

POLICY NUMBER

NDIS SER DEL 16

INTENT

This policy is to ensure that emergency and disaster management, including planning, preparation and recovery for all Real Living Options Association Inc. Service Users, employees, activities and property is in place and updated annually.

Real Living Options Association Inc. recognises that preparedness for emergencies and/or disasters is a priority and a requirement to ensure the safety of all Participants and employees.

Real Living Options Association Inc. will endeavour to provide adequate services to our Participants before, during, and after emergencies and/or disasters.

DEFINITION

Disaster: A disaster is any phenomenon, natural or human-made, that has the potential to cause extensive destruction of life and property.e.g. cyclone, tsunami, landslide, flooding, earthquake or pandemic

Emergency: An emergency is a grave risk to health, life or the environment.

Critical Supports: People who are totally dependent on support, extremely ill or at risk of death if appropriate support is not provided

POLICY STATEMENTS

- The Service is committed to making appropriate arrangements for all Participants and employees of Real Living Options Association Inc. as far as possible in the event of an emergency and/or disaster which could affect the Cairns area.
- The Service places the safety and care of its Participants at the forefront of operational procedures. During an emergency and/or disaster all employees will adhere to this policy framework and work within any additional guidelines and instructions provided by state and federal government authorities to our Service.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. does not provide 24-hour support to Participants and therefore cannot guarantee the availability of 24-hour support in the event of an emergency or disaster. However, it will endeavor to provide additional support required where possible.
- Arrangements for each Participant will be individualised. Participants and/or their Representative Nominee will be consulted to ensure the Service knows how to best support them in the event of an emergency or disaster, incorporating all aspects - before, during and after, that may include:
 - Making changes to the Participants support.
 - Adapting, and rapidly responding to changes to Participant supports and other interruptions.
 - Communicating changes to Participant supports to workers, Participants and their support networks.

Date Adopted:	19.02.2019	Next Review Date	2027	Version:	07	CIR	01.05.24
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- Informing Participants and their support network in the manner set out in their plan.
 - Exit strategies (e.g. Disaster)
 - Continuity of supports, including potential staff replacements and options.
 - Supports required that can be provided during emergency or disaster.
 - Actions to be taken by support staff.
 - Actions to be taken by management.
- Where applicable, emergency and disaster preparedness and planning measures are in place to enable continuation of critical supports before, during and after an emergency and/or disaster.
 - Any support arrangements in the event of a natural emergency and/or disaster must be negotiated with the Service. The Service cannot guarantee in all circumstances that it will be able to provide support.
 - Alternative arrangements may be provided where the Service is unable to provide care and support for Participants who require critical support.

PROCEDURES

- Real Living Options Association Inc. places the safety and care of its Participants at the forefront of operational procedures. During a disaster, the Service will adhere to this policy framework and work within any additional guidelines and instructions provided by state and federal government authorities.
- During any disaster, the Support Team will undertake the following actions as far as reasonably practicable:
 - Follow all relevant government guidelines and instructions.
 - Review continuity of support plans and ensure as far as reasonably practicable each Participant's safety, health, and well-being – before, during and after an emergency or disaster.
 - Communicate Real Living Options Association Inc.'s response to staff, Participants, Representatives/Nominees and other relevant parties.
 - Prepare Participants and/or their Representative/Nominee (before any possible actions are taken) by informing them how the current situation may affect their services.
 - Brief all employees on any possible or real action steps required by them.
 - Attempt to keep key workers allocated to the same Participants.
 - Work towards maintaining continuity of support for each Participant.
- A Participant may refuse to have an Emergency Preparation Plan. However, during the Participant onboarding process the Support team will:
- Endeavour to explain that a plan is a requirement under the NDIS Standards and that the focus of the plan is about the Participant's safety and how the Service can provide support to the Participant in an emergency or disaster situation.

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Preparing for Disasters and Emergencies

- Real living Options Association Inc. will consult with Participants, support networks, and employees to periodically review emergency and disaster management plans, so their management is relevant to the current situation.
- Some disasters and emergencies Real Living Options Association Inc. may face include:
 - Flood
 - Fire
 - Heatwave
 - Storms Or Cyclones
 - Pandemic.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. will as far as practicably reasonable/possible:
 - Consult with Participants to create an emergency plan incorporating all aspects - before, during and after any emergency and disaster.
 - Stay informed regarding all State/Territory and Federal government directives and act upon these directives appropriately.
 - Advise other Services who work with Real Living Options Association Inc. of its disaster procedures and processes.
 - Communicate with Participants and relevant networks in a manner as determined in their support plan.
 - Identify personnel who are critical in the delivery of essential frontline services.
 - Identify Real Living Options Association Inc. Participants and their stakeholders whose services may be impacted by the situation.
 - Train employees in the implementation of any relevant strategies.
 - Implement this policy in conjunction with the Service's risk management policy and procedure, information management policy and procedure and relevant Staff policies and procedures.
 - Ensure emergency preparation plans explain and guide how the Service will respond to and oversee the response to an emergency or disaster.
 - Develop emergency preparation plans through consultation with Participants and their support networks that may include:
 - Making changes to Participant supports
 - Adapting, and rapidly responding to changes to Participant supports and other interruptions.
 - Communicating changes to Participant supports to workers, Participants and their support networks.
 - Informing Participants and/or their support networks in the manner set out in their plan.
 - Continuity of supports, including potential staff replacements and options (e.g. Disaster or emergency).

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- Supports during an emergency or disaster.
- Actions to be taken by staff.
- Actions to be taken by management.
- Implement Emergency Preparation Plans as per the identified consultation if required.
- Review Emergency Preparation Plans in consultation with Participants and their relevant support networks during the annual review of the support plan to enable adjustments due to the changing nature of any disaster or emergency.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. understands that it is more likely that Participants will be adversely impacted by an emergency or disaster than others in the community.
- The Service acknowledges that it may not be able to provide the same service to its Participants during or immediately after an emergency or disaster. All Participants will be supported by Real Living Options Association Inc. to prepare for changes due to a disaster or an emergency.
- Real Living Options Association Inc will as far as practicably reasonable/possible:
 - Inform Participants of the current situation and how the provision of their services and workers may be impacted.
 - Consult with Participants and support networks on the Services plan's and any adjustments or changes in circumstances, ensuring as far as practicable that they are informed of what will occur before, during and after any disaster or emergency.
 - Continue to provide Participants with the same key workers if they are available.
 - Inform the Participant of any service changes and outline the reason/s for these changes.
 - Communicate with Participants to ensure as far as possible that their needs, preferences and goals are met.
 - Seek support within the local care community if our staff are unavailable, and ensure that any new workers are appropriately experienced, trained, and hold necessary checks.

Staff Preparedness

- Real Living Options Association Inc. acknowledges that its employees are its greatest asset and wants to ensure that they and their loved ones remain safe during an emergency or disaster.
- The Service will help prepare its employees for an emergency or disaster by implementing the following:
 - Inform employees of the situation and what is required by them via email, online messaging, meetings or similar.
 - Train workers in all required measures required e.g. Infection control, social distancing and evacuation.
 - Seek feedback from Participants regarding their services to adjust information distribution, if necessary.
 - Seek feedback from employees about actions undertaken, issues or concerns, and what worked well.

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- Inform employees of relevant Participant requirements as outlined in their support plan.
- Inform employees of any plans or changes to the operation of the office team and/or office hours and accessibility.

DELEGATIONS

Management Committee

- Ensure as far as practicable the Service has adequate planning for an emergency and/or disaster.

General Manager

- Ensure that a plan exists for the office premises and vehicle.
- Ensure as far as practicable that all employees have information about the response the Service will make in the event of a threatened or actual emergency and/or disaster.
- Stay informed regarding all local, state/territory and federal government directives and act upon these directives appropriately.
- Undertake a response in the aftermath of an emergency and/or disaster if there is damage to property or distressful emotional effect on Participants or employees.

Support Team

- Ensure as far as practicable that all Staff have information about the response the Service will make in the event of a threatened or actual emergency and/or disaster.
- Identify personnel who are critical in the delivery of essential frontline services.
- Delegate appropriate support staff to consult with participants to create an Emergency Preparation plan incorporating all aspects - before, during and after any emergency and/or disaster.
- Consult with Participants and support networks on the plan's development and any adjustments or changes in circumstances.
- Identify Participants whose services may be impacted by the situation.
- Inform Participants of the current situation and how the provision of their services and support workers may be impacted.
- Communicate with participants to ensure that their needs, preferences and goals are met.
- Undertake a response in the aftermath of an emergency and/or disaster if there is damage to property or distressful emotional effect on Participants or employees.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Emergency and Disaster Management Flowchart
Cairns Regional Council Emergency RediPlan
Preparing for Cyclones Guide
Workplace Health and Safety Policies and Practices
Person Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook

REFERENCES

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Amendment (2021 Measures No. 1) Rules 2021

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AMENDMENTS/REVIEWS

Amended 09.08.12, Amended 05.05.16, Amended 30.05.19, Amended 25.06.20, Amended 29.09.22, Amended 06.06.24

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