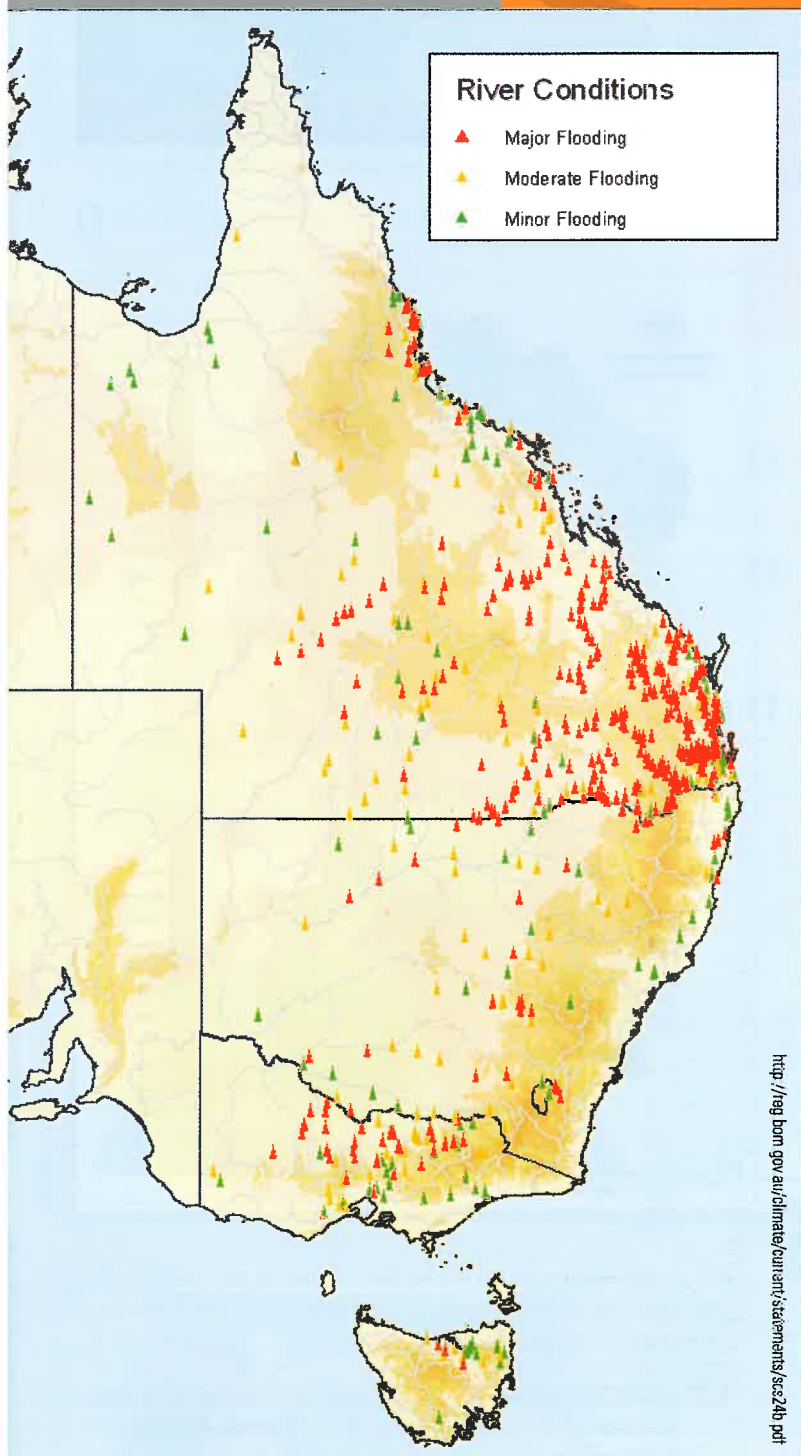


# A Land of Droughts and Flooding Rains

## Queensland Floods Case Study

*I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding rains.*

Dorothea Mackellar, *My Country*



Flood peaks in eastern Australia over the period  
26 November 2010 – 20 January 2011.

During January 2011 much of eastern Australia was suffering major flooding — after a decade of drought. In Queensland fierce storms caused more than 30 deaths, and the destruction of whole towns, and flooded major cities. In New South Wales farms and animals were lost to rapidly rising water. In Victoria a slow-moving but unstoppable inland sea 95 kilometres long and 50 kilometres wide relentlessly inundated a third of the state.

Thousands of people lost their homes and precious personal possessions. Animals were drowned, crops inundated, roads, bridges and railways were destroyed.

The floods have been a personal, regional and national disaster.

How could this happen — was it due to climate change, whether natural or human caused, or to the normal patterns of La Niña (seen in such previous floods in 1974 and 1893)? Why did the flooding occur in some places and not others? Did all the floods show the same patterns or characteristics? Did human activity, such as engineering of dams and drainage, and increasing building of houses on flood plains or the headwaters of creeks and rivers, make the floods greater or lesser than they might have been? Will it all happen again? What impacts did the floods have, both short-term and long-term? Were there any positives to come out of it, or were all the impacts negative? How did individuals and groups respond? And how did the Australian Defence Force, in its role as a national emergencies response body, respond to the challenge?

These are questions that will be explored in this unit in these four broad investigations:

- Investigation 1** CAUSATION: Why did the east coast of Australia flood in January 2011?
- Investigation 2** LOCATION: How were particular places affected?
- Investigation 3** IMPACTS: What are the impacts of flooding?
- Investigation 4** MANAGEMENT: Did the ADF play a 'good citizenship' role in the floods?