Once a flood has ended, you cannot return home immediately. It is important that you follow advice from emergency services personnel.

Hazards resulting from the flood or flood damage may remain in your area, such as fallen powerlines that are still live, damaged road infrastructure and mudslides. If you are uncertain about access to your area, check online via the SES website.

Do not return home until you are certain your journey home will be safe.

Once a flood has ended and hazards have been secured, the SES will issue the All Clear.

When you return to your home, be prepared for the worst. You may see extensive damage to homes and properties, and your own home may be covered with thick, smelly mud. This experience may be distressing.

Make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing, including long-sleeved shirt, sturdy boots and strong gloves.

Check your gas and electricity are turned off at the mains before you enter your home.

Check the outside of your home for any structural damage, and enter your home only if there is none.

Remember to cover your face with a mask.

Use a torch to inspect the interior of your home.

Watch for any trip, slip or fall hazards.

Use your torch to inspect your windows, walls and roof for any damage.

Keep an eye out for any chemical, electrical or asbestos hazards.

Older homes often contain asbestos materials. If you see any damaged walls or other structures that make you suspect the presence of asbestos, you must request a professional to come and inspect.

Remove yourself from the house immediately. Invisible asbestos fibres may be in the air and you could breathe them into your lungs. Asbestos can cause cancer and other health conditions.

Before you begin cleaning, make sure you take photos inside and outside your home, for insurance purposes.

Check if any electrical or gas appliances, such as barbecue gas bottles, came in contact with flood water. If they did, request a professional to inspect each item to check it is safe to use again.

Do not eat any food supplies from flood-affected areas. It may have been contaminated by toxic flood water. Remember that flood water often contains raw sewerage, petrol and other chemicals. Your safest option is to discard of any food supplies that may have been contaminated by flood water.

You may also need to replace any toiletries that may have been contaminated by flood water.

Do not drink tap water after a flood, as it may be contaminated by flood water. Use bottled water until the authorities have assured you that your tap water is safe to drink.

Cleaning up after a flood can be an emotional experience that takes a long time.

Often communities will rally around to clean up together.

Emergency Relief Centres may be established. Here you can access different forms of support.

This support may include financial assistance, temporary accommodation if you have nowhere to stay, and other personal support. Emergency Relief Centres will provide you with further information about your situation.

When you arrive at an Emergency Relief Centre, you may be met by someone from the Red Cross or other service. They will discuss your circumstances and refer you to appropriate support services.

Remember it is your right to request a communication service such as Auslan interpreter, deaf interpreter, or deafblind interpreter.

Be aware that Emergency Relief Centres can be very busy and it can take a long time to process people, although they aim for smooth and quick service for everyone.

You may need to liaise with your insurance company, and they may need to inspect your home.

You may need to liaise with your bank to organise any repairs to your home and property.

Do not rush your decisions. Take your time and consider your needs. There will be a lot of paperwork and cleaning up can take a long time. Psychological support will be available.

Make sure you get all the support you need.