



## General AWS FAQs

These are general AWS questions – for people who are just learning about the project and want to know how it will affect them. These FAQs and more information can be found on the AWS website, at [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/AWS](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/AWS)

### What is the Australian Warning System (AWS)?

The AWS is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and cyclones.

The AWS uses a nationally consistent set of:

- triangle icons, and
- warning levels – Advice, Watch and Act, and Emergency Warning
- colours – yellow for Advice, orange for Watch and Act, and red for Emergency Warning, and terms to tell people what they need to do to be safe from that disaster at that point in time – like ‘move to higher ground’, ‘shelter indoors now’, or ‘stay informed’

The AWS was designed based on feedback and research across the country and aims to deliver a more consistent approach to warnings, no matter where you are.

### What do the colours and levels mean?

**Advice** level warnings are yellow. You’re not in danger, but you need to take some early actions, like staying informed.

**Watch and Act** level warnings are orange. Conditions are changing and you need to start acting now to be safe, like preparing to take shelter, preparing to leave or moving to higher ground.

**Emergency Warnings** are red. This is the highest level of warning. Your life could be in danger. You need to act immediately to be safe, like leave immediately, seek shelter now, or in some cases, you might be told it’s too dangerous to leave.

### Why do we need the AWS?

Until now, every state and territory in Australia did warnings differently. This was confusing to people new to the area or visiting, and people who live near state borders. The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements made recommendations for all states to implement the AWS and educate communities about warnings.

Having nationally consistent, action focused warnings means that, no matter the hazard or where you are in the country, you’ll be able to understand the warnings, know what the level of danger is, and what to do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe more easily.

### Where do I find warnings for my area?

- Bushfire warnings will be on the QFES website and social media channels.
- Extreme heat warnings will be on the Queensland Health website and social media channels.
- Storm, flood, and cyclone warnings will be found on your local council’s platforms like disaster dashboards (visit their website), social channels and opt-in messaging system if they have one.
- You can also go to [disaster.qld.gov.au/warnings](http://disaster.qld.gov.au/warnings) and listen to local radio for all warnings.



## Will the Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings still be issued?

The Bureau of Meteorology will continue to issue weather forecasts and warnings based on the weather. AWS warnings will complement the Bureau of Meteorology warnings by providing information like specific actions that need to be taken and the impacts being experienced.

All AWS warnings focus on community safety actions and include a link to the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date weather information.

## How do I get ready for a natural disaster before it happens?

The “[Prepare](#)” page on the QFES website has information to help you be ready before disaster strikes, including [packing an emergency kit](#) and [preparing your home](#). And don't forget about the family pets, with helpful information to help your furry friend on the [RSPCA website](#).

## What about warnings for other hazards?

For now, AWS warnings apply to bushfire, storm, flood, cyclone, and extreme heatwaves. In time, other hazards could be added to the list.

## How will I receive warnings?

You can turn notifications on for posts from social media channels of the agency you want to receive warnings from. Staying connected to your local council, or areas you frequently visit will help keep you informed for warnings. You can also listen to your local radio station.

If you are travelling outside of your usual area, we recommend checking the weather forecast to see if there is going to be a need to stay informed.

## Will I always get a text message?

If there is an Emergency Alert associated with the warning, you will most likely get a text message from +6444 444 444. But not all warnings come with an Emergency Alert – if you see inclement weather or smoke, that's a good time to seek out actions from your local council, QFES, or Queensland Health.

## How will I know that the warning applies to me/my address?

AWS warnings will have specific locations that need to take action. Sometimes they are broad, applying to suburbs or neighbourhoods, and in other cases there are specific actions only small sections of the community need to take.

## How is this different to the Australian Fire Danger Rating System?

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) lets you know how dangerous a fire would be if one broke out in your area, so you know what to do **before** a fire starts. Ratings are calculated using a combination of weather forecasting and information about vegetation that could fuel a fire.

AWS bushfire warnings provide information about what to do to be safe **during** a bushfire.

Visit <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/prepare/bushfire/fire-danger-ratings> for more information.