

# Family shelters in dam

*'The intensity of the heat and flames was something I've never seen before'*

By **PETER KENNEDY**

A MAIDEN Gully family had a miraculous escape from the weekend's deadly inferno, when they were forced to seek shelter from the wall of flames in a dry dam.

Peter Kinniburgh and his partner, Beck McQuinn, had decided to leave their one-acre property along Maiden Gully Road, but the sudden approach of the fire forced them to ditch their escape plan and seek immediate shelter.

"The intensity of the heat and flames was something I've never seen before," Mr Kinniburgh said.

The front grille and number plate of the couple's four-wheel-drive vehicle had already started to melt in the intense heat.

The pair fled to an empty dam bed behind their property, together with

Ms McQuinn's two children, aged nine and seven.

Covering themselves with wet towels and dirt, they huddled together in fear as flames raced through their property.

The fire destroyed a shed on the property, and pet birds in the family's aviaries perished.

A shed containing thousands of dollars worth of gym equipment was also lost, but the flames stopped short of the back door of the weatherboard house.

The two children were taken to hospital and treated for smoke inhalation.

Adjoining properties were lost and a stand of agapanthus in the front yard of the property was singed to the bulb.



Peter Kinniburgh and Beck McQuinn are amazed their house was left standing, but their shedding was burnt to the ground while many around them were lost to the fire.



Fire engulfs Graham O'Brien's property in Stray Street, West Bendigo.



A resident battles the blaze in West Bendigo.



A resident in Dora Street runs to get more water as flames threaten houses.



A firefighter shows the strain of the long day.



The fire at Happy Valley Road claims another house.



# Choices to make

*'I've lived in this part of Bendigo all my life and I have never been so scared'*

THE Bracewell Street fire started **By PETER KENNEDY**







Royal Commission into National  
Natural Disaster Arrangements  
Report

28 October 2020



*“Provision of emergency warnings and related information is an integral part of state and territory emergency management arrangements.*

*Warnings assist the public to make informed actions to safeguard life, property and the environment.*

*The public must have confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the source of emergency information. Any warning issued must be timely, tailored and relevant to the public”*





Whether you're at home, work or travelling.

# Australian Warning System

Consistent warning levels

Consistent action statements

Consistent colours

Consistent icons



[www.australianwarningsystem.com.au](http://www.australianwarningsystem.com.au)



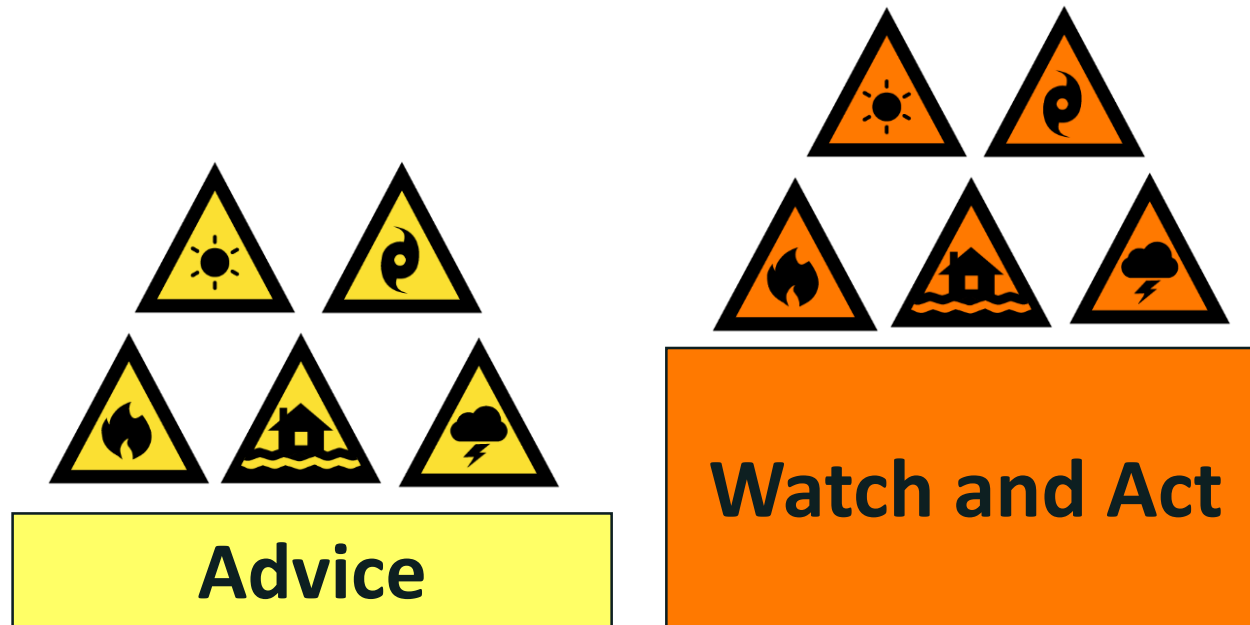
# Warning levels

An incident has started.  
There is no immediate danger.  
Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



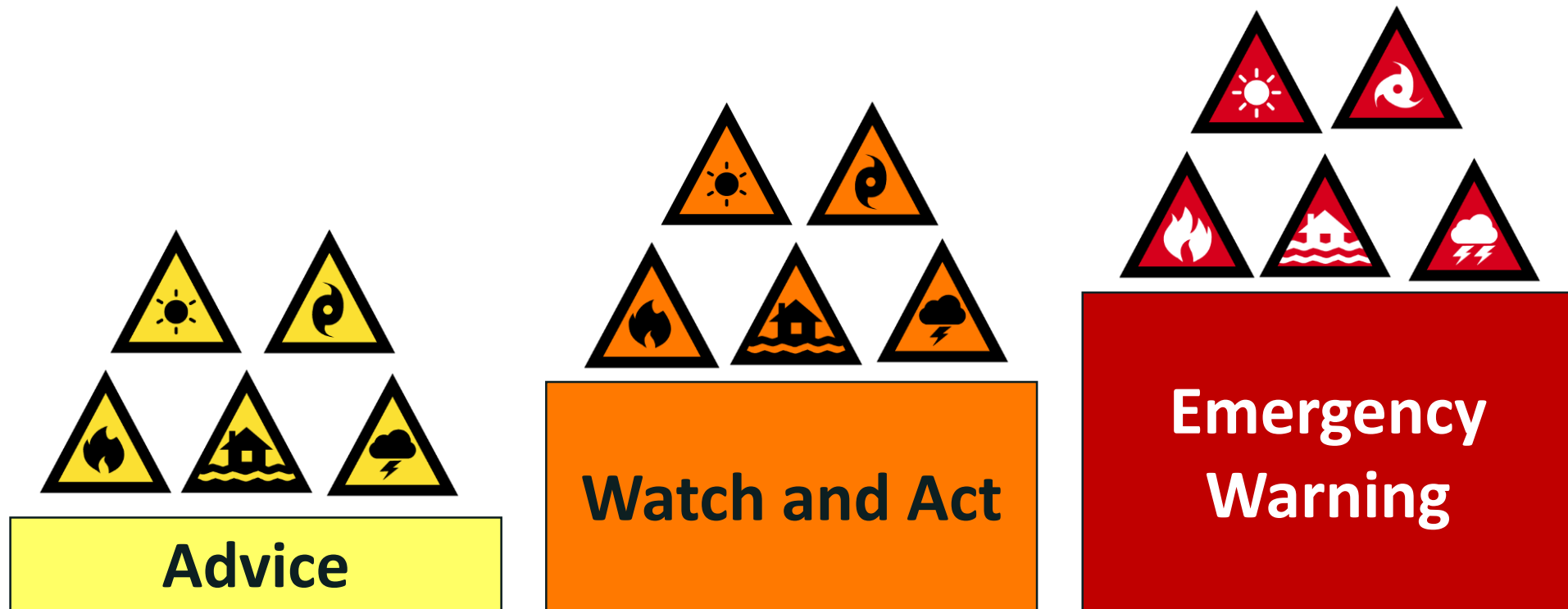
# Warning levels

There is a heightened level of threat.  
Conditions are changing.  
Act now to protect yourself and your family.



# Warning levels

You may be in danger and need to take action immediately.  
Any delay now puts your life at risk.



# What it's not...

**AWS is NOT replacing or duplicating weather warnings**



BoM will keep issuing weather warnings

AWS warnings will be issued by hazard management agencies

AWS warnings focus on community impacts and actions

**AWS is NOT an IT system**



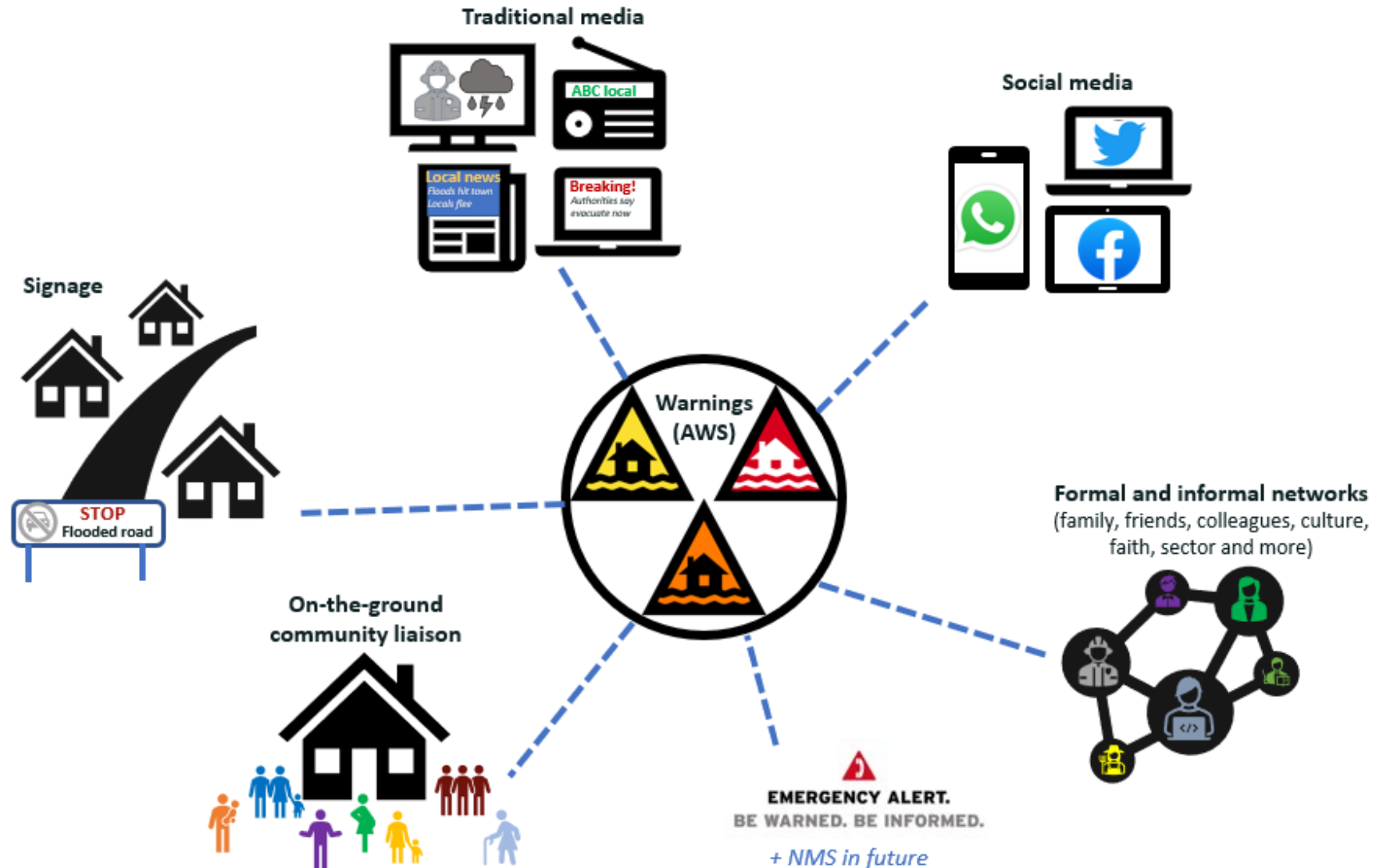
Warnings will be issued through existing channels for now

Strong support for future common publishing platforms and back-end system





# AWS as part of the bigger public information ecosystem



# Benefits



- Driven by a community need
- Consistency for those who move
- Consistency across hazards
- Action focus
- Flexible

# Implementation progress



- Each state & territory responsible for implementation
- Nationally consistent for bushfire
- Other hazards progressing well



# Future opportunities

- Common publishing platforms
- Connected and innovative systems
- Translated warnings
- Other hazards
- Responsive devices
- Continue to adjust language
- Increased awareness and resilience
- Improved accessibility
- Low-tech channels
- Increased community participation

The things that haven't even been conceived yet!

