

A National Survey of Community-Based Health and Social Care Organisations on Business Continuity Planning



Key Messages

- Disruptions to business continuity during and after a disaster event can have serious consequences, such as increasing clients' risk of homelessness, financial hardship, deprivation, hunger, adverse health outcomes, and social isolation.
- The surveyed organisations exhibited a high level of emergency preparedness, significantly reducing the potential for service disruption during hazard events..
- Investment in business continuity planning, ICT infrastructure and collaborative workforce will enhance the resilience of community-based health and social care during pandemics and disasters.

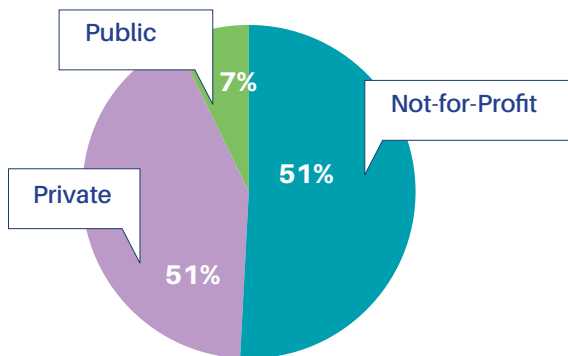
Self-administered online survey across Australia via convenience sampling from December 2021 to July 2022

Number of survey respondents:

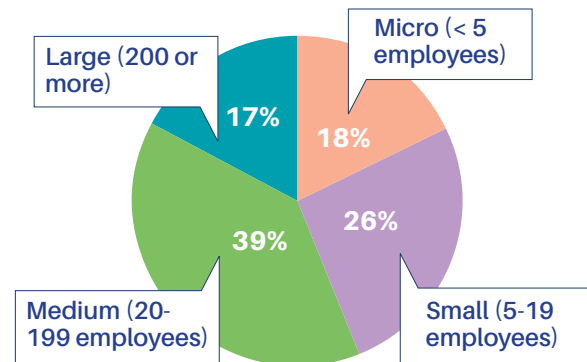
244

Who was surveyed?

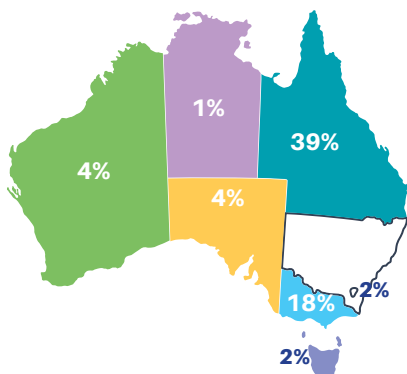
Organisation Type



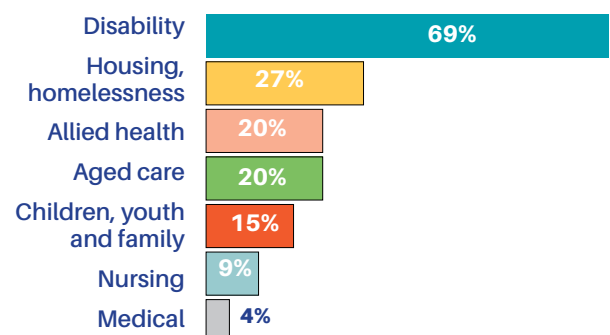
Size of Organisation



State



Service Sector



Client Groups



76%
People with disability



35%
People with a mental health issue



29%
People experiencing homelessness



28%
Families & informal carers



23%
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people



23%
CALD clients



23%
People experiencing domestic and family violence



13%
People with problematic drug and/or alcohol use



13%
LBTQI community



12%
People on care and protection orders



8%
Refugees and migrants

Which hazard events impacted on the organizations in the past ten years?

Only 7% of those surveyed reported that their organisations had **not** been impacted by any hazard events in the past ten years.



81%

Pandemic



33%

Flood



29%

Severe storm or cyclone



23%

Bushfire



18%

Heatwave



9%

Drought



9%

House fire



7%

Storm tides or tsunami

How the past emergency events impacted on businesses and clients?



"Flood closed roads which prevented staff and clients from getting to the facility. Pandemic prevented us from offering Day Respite and increased screening requirements for anyone entering the premises, also limited ability to visit."

- Disruptions in service delivery
- Staffing challenges
- Increased client support needs
- Financial hardship
- Emotional stress



"Increased service requests for provisions of material aid and brokerage. Increased demand on referrals to crisis accommodation and or emergency housing arrangements."

Emergency preparedness

Our organisation is **fully insured** against business interruption and the loss of assets caused by a natural disaster emergency.

In times of emergency, our **staff can make decisions quickly and confidently** without senior managers available.

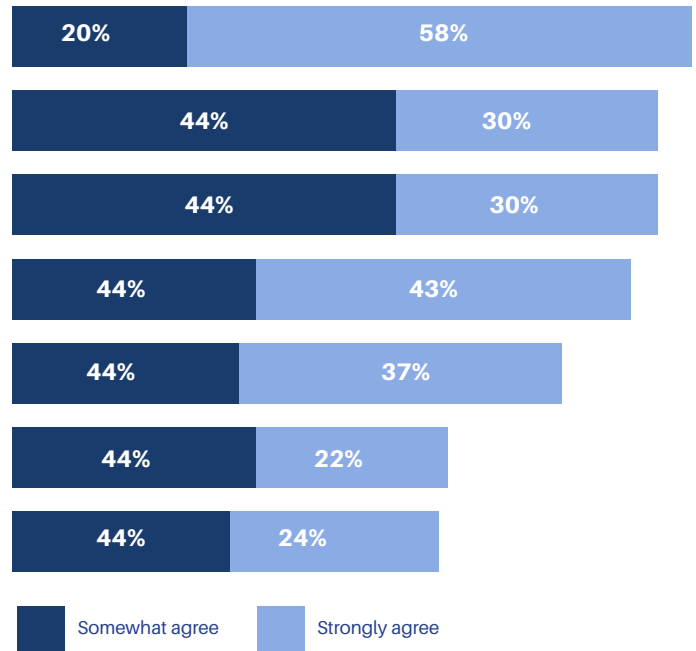
Our staff (and volunteers) are well prepared to cope with an emergency event at home and at work.

Our organisation **has a strong business continuity plan** that sets out roles and responsibilities, communication strategy, temporary office/service accommodation, data security and back up and emergency supplies.

Our organisation is **well networked with emergency service agencies**, such as the police, fire brigade, State Emergency Services (SES) and/or ambulance services.

Our organisation **helps local emergency services understand the needs of our clients** during and immediately after an emergency event.

Our organisation **is collaborating with other community organisations** to prepare for disasters or emergencies.



Service Continuity

More than three quarters (78%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were **able to deliver an adequate level of services** to their clients in case of natural hazards, pandemics and other types of emergencies. But they experienced a number of barriers.

8 Barriers to Service Continuity

1 Resource Limitations: Limited funding, time constraints, and lack of expertise

2 Workforce Challenges: Staff shortage, instability, and burnout

3 Communication Barriers: Lack of connectivity in remote areas, elderly clients struggling with new technologies, and inadequate information sharing

4 Lack of Collaboration: Unclear roles, responsibilities, and priorities, as well as difficulty in coordinating recovery efforts with other organisations.

5 Uncertainty and Complexity: Unpredictable nature of disasters and the ever-changing rules, policies, and circumstances

6 Supporting Vulnerable Populations: Challenges in addressing the distinct needs of diverse client groups during and after a disaster

7 Inadequate Knowledge and Training: Insufficient expertise in business continuity planning

8 Limited Client Engagement: Challenges in effectively engaging with clients and perceptions that clients may be unable, incapable, or inflexible in disaster management efforts.



Watch Now

Disability and community service organisations have a duty of care to both their staff and the people they support before, during and after a disaster.

This webinar brings Business Continuity Planning (BCP) to life through good practice examples of all hazards preparedness planning.

Tools and resources are shared so that community and disability organisations can get started.

[Organisational Preparedness: Preparing for Service Continuity in Disaster](#)

Learn more about the [Developing Capability in DIDRR Webinar Series](#)

Actions that community-based organisations can take now:



Develop and regularly update your business continuity plan.



Provide staff training to build capacity for emergency preparedness and response.



Establish collaborative partnerships with local organisations and emergency services.



Advocate for financial support to allocate resources for business continuity planning, staff training, and necessary preparations.

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4 Inclusion**



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