Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Little-known Danger of Driving in Floodwaters

20 June 2016

The demonstration by University of New South Wales researchers that it is surprisingly easy for modern cars to be swept away by as little as 60 centimetres of slow moving water is a timely warning as heavy rain and flooding continues along eastern Australia.

Floodplain Management Australia (FMA) President Ian Dinham said while much is being done to reduce the flood risk to houses and businesses too many people are losing their lives when their vehicles are washed away by floodwater.

“Even large four-wheel drive vehicles which may be capable of driving in water were shown by the University research to not be safe when water is moving across a roadway.

“It can be tempting to try to cross a short stretch of floodwater, but if the water is moving at all it can exert amazing force – enough to move a 2 tonne vehicle.

“Modern cars and four-wheel drives are very different to those in the past. They are water tight, so they float easily. In addition electric windows can fail to operate when wet, making escape more difficult.”

Mr Dinham said that much of the workload of State Emergency Service personnel is related to water rescues. “These put rescue personnel at unnecessary risk and, sadly, they are not always successful.

“FMA congratulates the University of New South Wales on this important research, and fully supports the advice of the State Emergency Service not to drive into floodwater.”

Floodplain Management Australia brings together experts from across Australia and overseas to help build a more flood resilient nation. Members include over 120 councils, catchment management authorities, businesses, and professionals involved in urban and rural flood risk management.

About
For more information on Floodplain Management Australia, visit floods.org.au.

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Please note that in the original media release the unit of measurement in the first paragraph was incorrectly show.