

Business continuity tool and key
departmental contacts



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Scope and purpose of this tool

The Aboriginal community services sector provides services to many Aboriginal Victorians experiencing vulnerability. Aboriginal people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable are impacted by the current pandemic due to their lack of personal, social and financial resources. It is acknowledged that the economic impact of the pandemic, and the stresses that can accompany self-isolation and social distancing, may lead to increased demand on community services from vulnerable Victorians during the recovery stage and for some time thereafter.

This tool should be used to support services to prepare business continuity plans in line with Department of Health and Human Services guidance to the community services sector for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Four Stage Pandemic Response. Stage 3 of the Pandemic Response involves the activation of contingency plans and a focus on the maintenance of services that have been assessed as essential. Sector specific plans are under development and will provide more detailed guidance for each sector to support business continuity and contingency arrangements during Stage 3 of the Pandemic Response.

This business continuity tool should be considered alongside the Community Service Organisations (CSOs) plan [at this link](#), and other materials provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Health to determine how COVID-19 may impact their services, residents or clients and their workforce, and to determine further planning, preparedness and action as required.

This tool can be used in the business continuity planning stage and can inform more detailed, sector specific plans and should be read in conjunction with updated information found at the [Funded Agency Channel](#).

Business continuity plan tool
Make sure that your plan considers what is needed during each stage

What is needed?	What to think about	What to include
1. Preparation - Business impact analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does the current business continuity plan (BCP) include COVID-19 impacts and response? • assess the factors that could potentially harm your business to create a business impact analysis (BIA) • include your senior management and key stakeholders to review your BIA and to ensure visibility 	<p>Protocols for: Infection prevention and outbreak, identification and management – training and support for staff</p> <p>Consider the setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing client care, following cases and visitor access • facility based care versus at home care in the community • escalation of care to other settings, such as the hospital • review the budget and make necessary adjustments to expenditure
2. Recovery strategy - Resources and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and document all resource requirements based on the BIA completed in the previous step • determine a plausible recovery strategy based on the needs of the business and the BIA • document and implement that strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infrastructure, facility management and cleaning • workforce - manage staff reductions and absenteeism (20 - 30%) • finalise arrangements for seasonal flu vaccinations for residents, staff and volunteers • are there any health care needs that can be managed now?
3. Plan development - Communication and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the framework for the BCP • establish and organise the recovery teams • develop a plan for relocation in the case of disruption or disaster • create an IT disaster recovery plan within BCP and circulate document to staff and management prior to approval • ensure that your plan aligns with COVID-19 Plan for the Victorian Community Services Sector https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/news/released-covid-19-plan-victorian-community-services-sector • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business continuity plan template https://resilience.acoss.org.au/the-six-steps/leading-resilience/emergency-management-prevention-preparedness-response-recovery • activate community support • local social infrastructure (like neighbourhood houses), utilise existing social connection networks and wider family networks • visits, use of technology, social media, regular phone contacts

4. Implementation - Testing and exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a test plan and subsequent exercises that can be performed by the business to ensure that the BCP works successfully • update the BCP as needed based on the tests and exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visits, use of technology, social media, regular phone contacts
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Template outlining four key stages on an effective business continuity plan

Preparation Business impact analysis			
Action	Details	When	Who
Assess factors that may impact on your business	Rapidly review and identify the current business model in relation to the needs of your: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clients • business model and your business partners • state-wide and local responses to COVID-19 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain contact with key stakeholders to develop consistent service responses including key messages and continuity planning (the Department of Health and Human Services, peak bodies, your local community and business partners) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the roles and responsibilities that different agencies and organisations play with regards to governance and management 		
	Identify risks to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal families and communities • resourcing - staff, equipment and funding support • operational procedures, budget and expenditure • protocols and regulatory frameworks • monitoring and reporting your response 		

Create a business impact analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> document findings and share with senior staff and management use the Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats (SWOT) analysis to structure your report (search for SWOT analysis to find free templates on the internet) 		
Review the impact analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consult with senior management and key organisational stakeholders about managing the risks identified and discuss potential organisational responses 		

**Recovery strategy
Resources and tools**

Action	Details	When	Who
Identify and document all resource requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> infection prevention and outbreak identification, and management training and support for staff 		
Determine a plausible recovery strategy	<p>Human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> train staff in alternative roles to prevent interruption to service delivery due to staff absenteeism allow for adjustment of rosters to accommodate absenteeism establish policies and interim protocols for employee compensation and/or leave manage staff exposed to the pandemic and develop policies for returning to work https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-transmission-reduction-measures. identify services or programs that can be postponed, reduced or stopped identify additional staff that may be required in the event of a surge of COVID-19 train staff in the use of new and/or unfamiliar equipment – IT information sharing products. 		

	Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore information sharing technologies to enable remote access to business documents and critical resources • audit current stock and closely monitor • identify any additional equipment for staff and clients – this will inform your need to order equipment. 		
	Funding support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor potential sources of funding or additional support provided by government, the business community, peak bodies or other mechanisms 		
Document and implement the recovery strategy	Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collate documentation around your business continuity planning and be ready to submit it to funding agencies at short notice 		
	Communications Share your strategy with key stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workforce and clients • local community, government and funding bodies. 		

**Plan development
Communication and information**

Action	Details	When	Who
Develop a framework for the business continuity plan	Monitor incoming communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain contact with key stakeholders • ensure that your plan aligns with COVID-19 Plan for the Victorian Community Services Sector https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/news/released-covid-19-plan-victorian-community-services-sector • A business continuity plan template https://resilience.acoss.org.au/the-six-steps/leading-resilience/emergency-management-prevention-preparedness-response-recovery 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community sector partners to support the management of service pandemic responses such as COVID-19 committees • identify services or programs that can be postponed, reduced or stopped if required during a pandemic to minimise service disruption 		
Establish and organise recovery teams	Review Discuss the management of COVID-19 and strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevent and contain infections that will be implemented • respond to infection risks in your local community, including adaptation when risks change within the community 		
Develop a relocation plan in the case of disruption or disaster	Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • postpone non-essential / routine meetings, engagement and service delivery • incorporate flexible working hours and staggered shifts during the pandemic • monitor appropriate communication networks regarding Australian pandemic alerts https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-update 		
Create a thorough business continuity plan and IT disaster recovery plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritise available services and consider cutting back non-essential services to deal with increased demand • maintain systems for communication (consider cultural backgrounds, any sensory impairments, level of literacy and numeracy, and technological capabilities) 		
Document both plans and circulate them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make sure your business continuity and disaster recovery plans are easily accessible to your workforce and key stakeholders/partners, particularly for those working remotely • ensure both plans can be updated at short notice in response to emerging developments 		
Gain upper management approval upon completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any business continuity and business impact assessment plans should be endorsed by senior management; relevant governance groups or sub-committees; and approved by your board 		

Implementation Testing and exercises

Action	Details	When	Who
Test your business continuity plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the business continuity plan, obtain feedback and discuss pertinent issues with your workforce and board 		
Engage in exercises to ensure the business continuity plan works successfully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meet regularly to discuss updates and ensure the workforce are aware of the business continuity plan identify challenges or opportunities for operational improvement or workforce reallocation 		
Update the business continuity plan as needed based on the tests and exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> update the business continuity plan and consider whether the measures are appropriate to the level of response required? Should they be scaled up or down? develop processes for updating the business continuity plan including staff responsibilities, monitor external developments and assess the effectiveness of business continuity plan activities 		

Department of Health and Human Services Key Contacts

The Department of Health and Human Services can provide support with business continuity planning for your organisation. For further advice and support regarding continuity planning for sector-specific services, please contact the department leads below.

Children and Families Services	Beth Allen, Director, Children and Families Policy Branch T: (03) 9096 6189 E: Beth.Allen@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Performance and Improvement, Aged and Community Based Health Care and Cancer Services	Louise Galloway, Director, Performance and Improvement, Aged and Community Based Health Care and Cancer Services T: (03) 9096 5238 E: Louise.Galloway@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Disability, Housing and Homelessness Services	James Maclsaac, Director, Disability, Housing and Homelessness T: (03) 9096 1093 E: James.Maclsaac@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Housing Pathways and Outcomes, Supported Residential Services and other Regulated Services	Sherri Bruinhout, Director, Housing Pathways and Outcomes, Supported Residential Services and other Regulated Services T: (03) 9096 1442 E: Sherri.Bruinhout@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Disabilities and Community Branch, Home and Community Care	Phil O'Meara, Director, Disabilities and Community Branch, Home and Community Care T: (03) 9096 0642 E: Philip.O'Meara@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Family Violence	Kelly Stanton, Executive Director, Family Safety Victoria T: (03) 9194 3238 E: Kelly.Stanton@familysafety.vic.gov.au
Human Services Regulator, Aged Care Services and Carers	Anthony Kolmus, A/Director, Human Services Regulator, Aged Care Services and Carers T: (03) 9096 0377 E: Anthony.J.Kolmus@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Seniors Aging and Carers, Volunteering and Local Community Services	Jackie Kearney, Director, Seniors Aging and Carers, Volunteering and Local Community Services T: (03) 9096 2143 E: Jackie.Kearney@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Aboriginal Community Controlled and Health Sectors	
Aboriginal Strategy and Oversight	Paulleen Markwort, Director, Aboriginal Strategy and Oversight Branch T: (03) 9096 7532 E: Paulleen.Markwort@dhhs.vic.gov.au
Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing	Nicole McCartney, Chief Aboriginal Health Adviser, Health and Wellbeing Division T: (03) 9096 1912 E: Nicole.McCartney@dhhs.vic.gov.au