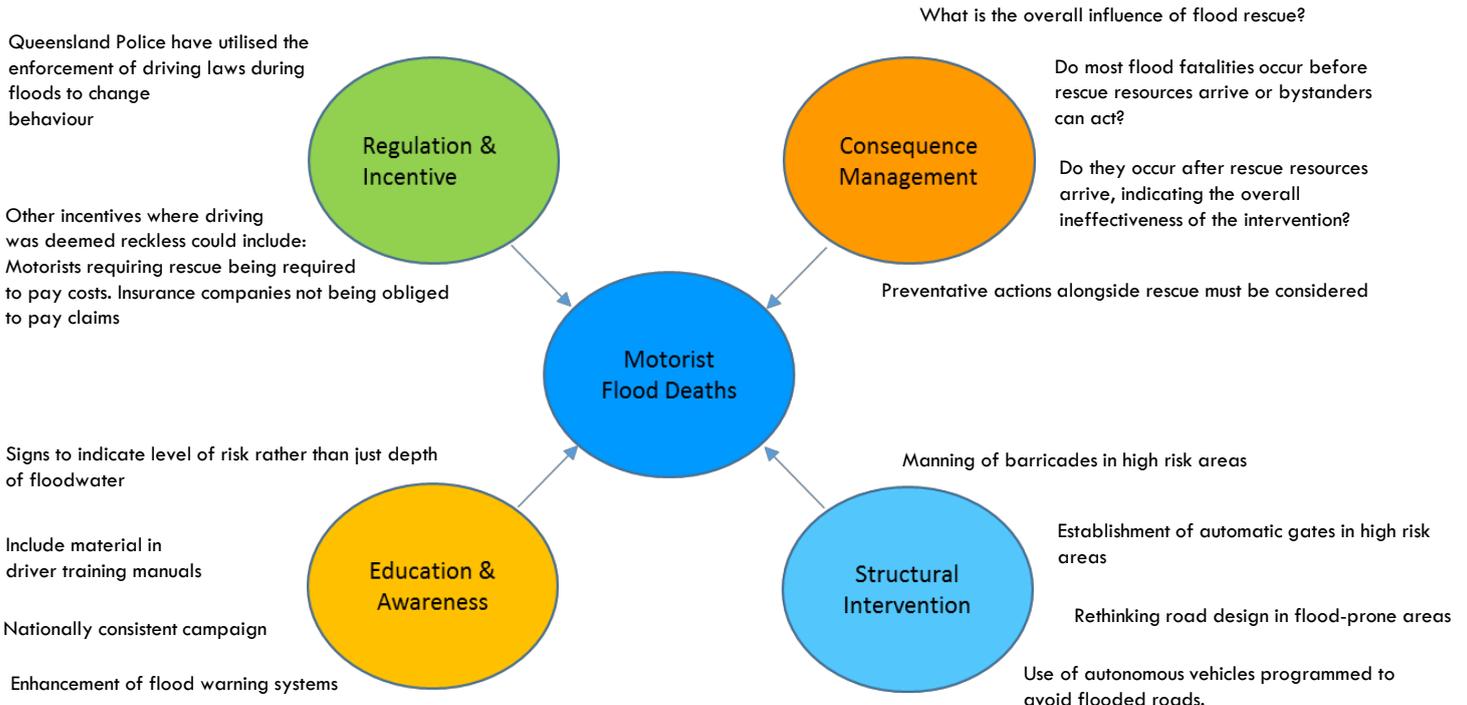
Floods are the second highest cause of death from natural hazard events in Australia following extreme heat. Bushfire and Natural Hazard CRC research has so far uncovered 1874 flood fatalities between 1900-2015. This data shows a growing number of fatalities associated with vehicles entering floodwaters, particularly 4WDs.

The analysis of flood fatalities is the first part of a wider project to examine human fatalities, injuries, rescues and building losses from natural disasters in Australia from 1900 to the present. The hazards of interest include: floods, cyclones, earthquakes, heatwaves, severe storms (gust, hail, lightning, tornado, flash flood) and bushfires.

Over the last 20 years to 2014, at least 81 people have died driving through floodwater in Australia, accounting for 43% of all flood fatalities over this period. 35% of these were driving 4WD vehicles: an increase in percentage over the previous two decades.

If water is fast-flowing, even thirty centimetres of floodwater can wash a car off the road. In addition, drivers may be unable to see what lies beneath flooded roads, with large sections of roads often washed away, creating hazardous conditions.

A combination of education and awareness, regulation and incentive, structural intervention and consequence management are needed to reduce these deaths.



The key challenge for policy makers in developing a holistic strategy is the lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions. Evaluation of existing and potential new measures is critical to assess their influence on behaviour.

