

# Guide to Using the OEP

## Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to complete the **Organisational Emergency Preparedness Profile (OEP)**.

The OEP is designed to support organisations like yours to **pause, reflect, and describe how emergency preparedness works in everyday practice** — across services, roles, and conditions. Many organisations find that even a short, honest self-assessment helps surface strengths that are already in place, as well as areas where practice is uneven, emerging, or constrained by wider systems.

This guide is provided to support you as you complete the OEP. You can complete the OEP **with or without** this guide.

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## What this guide is for

This guide supports organisations to:

- understand what the OEP questions are asking, and
- select responses that reflect **current practice**.

It does **not** explain the research, recommend actions, or assess performance. Its role is simply to help you move through the OEP with confidence and consistency.

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## Who the OEP is for

The Organisational Emergency Preparedness Profile (OEP) is designed for:

- **community organisations**, and
- **disability organisations**

whose work involves:

- providing care, support, or services to people or communities, and/or
- maintaining essential supports **before, during, or after emergencies**.

This includes organisations that:

- provide direct services,
- coordinate or support others,
- advocate for inclusion and safety, or
- maintain critical community functions.

The OEP is **not designed for emergency services or lead emergency-management agencies**, which use different tools.

If parts of the OEP do not apply to your organisation, the survey will guide you past them automatically. This is expected and does not affect the value of your responses.

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## How the OEP is structured

The OEP includes six short sections that focus on different aspects of preparedness, including:

- organisational context and services,
- organisational emergency preparedness,
- support for personal emergency preparedness (where relevant),
- gaps and constraints that affect safety and wellbeing,
- accessible resources and capabilities, and
- experience and learning related to emergencies or disasters.

You may not see all sections — this depends on your organisation's role and services.

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## How to approach the OEP overall

When answering the OEP:

- base responses on **what usually happens now**, not what is planned or intended,
- expect variation across questions — this is normal,
- answer from an **organisational perspective**, not individual effort, and
- remember there are **no right or wrong answers**.

If you are unsure between two response options, select the one that feels **most accurate most of the time**.

The OEP is most useful when it reflects **where your organisation really is today**.

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## Section 1: Organisational Profile

Section 1 collects **basic information about your organisation and services** to help place preparedness responses in context.

This includes:

- general information about your organisation,
- the types of services you provide,
- who you support, and
- the operating context in which preparedness occurs.

The questions in this section are **descriptive only**.

They are not used to assess quality or readiness.

Answer based on information that best reflects your organisation **as a whole**, rather than a single program or site, unless the question specifies otherwise.

Accurate context helps ensure later preparedness questions are interpreted appropriately.

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## Understanding the Preparedness Scale (Sections 2 and 3)

Sections 2 (Organisational Emergency Preparedness) and 3 (Personal Emergency Preparedness Support) use the same **six-level preparedness scale**.

The scale describes **how consistently a practice occurs**, not how important it is.

### The scale at a glance

- **Out of Scope** – Not part of our organisation's role
- **Emerging** – Happens sometimes, not routine
- **Localised** – Regular in one area or team
- **Established** – Standard across the organisation
- **Optimising** – Reviewing and improving over time
- **Systemic Influence** – Helping others improve practice

## How to choose the right level

When selecting a level, ask:

- Would this still happen if key staff were away?
- Would this occur under pressure (e.g. overnight or during prolonged disruption)?
- Do different teams do this the same way?

Choose the level that best reflects **what actually happens most of the time**.

### Important distinctions

- **Out of Scope**  
Use this only when the activity genuinely sits outside your organisation's role — not because capacity is limited or the work has not started yet.
- **Emerging vs Localised**  
*Emerging* = happens occasionally or informally.  
*Localised* = happens reliably, but only in one part of the organisation.
- **Established does not mean perfect**  
It means the practice is standard, not that it works flawlessly.
- **Systemic Influence is optional**  
Not all organisations will reach or need this level. Lower ratings are common and appropriate.

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## Section 2: Organisational Emergency Preparedness

Section 2 focuses on **organisational systems and practices**, such as:

- service continuity,
- emergency planning,
- staff preparedness and support, and
- communication and collaboration.

Answer based on **organisational arrangements**, not individual initiative or goodwill.

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## Section 3: Personal Emergency Preparedness Support

Section 3 applies only if your organisation provides **direct support** to individuals or groups.

It focuses on how your organisation supports people to:

- understand emergencies,
- prepare in ways that work for them, and
- remain safe and supported during emergencies.

When answering:

- think about **typical support**, not exceptional cases,
- consider whether support is consistent or depends on particular staff, and
- remember that personal preparedness is about **the right support**, not independence.

## What we mean by “service recipient”

In the OEP, a **service recipient** is a person or group who receives services, supports, or assistance from your organisation.

This may include people your organisation supports:

- regularly or ongoing,
- occasionally or episodically, or
- during crisis or emergency situations.

A service recipient:

- does not need to be a long-term client, and
- does not need to receive daily support.

If your organisation does not provide direct support to individuals or groups, the OEP will guide you past the relevant sections.

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## Section 4: Understanding the Concern and Control Ratings

Section 4 asks you to rate **two different things** for each factor.

### Level of concern

This reflects how much the issue affects safety and wellbeing during emergencies.

When rating concern, think about:

- how often the issue creates difficulty,
- how much risk it poses for the people you support, and

- whether it complicates safe response or recovery.

High concern is common and does **not** indicate poor preparedness.

## Level of organisational control

This reflects how much your organisation can realistically influence the issue on its own.

When rating control, think about:

- what sits within your organisation's authority or resources,
- what depends on other systems or decision-makers, and
- what would still be challenging even if you were well prepared.

Low control does **not** indicate lack of effort.

## Important reminder

It is common — and expected — for some issues to feel:

- high concern and low control, or
- lower concern but higher control.

This section describes **real operating conditions**, not performance.

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## Section 5: Accessible Resources

This section asks about the **tangible and intangible resources** your organisation has or can access that may support inclusion and safety during emergencies.

This includes physical assets (such as facilities, equipment, or transport) as well as knowledge, skills, relationships, or capabilities.

Answer based on what your organisation **currently has access to**, recognising that resources may be limited or conditional.

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## Section 6: Emergency Management Experience and Learning

This section invites brief reflection on your organisation's experience supporting communities **before, during, or after emergencies or disasters**, where relevant.

Experience can take many forms, and it is equally appropriate to indicate **limited or no experience**.

The final questions invite optional sharing of insights or advice based on experience or preparedness activities.

### After completing the OEP

The Organisational Emergency Preparedness Profile (OEP) is designed to support **reflection and understanding**, not assessment or compliance.

If you choose to complete the OEP, you will be able to download a copy of your responses for your organisation's own use. The OEP does not generate scores or rankings.

Many organisations find the OEP useful as a way to:

- notice strengths that are already in place,
- recognise where practice is emerging or uneven, and
- reflect on preparedness across different roles, programs, or conditions.

How you use the information from the OEP is entirely your choice.

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### Optional ways organisations use the OEP

Some organisations choose to:

- discuss the OEP internally with staff or leadership,
- use it as a starting point for preparedness conversations,
- revisit the OEP over time to notice change, or
- share parts of their profile with trusted partners to support joint reflection.

There is **no expectation** that OEP responses are shared externally.

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## Optional learning and reference resources

For organisations interested in exploring learning, examples, or sector-level insights related to disability-inclusive emergency preparedness, the following resources may be helpful. These are **optional** and intended to support organisations at different points in their preparedness journey.

- **[National Emergency Management Synthesis Report](#)**  
A synthesis of learning across emergency management that highlights the role of community and disability organisations in inclusive preparedness, response, and recovery.
- **[Webinar series on Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction](#)**  
Includes sessions that explore practical examples of service continuity and all-hazards preparedness planning.
- **[Resilient Community Organisations Toolkit \(ACOSS\)](#)**  
A practical toolkit offering steps and resources to support organisational preparedness reflection and planning.
- **[Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness \(P-CEP\) resources](#)**  
Tools and learning resources to support person-centred approaches to emergency preparedness, where relevant to your organisation's role and scope.

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## A final note

Preparedness is not a fixed state. It changes as services evolve, staff and volunteers change, communities shift, and risks emerge.

The OEP is intended to support **honest reflection in real operating conditions**. An OEP that reflects current practice is far more useful than one that reflects aspiration.

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## Need help completing the OEP?

If you have questions while completing the OEP, or would like clarification about how to interpret a question or rating scale, you can contact the project team for support:

**Email:**

 [Collaborating4Inclusion@sydney.edu.au](mailto:Collaborating4Inclusion@sydney.edu.au)

Support is available to assist with understanding the OEP. Contacting the team does **not** commit your organisation to any further participation or follow-up.