During 2010 and 2011, Queensland was devastated by major floods. The Brisbane River flooded causing significant damage. Homes, trees and cars were carried off in the flood waters, and all staff working at the National Relay Service headquarters had to be evacuated, which affected communications for Australians all over the country. Thirty-five people lost their lives.

Major floods were also experienced in Victoria during 2010 and 2011, during 2012 in North-Eastern Victoria and also during 2013 in Gippsland. Floods are frequent in Victoria and they will occur frequently in the future. Floods can occur anywhere and at any time of the year.

The main cause of death during floods is people driving, riding or walking through flood water,

or children playing in flood water.

Floods can occur slowly or quickly, as in the case of flash flooding.

If a flood occurs slowly, there may be sufficient time to warn communities and prepare for the flood, but sometimes it is not possible to send out warnings because the flood occurs too fast.

There are several different causes of floods.

Floods may be caused by solid rain over a few days, or an intense downpour during a short period of time.

Floods may be caused by overflowing drains, whereby excess rain water from other areas diverts into one area that then floods, even if there is no rain.

Floods may be caused by overflowing rivers or creeks as they inundate surrounding areas.

Floods may be caused by run-off from nearby mountains, especially when the winter snow melts and flows down into the lowlands.

Floods may occur from dam breaks or dam bursts, if the amount of water captured in the dam exceeds capacity, if an earthquake causes structural damage to the dam, or if there is an error in the design or building of the dam. If you live near a dam, your area may flood frequently.

Tidal floods may occur in coastal areas near the beach, such as if a low pressure system over the ocean causes tides to flood nearby coastal areas, affecting communities and townships in these areas. Tidal floods are different from tsunami, which are giant waves created by earthquakes or volcanic activity underneath the ocean.

High-risk flood areas are typically those areas near rivers and creeks, but floods may also occur in other areas such as near storm water drains and the beach. If you live or visit any of these areas, consider the risk of flood at these locations and be prepared.

Floods are dangerous and can cause significant damage to properties, agricultural land and homes.

Floods can cause significant damage to road, rail and air infrastructure.

If the area around your home floods heavily and you need to leave, you may be cut off and unable to exit the area.This could have severe consequences if you do not have enough food supplies.

If your property is flooded, this environment can be dangerous too. Any loose objects left in the home can be mixed in with the flood water, and you can risk injury from unknown or unseen sharp or heavy objects.

Sometimes people are caught short on the road during a flood, and many people have died trying to walk or drive through flood water.

Never walk, ride or drive through flood water.

You could drown or disappear in flood water because you cannot see what it is underneath the water,

or the currents may be strong and fast, carrying you away. Powerlines may fall down and into flood water, and you will not know if they are live or not.

Flood water is also toxic. It typically contains raw sewerage, rubbish, chemicals and dead animals mixed in together. This means that flood water is poisonous, and can cause significant damage to agricultural land.

Be prepared for flood so that you will be safe. Watch these videos and learn how to prepare your home and other properties for flood.

Learn about the Flood Warning system, and learn how to prepare your emergency kit.

If you are prepared for flood, you will be able to respond with confidence when one occurs near you.

Remember never drive, ride or walk through floods. You could die.

Most important is that you, your family and friends are safe.