

**CYCLONE GILLIAN.
WARNINGS,
AWARENESS AND
PREPAREDNESS**

**A HOUSEHOLD SURVEY
CONDUCTED BY THE DISASTER
STUDIES CENTRE OF JAMES
COOK UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
QUEENSLAND, ON BEHALF OF
THE BUREAU OF
METEOROLOGY**

TOWNSVILLE, FEBRUARY 1997

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH METHOD

A survey of 200 households was carried out in all urban suburbs of Townsville and Thuringowa between 18th and 20th February, one week after cyclone Gillian had approached the coast of Townsville on Wednesday 12th February. Households were selected randomly within each suburb. The number of households selected from each suburb was based upon the number of households enumerated in each suburb in the 1991 census. Thus the sample is proportionately representative of all communities within the urban area of Townsville and Thuringowa.

Data were collected by survey, using a questionnaire instrument which was administered directly to each respondent by a team of interviewers. This enabled both a rapid turn around of interviews as well as the collection of open ended comments or opinions. Answers were coded and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This report was written by David King, Director of the Centre for Disaster Studies, and interviews were carried out by Bretta Girling-King, Kate Girling-King, Tom Measham, Pip Moore, Jay Quadrio, and Tim Pulsford

RESULTS

Table 1. Public perception of cyclone warnings

Attitude to warning advice	Number of respondents	Percent
False alarm	22	11.1
Over reaction	53	26.6
Close call	82	41.2
Near Miss	28	14.1
Other	14	7.0

Table 2. Expectations of the Impact of the Weather Based on BOM advice

Weather impact	Number of respondents	Percent
Weather was less than expected	114	57.3
Weather was more than expected	7	3.5
Weather was as expected	78	39.2

Table 3. Did You Plot the Cyclone on a Map

Did you plot the cyclone	Number of respondents	Percent
Yes - in the telephone book	25	12.5

Yes - on another map	35	17.5
No	139	69.5
Other response	1	0.5

Table 4. Perception of BOM Statements on Cyclone Precautions

Preparation advice	Number of respondents	Percent
Very useful	68	

Table 9. Source of Information on the Approach of the Cyclone

Source of information	Number of respondents	Percent
Commercial TV	81	40.5
ABC TV	13	6.5
Commercial Radio	76	

closure		
Very dissatisfied	8	12.7
Dissatisfied	7	11.1
No opinion	7	11.1
Satisfied	29	46.0
Very satisfied	12	19.0

Table 15. Information on Early School Closure by Level of Parental Satisfaction

Information source	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Row percent
School contacted you	1	1	1	7	4	23.0
You contacted school	0	0	2	0	0	3.3
Employer/public address	1	0	1	2	1	8.2
TV/radio	2	2	2	9	5	32.8
Unaware	1	1	1	0	0	4.9
Other source	2	3	0	10	2	27.9