

# Emergency Preparedness Survey of Housing and Homelessness Service Organisations

M. Villeneuve, J.Chang, F. Nila, B. Simpson, & I.Yen

Centre for Disability Research and Policy



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

This report on findings is an interim research report on the Homelessness Inclusion Disaster Risk Reduction (HIDRR) project. The project is funded by the Queensland Government Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund and the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

## Contact:

M. Villeneuve,  
Associate Professor

[michelle.villeneuve@sydney.edu.au](mailto:michelle.villeneuve@sydney.edu.au)

<https://collaborating4inclusion.org/homelessness-and-disaster/>

## Contents

Emergency Preparedness Survey of Housing and Homelessness Service Organisations .....	1
Background .....	3
Methods.....	4
Questionnaire design .....	4
Data collection .....	4
Data analysis .....	4
Part one: Organisation profile .....	5
Organisation type, size, structure and mode of service delivery .....	5
.....	5
Primary services .....	5
Clients' age groups.....	6
Main client groups .....	7
Impact of natural hazards and emergency events on service continuity .....	8
Impact on business and clients .....	9
Part two: Enabling emergency preparedness of at-risk clients .....	11
Barriers to emergency preparedness planning.....	13
Part three: Organisational emergency preparedness.....	13
Emergency preparedness .....	13
Business downtime .....	15
Challenges in preparing and implementing a strong business continuity plan that would improve continuity of supports to clients before, during and after a disaster.....	15
Resources, tools or training needed for a strong business continuity plan .....	17
Appendix A: Emergency Preparedness Survey of Health and Social Care Organisations .....	18

## Background

On Census night in 2016, 116,427 Australians were homeless, up from 102,439 persons in 2011<sup>1</sup>. The actual figure is likely to be much higher since various circumstances of homelessness would have prevented many from being included in the Census. Homelessness has a profound impact on individuals' physical and mental health, as well as their social, educational, and economic participation in society. This impact is compounded by the ramifications of disasters triggered by natural hazard events and other emergencies, which adversely affect health, income, housing affordability, and access to services.

Across Australia, there are 1,698 funded housing and homelessness service organisations/agencies (257 in Queensland) providing services ranging from accommodation, assistance for family/domestic violence, counselling, material aid/brokerage to provision of meals, shower/laundry facilities and transport<sup>2</sup>. Their clients can be a specific target group, such as young people or people experiencing domestic violence, or more broadly any person experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In 2020-2021, 273,373 individuals received either goods, services or referrals from these organisations.

However, provision of these essential services can be abruptly hindered by an emergency or disaster event, as evidenced by the 2019-20 bushfire season and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In light of these recent events, housing and homelessness service organisations must have an effective plan in place to prepare for, manage, and respond to emergency and disaster situations. By implementing these plans, organisations can minimise the likelihood of service disruption as well as ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of their staff and the people they support.

The relationships between people experiencing homelessness and the organisations supporting them are a community asset. This asset can be leveraged to increase disaster resilience among the homeless population. By nature of performing their routine interactions, service organisations acquire an intimate knowledge of the capability and support needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In addition, their knowledge of the local community places them in an optimal position to aid those who are homeless and those who are vulnerably housed in learning about disaster risks and developing personal emergency plans.

Funded by the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy Queensland Government, the **Homeless Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (HIDRR)** Project aims to enable Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) and cross sector collaboration to reduce disaster risk among people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. As part of the HIDRR project, an "Emergency Preparedness Survey of Housing and Homelessness Service Organisations" was conducted by The University of Sydney in eight Local Government Areas with the highest rates of homelessness: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, Brisbane and Ipswich. The survey sought to understand the roles, capacity, tools, and training needs of the responding organisations to 1) enable people experiencing homelessness in person-centred emergency preparedness and 2) develop and implement a strong business continuity plan supporting the continuity of critical services for people experiencing homelessness before, during and after emergencies.

This report shares what we learned from the respondents who completed this survey. Findings will inform ongoing consultations and co-production as part of the HIDRR project.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/census-population-and-housing-estimating-homelessness/latest-release>

<sup>2</sup> AIHW, Specialist homelessness services 2020–21

## Methods

### *Questionnaire design*

The design of the questionnaire was informed by a review by Subramaniam & Villeneuve (2020): *Advancing emergency preparedness for people with disabilities and chronic health conditions in the community: A scoping review*. A working group consisting of housing and homelessness service providers reviewed and tested the questionnaire to ensure the understanding and appropriateness of the survey questions. The survey questionnaire is included as Appendix A. This study received ethical approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of Sydney.

### *Data collection*

In March – April 2022, the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy invited the funded housing and homelessness service organisations to participate in the online self-administered survey. In order to progress survey recruitment while considering needs of communities impacted by the South-East Queensland (SEQ) floods, survey invitations were dispatched on different days. On 31 March 2022, survey invitations were emailed to 112 organisations located outside the disaster-declared regions. Two weeks later, when the impact of floods on the communities had eased, survey invitations were emailed to 155 organisations located within the disaster-declared regions. Appropriateness of the timing of survey administration was advised by the HIDRR Steering Committee and the Housing and Homelessness Services Working Group.

### *Data analysis*

Frequency distributions were calculated for categorical data. Means and standard deviations were calculated for continuous data. All responses, including partial responses, were included in the analysis. Missing values were not included in the calculation of percentages. Qualitative data collected via open-ended questions was analysed using a thematic approach.

## Survey findings

Returned surveys from 47 organisations yielded a 18% response rate. Survey findings are described under three subheadings: organisation profile (part 1), emergency preparedness of at-risk clients (part 2), and organisational emergency preparedness (part 3).

### Part one: Organisation profile

#### Organisation type, size, structure and mode of service delivery

The majority of the respondents were from not-for-profit organisations (89%) (Figure 1a). The respondents' organisations size ranged from micro (<5 employees, 17%), small (5-9 employees, 26%), medium (20-199 employees, 28%) to large (200 or more employees, 28%) (Figure 1b). The most common business structure was incorporated associations (54%), followed by company (33%) (Figure 1c). Just over half of those surveyed (55%) reported that they typically provided direct service delivery to their clients, while 40% provided a combination of direct and indirect services (Figure 1d).

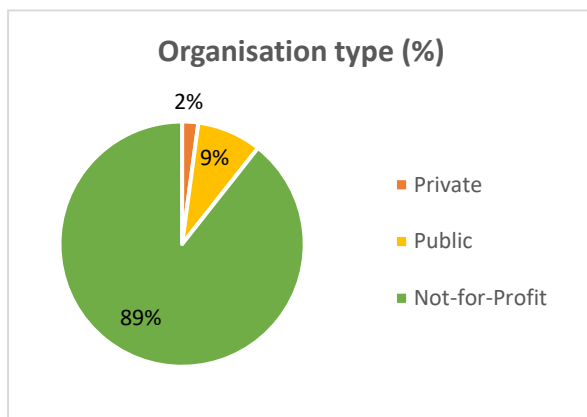


Figure 1(a): Organisation type

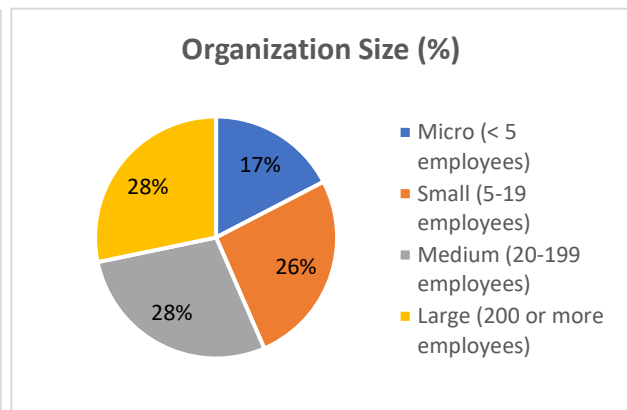


Figure 1(b): Organisation size

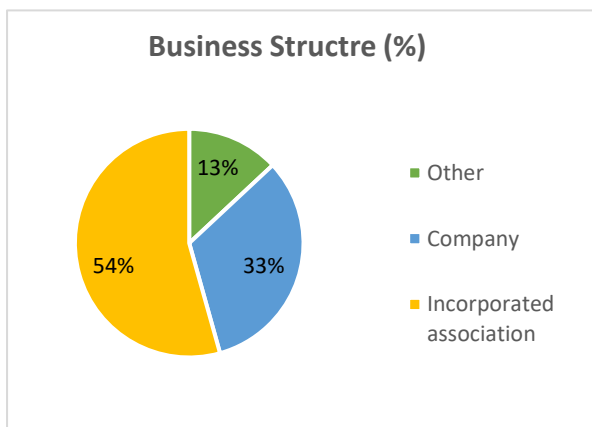


Figure 1(c): Organisation's business structure

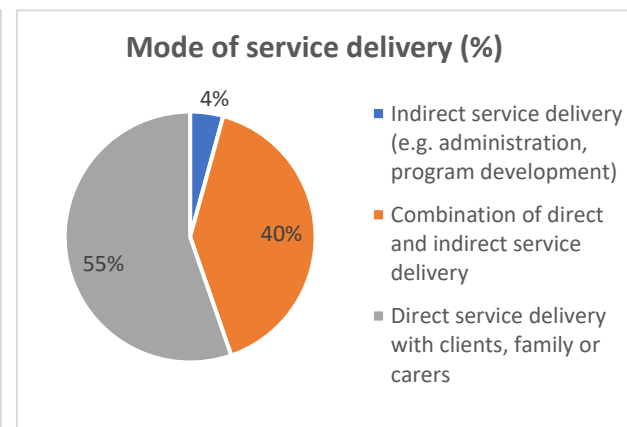


Figure 1(d): Types of services delivered by the organisations

#### Primary services

Among the 44 responding organisations, the most services provided were short term or emergency accommodations (e.g., hotels, motels and caravan parks) (55%), followed by assistance with tenancy (45%), medium term/transitional housing (>3 months but not ongoing) (43%), and long-term housing

(>3 months/ongoing) (43%). On the other hand, health/medical/specialist services (9%) and assistance for trauma (10%) were the least provided services. It is noteworthy that disability services and mental health services were provided by 19% and 12% organizations as their primary service respectively (Figure 2).

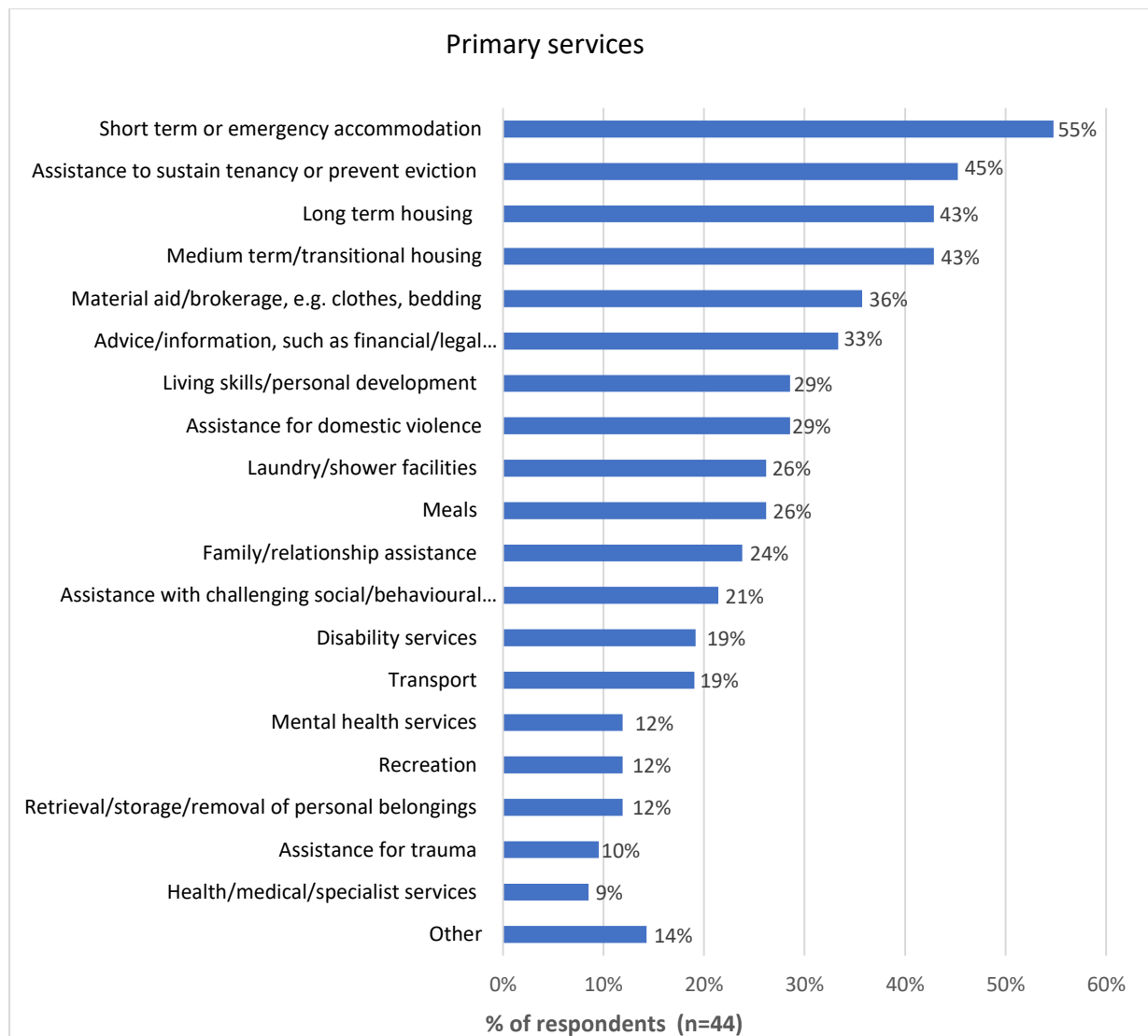


Figure 2: primary services provided by the organisations

### Clients' age groups

More than three quarters (81%) of the responding organisations provided services to adults aged between 25 and 64, followed by youth (68%, aged between 15 and 24), and elderly people (53%, aged more than 65 years old) (Figure 3).

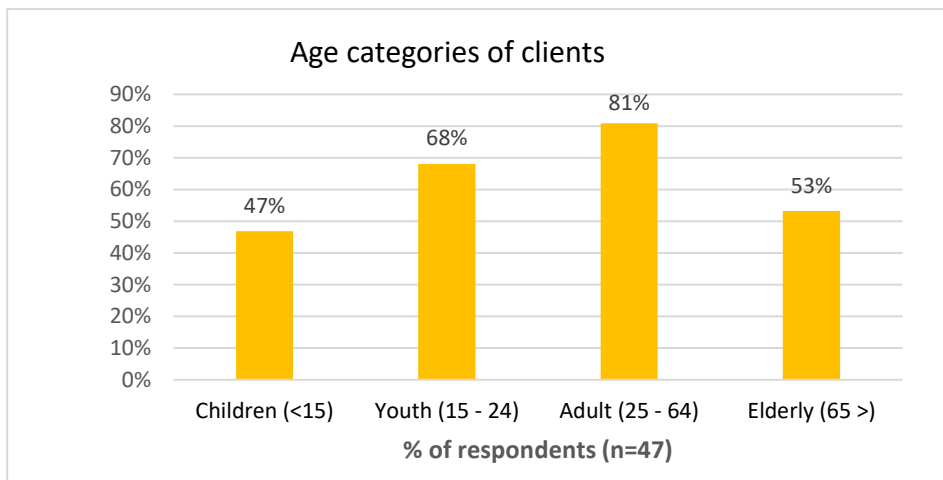


Figure 3: Age categories of the clients

### Main client groups

More than three quarters of the respondents (79%) reported that their main clients were people experiencing homelessness, followed by 49% people experiencing domestic and family violence (49%), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (40%). (Figure 4).

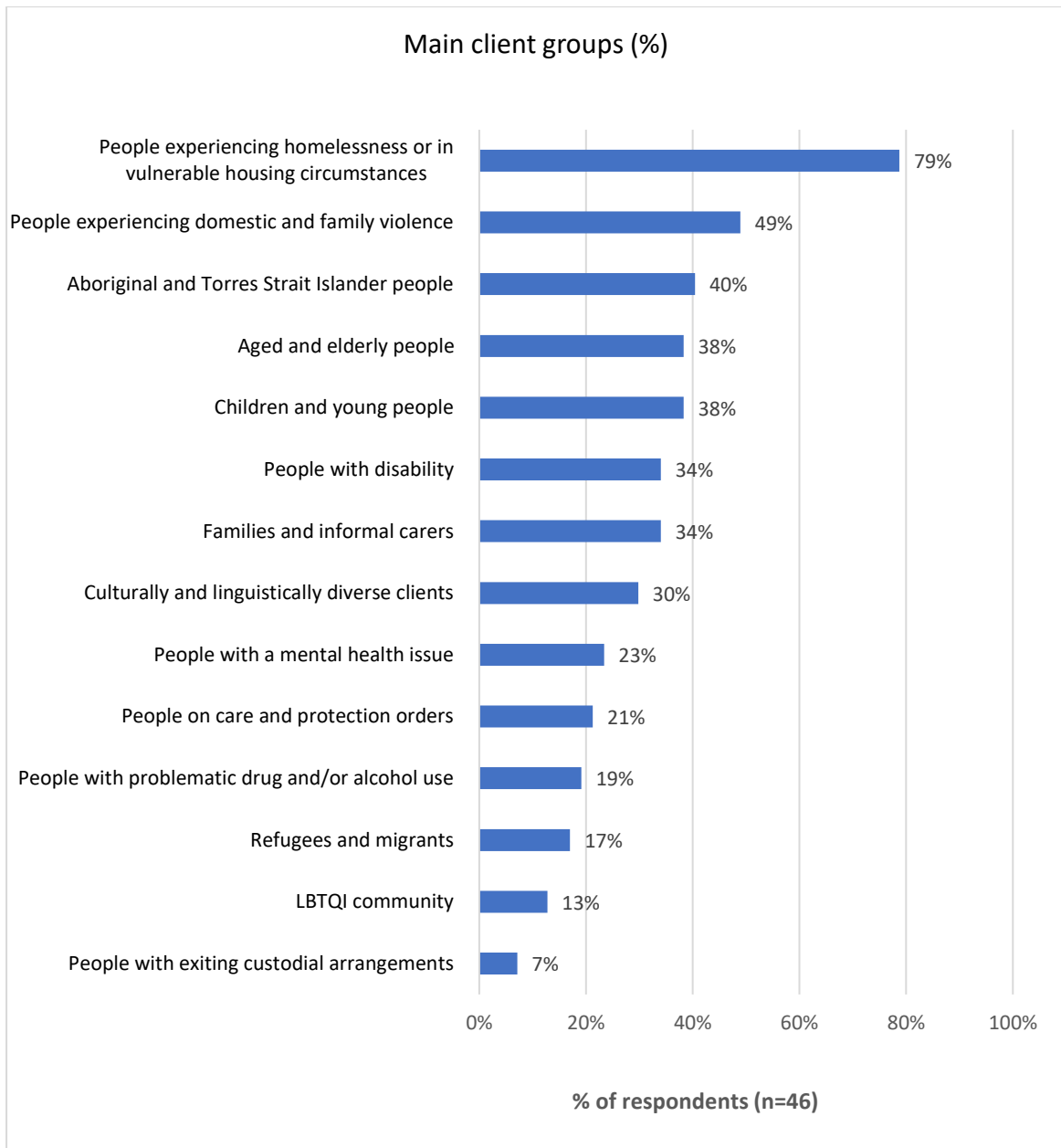


Figure 4: Main client groups of the organisations

#### Impact of natural hazards and emergency events on service continuity

Pandemic was the highest (79%) reported event that impacted the organizations in the last ten years, followed by flood (66%), and severe storm or cyclone (62%). In addition, premises fire (23%), heatwave (19%), tsunami (17%), bushfires (17%) and draught (15%) were identified as major causes of business disruptions by the respondents (Figure 5)



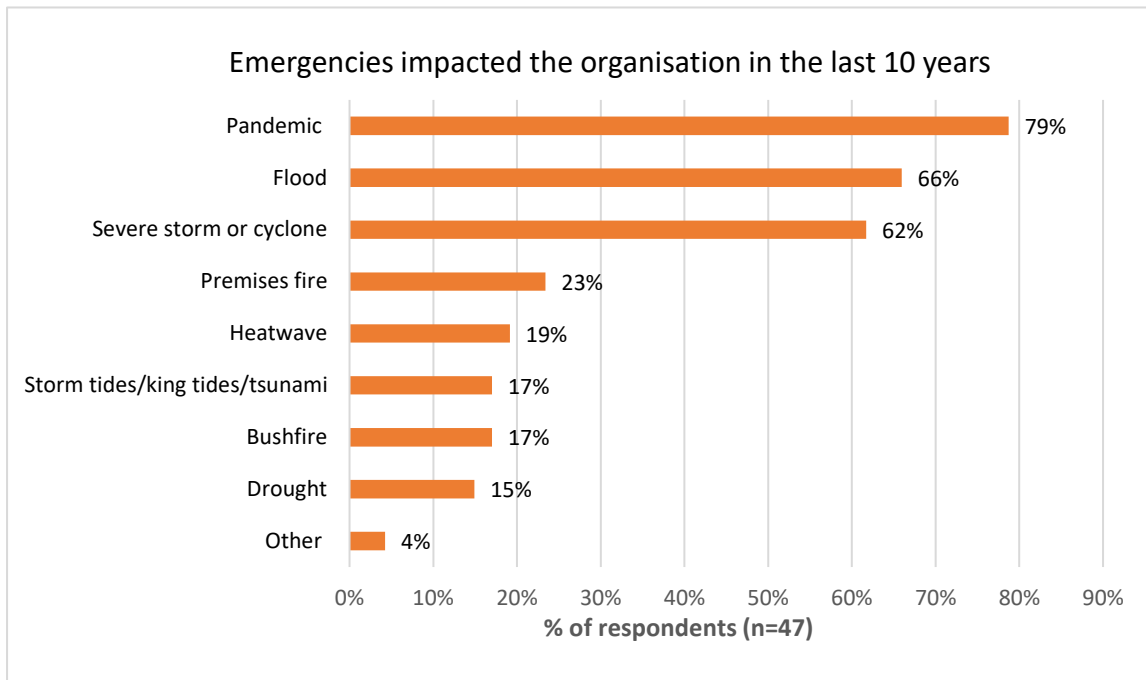


Figure 5: Emergencies that impacted the organisations in the past 10 years

## Impact on business and clients

The pandemic and associated restrictions impacted continuity of care; in some circumstances this increased the risk to safety for clients.

*“Covid had isolation impacts on our elderly and youth. Our annual youth survey showed increase in homeless and unsafe circumstances at home and drug use.”*

*“The reduction of informal access to the Housing Manager to reduce the risk of COVID spread limited the flow of information to and from tenants that happens in this process. The rescheduling of works required when trades and tenants had to isolate due to COVID has slowed response times”*

An increase in client demand for supports was also experienced by businesses, which had a knock-on effect on staff workloads and capacity to carry out stable supports.

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

*“Early in 2022 many people in SEQ were affected by floods. Our service has seen an increase in people requesting services such as food parcels, rent and utilities assistance, school supplies. The service has a program that assists people to gain photo ID so that they are able to prove their identity for signing leases etc.*

*This program was part of the support provided to people who lost everything in the floods and were in evacuation centres. It continues to work with people who need to regain their identity documents.”*

*“Flooding did create an increase in displaced rough sleepers who were seeking services from us even though were at capacity. Out outreach officer’s case load increased significantly as a result.”*

Concurrently, issues of workforce shortage were evident because staff were also impacted by the disaster and/or staff turnover. The impact on services was a loss of organisational knowledge.

*“large personal impact on staff whose personal properties were affected resulting in extensive unplanned leave and longer term trauma which contributed to staff burnout and churn when pandemic hit.”*

*“Staff being impacted by weather events personally and impacting on their ability to work and support the service/clients. - Reduced staffing.”*

*“impact has been mostly staff resilience and churn resulting in 23% turnover in our workforce up from 7%. Unplanned leave also remains high. Overall impact on the organisation is that teams are now greener and less experienced resulting in a drop in outputs and performance measures, decrease in quality, and an increase in risk. Senior managers now less strategic and much more operational which will likely have longer term impact on the future of the business. Minimal impact on revenue streams and expenses fortunately.”*

Other types of disaster events resulted in damage to property, displacing clients. Clients’ routine supports and services were interrupted due to the direct impact and subsequent flow on effect into the community such as disruption to utilities and supply chains.

*“Electricity was off for five days. We usually have hot summers, this year we had a consistent highest temperature of 40 degrees. Many of our crisis accommodation dwellings do not have air-conditioning. We have supplied portable breeze air but these do next to nothing during the hottest part of the days”*

*“The COVID pandemic brought shortages of grocery items to our regional rural town and domestic violence behaviour increased.”*

Similarly, damage to property impacted business continuity and their bottom line.

*“Our refuge complex has been flooded on at least 7 occasions in the past 5 years. The last flood was on the 27th February 2022 and this was the most damaging. Three of our organisational vehicles were written off and we are still waiting on replacement cars. This has impacted our ability to be able to transport women and children to appointments, court etc. We also had to throw out furniture and other essential items. The flood also destroyed the backyard of our refuge which is still damaged.”*

*“2013 Flood (Bundaberg) - Extensive damage to 18 residential properties as well as business premises of our head office resulting in being displaced for 7 months in temporary business locations until repairs could be effected.”*

*“Increase in areas of spending otherwise not in scope of funding especially if required to evacuate low lying accommodations facilities.”*

Some business experienced little to no impact during disaster events.

*“Good long-term planning for continuation of business through emergency situations have meant that aside from property damage from domestic fires, our Tenants have not been directly impacted or displaced by emergency.”*

*“In the last 2 years in particular our service has continued to remain open 7 days per week, with only 3 days lost, to provide services to people who had nowhere to live despite being in lockdown for COVID. Our service supported people to be housed over that period.”*

*“Flood has limited access to the buildings for a short period of time e.g., 48 hours. Major during February 2021 and minor Floods November 2021, January 2022 and March 2022. No Flood water entered any buildings, so therefore minor inconvenience. Pandemic has delayed the timely repairs of some services, but not to any major impact to any residents.”*

## *Part two: Enabling emergency preparedness of at-risk clients*

At this stage of the survey, the participants were asked about their capability, execution, and intent in carrying out a list of activities to enable emergency preparedness of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Table 1 summarizes participant responses in relation to their emergency preparedness actions with/for their clients. The most frequently practiced activity was referring clients to community services to enhance their emergency preparedness (54%), followed by identifying clients who are at risk during an emergency (51%), and subsequently assessing clients to identify their personal strength and support needs during emergencies (34%).

On the other hand, the most frequently reported activity that could *not* be undertaken by the responding organization was practicing emergency drills (26%), followed by providing formal support or education to clients to increase their active participation in taking steps to prepare for emergencies (17%). Examples of formal support or education include helping clients with programs such as the Person-Centered Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook; using planning guides such as the Australian Red Cross 'REDIPLAN'. It is noteworthy that 36% and 47% of the respondents expressed intention to carry out these activities in the future, respectively.

Table 1: Organisation's capability, execution and intent in enabling emergency preparedness with/for clients and their families

	We do all of this already	We do some of this already	We could do this in the future	We could not do this
Identify clients who are at risk in an emergency e.g., chronic physical and mental health condition affecting mobility, geographical location, barriers to access mainstream sources of information about impending danger (technology, communication, and language barrier).	51%	40%	6%	2%
Make referrals to community services that can help them to enhance their emergency preparedness e.g., local emergency service personnel and council.	54%	35%	9%	2%
Assess clients to identify their level of emergency preparedness e.g., awareness of local hazard risks, access to emergency information and alerts, understanding their role and responsibility in an emergency	28%	46%	24%	2%
Assess clients to identify their personal strengths and support needs during emergencies to minimise risk e.g., communication, technology, transport, living situation, personal supports, assistance animals, social connectedness, health (medical management)	34%	43%	17%	6%
PROVIDE emergency planning tools, information, or resources TO clients e.g., information on local bushfire or flood risk, council preparedness resources, community service resources such as the Australian Red Cross emergency preparedness plan	32%	43%	23%	2%
EXPLORE preparedness information, tools, and resources WITH clients to encourage them to take steps to prepare e.g., learn together with your client on local disaster risks, recognise gaps in knowledge (yours and theirs), develop skills to stay informed during an emergency such as how to find information about bushfires and floods etc	26%	43%	26%	6%
Develop an emergency preparedness plan for, or with clients that is tailored to their support needs in emergencies e.g., household, or personal emergency checklist and kit, emergency supplies, supported accommodation, communication strategy (including contact list)	28%	30%	34%	9%
Strengthen support networks of clients. Build social connectedness to the key people your client will most likely rely on, so that they have a group of willing people to call on to provide support in an emergency e.g., neighbours, friends, local neighbourhood centres, buddy system that pairs people with trusted local community members who can assist them in an emergency	30%	43%	21%	6%
Provide formal support or education to clients to increase their active participation in taking steps to prepare for emergencies e.g., helping them with programs such as the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook; using planning guides such as the Australian Red Cross 'REDIPLAN'.	13%	23%	47%	17%
Practice emergency drills with clients to increase their familiarity, sense of preparedness and confidence in how to respond effectively in an emergency e.g., evacuation, access to medication and ongoing care.	17%	21%	36%	26%

## Barriers to emergency preparedness planning

The most common barriers identified by the participants were inadequate funding (67%) and insufficient time (52%) to include emergency preparedness activities as part of their services (Figure 6).

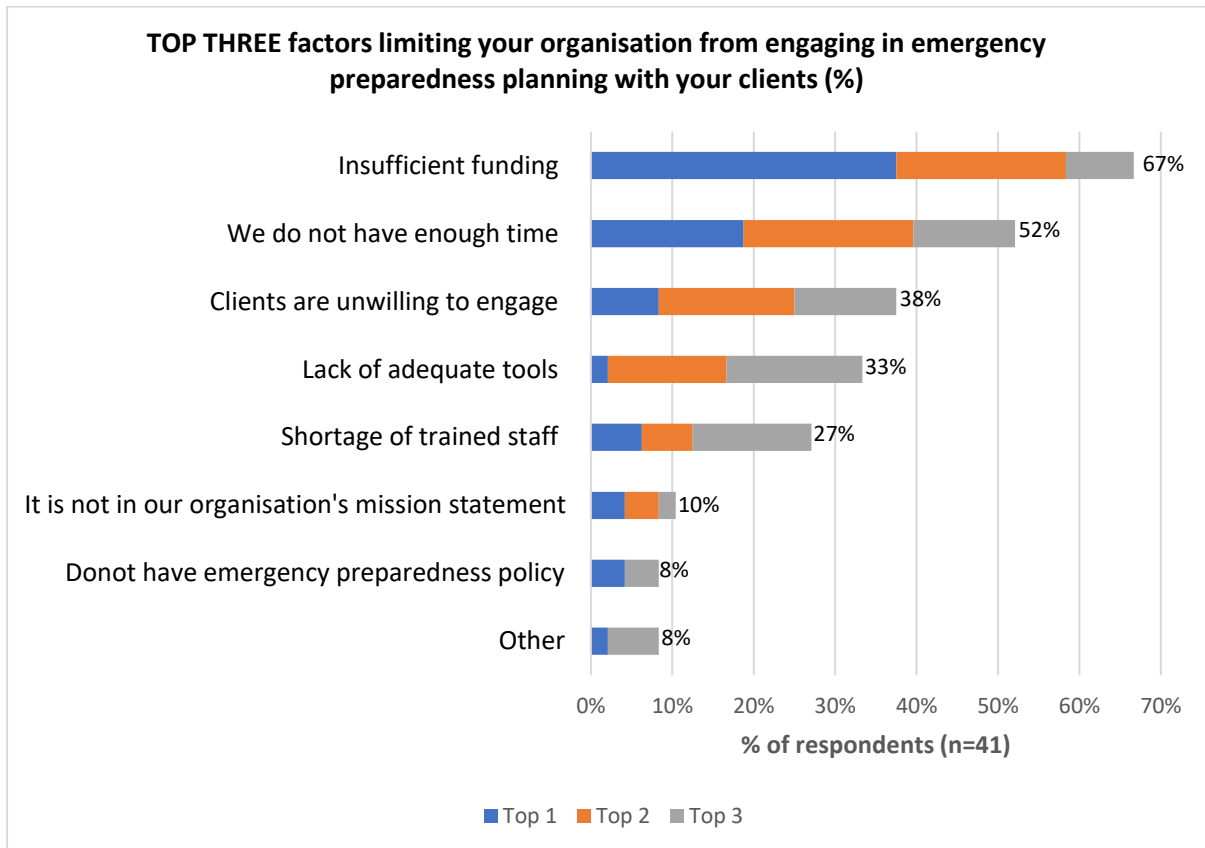


Figure 6: Barriers to emergency preparedness planning

Moreover, lack of adequate tools and trained staff to engage in emergency preparedness planning were identified as common challenges by the 33% and 27% of the organizations respectively. One out of ten respondents (10%) stated that developing emergency preparedness planning was not in their organization's mission statement or strategic plan (Figure 6).

## Part three: Organisational emergency preparedness

### Emergency preparedness

The majority of respondents demonstrated a high level of organisational emergency preparedness that could minimise the likelihood of service disruption during an emergency (Figure 7). The most frequently reported preparedness actions included:

- being fully insured against business interruption and the loss of assets caused by a natural disaster emergency (87%);
- having 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 (87%); and
- being well networked with emergency service agencies, such as the police, fire brigade, State Emergency Services (SES) and/or ambulance services (85%).

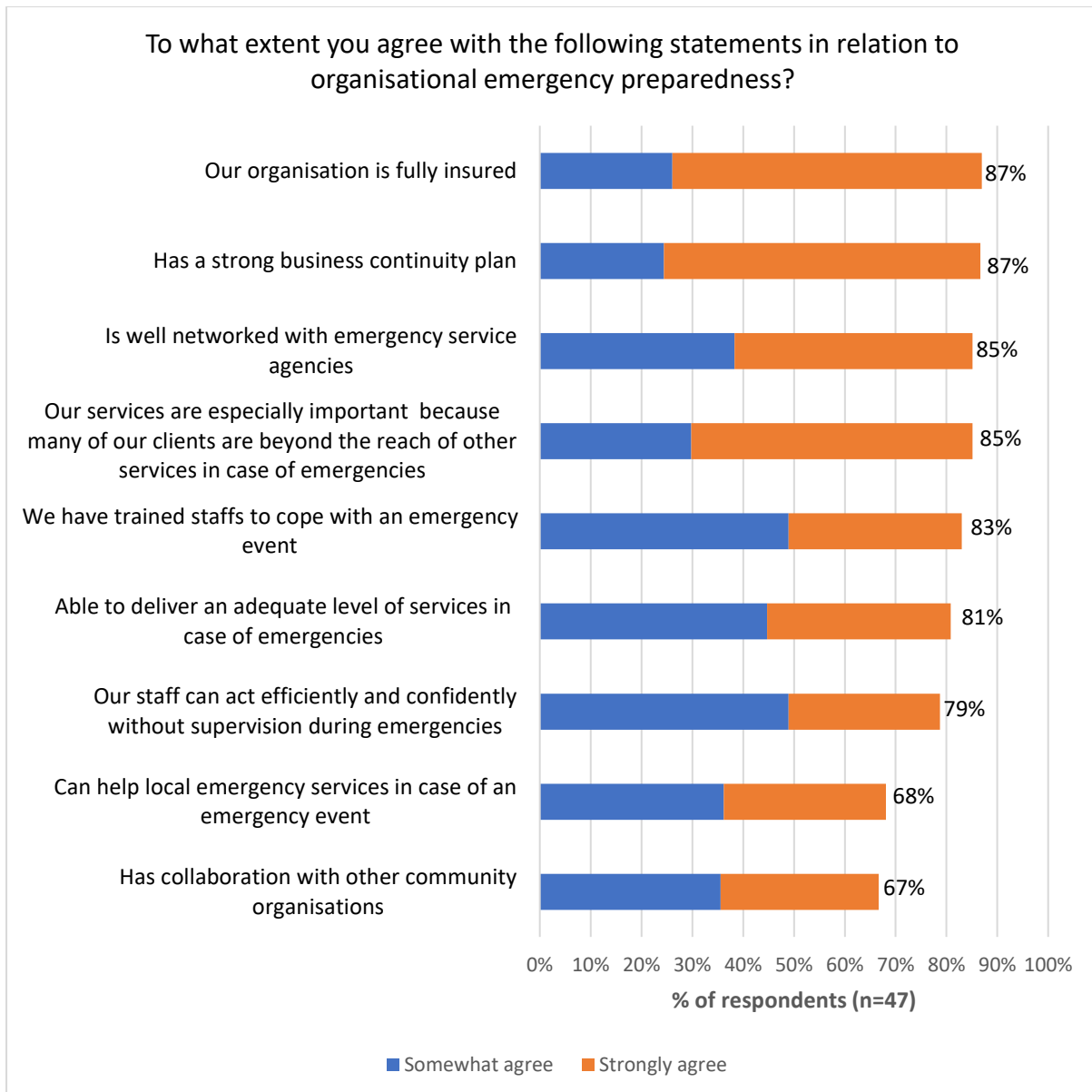


Figure 7: Organisational emergency preparedness

Most organisations (85%) reported that their services were especially important before, during or after an emergency because many of their clients were beyond the reach of other services. Eighty-three (83%) of the responding organisations had well prepared staff and volunteers to cope with an emergency event at home and at work, and 81% were able to deliver an adequate level of services to

the clients in case of natural hazards, pandemics and other types of emergencies (e.g. house fires, power outages, telecommunication breakdowns).

### Business downtime

Significant business downtime was caused by pandemic (average 709 hours per reporting organisation) and flood (average 306 hours per reporting organisation) in the 2020-2021 financial year.

Challenges in preparing and implementing a strong business continuity plan that would improve continuity of supports to clients before, during and after a disaster.

Planning for a range of scenarios is difficult. Rapidly changing scenarios meant that plans needed to be updated and needs were difficult to anticipate. Planning is especially challenging for organisations that provide services with diverse client groups and in a range of locations.

*“The fluidity of the situation, the individual impact of the situation, the timing of the situation - whilst you have robust policy and procedures in place to best there are many unknown factors at a more granular level that are very individualised on the variables of each situation”*

During the pandemic, services (and their clients) needed to comply with government directives e.g., movement restrictions, which impacted on service provision and are difficult to predict and plan for. Some services reported receiving assistance and advice from government departments, but many reported an increased administrative burden to comply with government regulations. A lack of co-ordination between different departments also makes it difficult to plan and maintain service continuity.

*“Being able to focus on our BCP and the needs of those we service was difficult within the confines of new meetings, administrative requirements and red tape that was repetitive and uncoordinated. As we are aware, government departments do not speak to each other and create further imposition at times of critical need when flexible and nimble responses are required from the human service sector.”*

*“Government funders simply wanted to know what we were doing but not practically helpful and impose on limited time for irrelevant meetings.”*

*“We had assist to prepare our plan through RSDC now called Whitsunday Greater Communities. They are also a not-for-profit organisation. Assistance is also provided through the Department of Communities.”*

Clients of housing and homelessness services are often a transient group that can be difficult to identify, engage and follow up. They do not necessarily reach out for help. This vulnerable group has a range of needs to consider, which adds complexity to service planning and provision.

*“We can have all the planning and processes in place but how we reach out effectively to clients has been most difficult.”*

Planning for and dealing with emergencies takes additional resources. Service providers report their capacity is already stretched in terms of funding and staffing.

*“Having available staff.....staffing is limited at present and current workload makes it difficult to include additional activities”*

*"The main challenges for our service is the fact that we run on a very tight budget due to funding not meeting the need of the number of clients we support and house. There is no scope or ability of an already fatigued team to provide more support to additional clients who contact the service in need of help at the time of a disaster."*

Maintaining a skilled workforce that have the knowledge about emergency preparedness is another challenge.

*"It is challenging to maintain such deep knowledge during periods of high staff turnover and new staff take a very long time before they have the depth of knowledge in the organisational business to respond accordingly."*

During disasters, service providers may be physically able to get to their clients to provide services.

*"Not being able to get to our clients e.g., water over roads, fallen trees. Services being down e.g., power, phone, SES and staff not being able to get to work for the same reasons"*

After disasters like flooding, accommodation is in short supply. Alternative accommodation is very limited in the area, and clients of housing and homelessness services already faced additional challenges finding and maintaining secure accommodation. There may be an increased demand for housing and homelessness services during an emergency.

*"What is often needed is housing and we have a long list of clients assessed and sitting pending for housing. The clients contacting the service during this time want an immediate response which we are not able to provide other than provide referral."*

Survey participants also reported a lack of services to assist their clients more broadly, and lack of collaboration between services.

*"There are limited support services in fact none other than SES volunteers to physically assist tenants to move. We register our tenants with the Council's VRR if applicable. Key to supports are tenants informal networks. We therefore seek to house tenants who have lived locally for a long time so that they have this. Referrals from the Department of Housing seek to include non-local residents into our units. This is a recipe for disaster."*

*"Obtaining the commitment and support from other agencies (e.g. Department of Housing, specialist homelessness services)."*

When answering the survey question about challenges, several organisations reported they already had effective business continuity plans in place. Actions they had already taken included:

- providing clients with information (including the P-CEP booklet)

*"Where ever possible we educate our tenants about emergency preparedness and last year distributed the P-CEP booklet to all our Tenants (Mackay) along with general emergency information and emergency supplies. Our NQ staff contacted local councils and made up emergency packs in preparation for the weather period."*

- Identifying informal support networks and other local services

*"Key to supports are tenants informal networks. We therefore seek to house tenants who have lived locally for a long time so that they have this."*

*"Having the Disaster Recovery Unit on site and knowing other services to refer clients to, have helped."*

- Facilitating staff working remotely



- Drawing on previous disaster experience

*"As a state-wide service provider with over 40 years in service delivery we have experienced many natural disasters. From this experience we have an understanding of how we continue to provide services".*

Resources, tools or training needed for a strong business continuity plan

Services requested training, including follow-up training and accessing specialist tailored advice

*"Specialist advice from someone who has experience in a range of disasters to overlook the business continuity plan etc to ensure that it somewhat addresses the situation that would arise within the business and community."*

*"Training of both front-line staff as well as managers in the basics helps to instill confidence that is drawn on through an emergency. Ta basic understanding of the risk, contractual, statutory and legal obligations that are drawn on to make informed but rapid decisions is critical when responding to a crisis."*

They thought access to tools, templates, resources would be useful. These resources could be collaborative and shared amongst networks.

*"Generic communication tools designed to meet the needs of our client groups are time consuming and costly to develop and are often produced internally and at short notice by begging and borrowing from other organisations. A suite of tools that our organisation could draw on as required and include in our tenant handbooks/information packs and re-distributed annually would be invaluable and help to increase a culture of knowledge and awareness of both the staff and clients over time."*

*"Shared resources and partnerships with local councils around emergency plans"*

*"More of a focus of the Peak organisations in being able to support organisations to develop and implement BCP's might assist smaller organisations. Sharing of stories and approaches online would also assist."*

Services recognised that organising this training and providing adequate services would require more staffing and funding.

*"Funding prior to disasters to prepare not after"*

*"Our Housing Programs provided emergency packs - this limited what we could provide in the kits. I believe there should be funds made available to provide basic emergency kits for all Tenants in our program."*

A reliable communications system would be important during disasters.

*"Implementing a strong communication method that could be relied on if essentials services (phone /electricity) were interrupted."*

Collaborations and networks would assist services with their planning and service provision.

*"Our relationships and participation in the human service sector across different programs and funding has supported us to be exposed to more tools and resources than possibly many others."*

## Appendix A: Emergency Preparedness Survey of Health and Social Care Organisations

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey project is carried out by a research team at the Centre for Disability Research and Policy, The University of Sydney. It aims to understand the role and capacity of your organisation/practice, as well as the tools and training needed to improve your business resilience, ensure continuity of service provision and protect the wellbeing of your staff before, during and after an emergency event such as flood, bushfire, or pandemic etc. The information you provide will help us design an operational framework at the community level to ensure that “no one ever gets left behind due to a lack of planning and preparation”.

This survey should take about 20 minutes. If you can't finish it in one go, please click the “Save and Return Later” button at the end of the page. Once you click this button, you will be given a Return Code. You will need to enter this code when you come back to continue the survey.

This survey is entirely voluntary. No risk or discomfort is anticipated from participation in this survey. All your answers to the survey questions will be kept strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information will be shared publicly. You can skip any questions you don't want to answer, and you may discontinue participation at any time. By submitting this survey, you agree to the use of your answers for research purposes by the Centre for Disability Research and Policy.

---

For more information about this survey study, please follow the link to the Participant Information Statement. [Attachment: "211021 PIS - survey of health and social care organisations (final).pdf"]

### Part One. Organisation profile

Organisation/Practice Name

---

Postcode

---

State/Territory

- New South Wales     Queensland     South Australia     Tasmania     Victoria     Western Australia  
 Australian Capital Territory     Northern Territory

Your name

---

Your position at the organisation

---

Your work email address

---

---

Your work phone number

Organisation type

- Public  
 Private  
 Not-for-Profit

Business structure

- Sole trader
  - Company
  - Partnership
  - Trust
  - Incorporated association
  - Joint venture
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Organisational size

- Micro (< 5 employees) Small
  - (5-19 employees)
  - Medium (20-199 employees)
  - Large (200 or more employees)
- 

Primary services (Select all that apply)

- Medical services
  - Nursing services
  - Allied health
  - Aged care services Disability services
  - Children, youth and family services
  - Housing, homelessness services Other
  -
- 

Main client groups (Select all that apply)

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people People with disability
  - Culturally and linguistically diverse clients Families and informal carers
  - LGBTQI community
  - People with a mental health issue
  - People experiencing homelessness or in vulnerable housing circumstances People experiencing domestic and family violence
  - People with problematic drug and/or alcohol use
  - People on care and protection orders
  - Refugees and migrants Aged and elderly people Children and young people Other \_\_\_\_\_
  -
- 

What are the age categories of your clients? (Select all that apply)

- Children (< 15)
  - Youth (15 - 24)
  - Adult (25 - 64)
  - Elderly (65 >)
- 

Number of active clients at the time of this survey

\_\_\_\_\_

---

How do you typically provide services?

- Indirect service (e.g. administration, program development) Direct
- service delivery with clients, family or carers Combination of direct and
- indirect service delivery
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which of the following emergencies have impacted your organisation in the last 10 years?

(In this survey, "emergency" refers to an actual or imminent event that endangers or threatens life, property or the environment and requires immediate action; including natural disaster events like bushfire and flood, human-made events like a house fire, and infectious events like COVID-19.)

(Select all that apply)

- Premises fire
- Heatwave
- Severe storm or cyclone
- Bushfire
- Flood Pandemic
- Drought
- Storm tides/king tides/tsunami
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

Please briefly describe how the above emergency event(s) impacted your business and clients.

**Part Two. Enabling emergency preparedness of vulnerable clients (e.g. people with disability, people with mental health issues, people experiencing homelessness etc.)**

**The following provides a list of activities in relation to your organisation's emergency preparedness with clients and their families. For each activity, please select the response that currently applies to your practice.**

	We do all of this already	We do some of this already	We could do this in the future	We could not do this
Identify clients who are at risk in an emergency e.g., chronic physical and mental health condition affecting mobility, geographical location, barriers to access mainstream sources of information about impending danger (technology, communication, and language barrier).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make referrals to community services that can help them to enhance their emergency preparedness e.g., local emergency service personnel and council.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess clients to identify their level of emergency preparedness e.g., awareness of local hazard risks, access to emergency information and alerts, understanding their role and responsibility in an emergency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess clients to identify their personal strengths and support needs during emergencies to minimise risk e.g., communication, technology, transport, living situation, personal supports, assistance animals, social connectedness, health (medical management).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROVIDE emergency planning tools, information, or resources TO clients e.g., information on local bushfire or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

flood risk, council preparedness resources, community service resources such as the Australian Red Cross emergency preparedness plan.

EXPLORE preparedness information, tools, and resources WITH clients to encourage them to take steps to prepare e.g., learn together with your client on local disaster risks, recognise gaps in knowledge (yours and theirs), develop skills to stay informed during an emergency such as how to find information about bushfires and floods etc.

Develop an emergency preparedness plan for, or with clients that is tailored to their support needs in emergencies e.g., household, or personal emergency checklist and kit, emergency supplies, supported accommodation, communication strategy (including contact list).

Strengthen support networks of clients. Build social connectedness to the key people your client will most likely rely on, so that they have a group of willing people to call on to provide support in an emergency e.g., neighbours, friends, local neighbourhood centres, buddy system that pairs people with trusted local community members who can assist them in an emergency.

Provide formal support or education to clients to increase their active participation in taking steps to prepare for emergencies e.g., helping them with programs such as the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook; using planning guides such as the Australian Red Cross 'REDIPLAN'.

Practice emergency drills with clients to increase their familiarity, sense of preparedness and confidence in how to respond effectively in an emergency e.g., evacuation, access to medication and ongoing care.

**Choose the TOP THREE factors limiting your organisation from engaging in emergency preparedness planning with your clients**

	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3
It is not in our organisation's mission statement or strategic plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is no emergency preparedness policy in our organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff do not have adequate training in emergency preparedness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We don't have the adequate tools to engage in emergency preparedness planning with clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We do not have enough time to include emergency preparedness activities as part of our services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is insufficient funding for us to include emergency preparedness responsibilities as part of our services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clients are unwilling to engage in emergency preparedness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part Three. Organisational emergency preparedness**  
**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to organisational emergency preparedness?**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Our services are especially important before, during or after an emergency because many of our clients are beyond the reach of other services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We are able to deliver an adequate level of services to our clients in case of natural hazards, pandemics and other types of emergencies (e.g. house fires, power outages, telecommunication breakdowns).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff (and volunteers) are well prepared to cope with an emergency event at home and at work..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In times of emergency, our staff can make decisions quickly and confidently without senior managers available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our organisation is well networked with emergency service agencies, such as the police, fire brigade, State Emergency Services (SES) and/or ambulance services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our organisation helps local emergency services understand the needs of our clients during and immediately after an emergency event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our organisation is collaborating with other community organisations to prepare for disasters or emergencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our organisation is fully insured against business interruption and the loss of assets caused by a natural disaster emergency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many hours of business downtime did your organisation experience in FY2020/2021 due to a natural disaster such as flood, COVID-19 pandemic etc.?

Type of Disaster	Hours of Downtime

Please estimate the costs of the following activities in FY2020/2021.

Organisational emergency preparedness	\$
Business continuity and disaster recovery	\$
Assisting clients to prepare for a natural disaster	\$
Assisting clients affected by a natural disaster	\$

What are the challenges in preparing and implementing a strong business continuity plan that would improve continuity of supports to clients before, during and after a disaster? Please explain your answer.

If any, what are the resources, tools or training you would need to develop and implement a strong business continuity plan?

Would you like us to contact you in the future regarding opportunities to participate in our research on preparing clients for emergency or organisational emergency preparedness?

- No, thank you
- Yes, please contact me for research on preparing clients for emergency.  
Yes, please contact me for research on organisational emergency preparedness.
- Yes, please contact me for research on both topics.