

POLICY TITLE:	BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY		
VERSION:	001	DATE EFFECTIVE:	06/03/2024
AUTHORISED BY:	Chief Executive Officer	DATE REVIEWED:	06/03/2024

SUMMARY

The organisation prioritises keeping employees and participants safe and ensuring uninterrupted services during disruptions.

PURPOSE

To define a structured approach for ARC Disability Services Inc. to manage business disruptions effectively, ensuring the continuity of crucial operations and prioritising the safety and well-being of participants and staff.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all aspects of ARC, including all locations, staff, participants, and operations. It focuses on, risk management, proactive measures, and the implementation of controls to prevent and mitigate the impact of business disruptions. Specifically, this policy addresses the following areas to ensure the continuity of our operations:

- **Unplanned Events:** Sudden incidents that could lead to harm or service disruption.
- **Operational Disruptions:** Events such as IT failures or cyber-attacks impacting operations.
- **Physical/Environmental Damage:** Damage to facilities affecting service provision.
- **Financial/Reputational Risks:** Issues threatening ARC's financial health or public image.
- **Government-Declared Disasters:** Effects of official disaster declarations on operations.
- **Loss of Key Personnel:** The impact from losing critical leaders or staff on operations.
- **NDIS Policy/Compliance Changes:** Regulatory or policy changes affecting service delivery.
- **Technology/Data Integrity:** Protection against IT system disruptions or security breaches.
- **Supply Chain/Service Delivery:** Ensuring continuity of essential supplies and services for participants.

DEFINITIONS

- **Business Continuity (BC):** The capability of the organisation to continue delivery of services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive incident.
- **Business Continuity Management (BCM):** A holistic management process that identifies potential impacts threatening an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response.
- **Business Continuity Plan (BCP):** A documented collection of procedures and information that is developed, compiled, and maintained in readiness for use in an incident to enable an organisation to continue to deliver its critical products and services at an acceptable predefined level.
- **Critical Functions:** Services or activities that must continue to be delivered to ensure the safety, security, and operational integrity of the organisation.
- **Disaster:** Significant natural or man-made events that severely disrupt operations.
- **Incident Management:** The process by which an organisation manages the wider implications of a business disruption that affects its ability to operate normally.

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IMPLEMENTATION

To safeguard the continuity of our operations and services during disruptions, our approach encompasses a range of strategic measures. Each aspect of our implementation strategy is designed to build resilience and ensure the safety and support of our participants and staff.

INTEGRATION WITH EMERGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

By seamlessly integrating business continuity with emergency and disaster management, our approach ensures that each aspect serves distinct yet complementary roles. Business continuity focuses on outlining procedures for maintaining and swiftly restoring business operations, thereby safeguarding ARC's long-term stability and service delivery.

Conversely, emergency and disaster management is dedicated to immediate response measures aimed at protecting lives and preventing damage during emergencies. This coordinated effort enables a comprehensive response mechanism, covering all phases of crisis management from initial reaction to full operational recovery.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Identifying, evaluating, and mitigating risks is central to protecting our operations against potential disruptions. Our risk management approach involves a combination of proactive measures and strategic planning.

Proactive Measures: We conduct regular risk assessments and business impact analyses to identify vulnerabilities and potential threats. These assessments help us understand the likelihood and potential impact of various risks on our critical functions and services. By anticipating potential disruptions, we can take proactive steps to mitigate their impact and ensure the continuity of our operations.

Strategic Planning: Based on the insights gained from risk assessments, we develop tailored strategies to minimise risks to our critical functions. These strategies may include implementing preventive measures, establishing contingency plans, and investing in resilience-building initiatives. By addressing risks proactively, we enhance our ability to continue delivering essential services even under adverse conditions.

Adaptation and Response: Our risk management approach is dynamic, allowing us to adapt and respond to changing circumstances. We continuously monitor emerging risks and adjust our strategies accordingly. This proactive stance enables us to stay resilient in the face of evolving threats and challenges.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Effective communication is important in managing disruptions smoothly. Our comprehensive communication plan is designed to ensure timely and accurate distribution of information to all stakeholders, including staff, participants, and external partners, during emergencies.

Predefined Communication Channels: ARC has established predefined communication channels to facilitate rapid communication during emergencies. These channels include email, phone calls, text messages, and internal messaging systems. These predefined methods of communication enable us to quickly reach out to stakeholders and provide updates on the situation without delay.

Protocols for Message Prioritisation: Our communication plan includes clear protocols for prioritising messages to ensure that critical information is conveyed promptly. During emergencies, messages are prioritised based on their urgency and relevance to the situation. This ensures that stakeholders receive the most important information first, allowing them to take appropriate actions in response to the emergency.

Regular Communication Updates: We understand the importance of keeping stakeholders informed throughout the duration of an emergency. Therefore, our communication plan includes provisions for regular updates to ensure that stakeholders are kept abreast of any developments or changes to the situation. This ongoing communication helps maintain transparency and trust among stakeholders, fostering a sense of confidence in our response efforts.

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Coordination with External Partners: In addition to internal communication protocols, our plan also outlines procedures for coordinating with external partners, such as emergency services, government agencies, and community organisations. Clear lines of communication are established with external partners to ensure effective collaboration and coordination of response efforts.

Training and Drills: To ensure the effectiveness of our communication plan, we conduct regular training sessions and drills to familiarise stakeholders with communication protocols and procedures. These training activities help ensure that everyone knows their roles and responsibilities in communicating during emergencies, enhancing our overall preparedness and response capabilities.

TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SECURITY

ARC's technology infrastructure and data security are integral components of our continuity strategy. We prioritise investment in robust IT systems and stringent data protection measures to safeguard against potential disruptions and cyber threats.

Robust IT Systems: We maintain robust IT systems that are designed to support our business operations efficiently and effectively. These systems are regularly updated and monitored to ensure optimal performance and reliability. By investing in modern technology infrastructure, we minimise the risk of system failures and disruptions that could impact our operations.

Stringent Data Protection Measures: Data security is a top priority for ARC, and we implement stringent measures to protect sensitive information from unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration, and destruction. These measures include encryption, access controls, and regular security audits to identify and address vulnerabilities proactively.

Regular Backups: We understand the importance of data backup in ensuring business continuity, and we have implemented regular backup procedures to safeguard against data loss. Our backup systems are automated and encrypted to ensure the integrity and availability of critical information in the event of a disruption.

Minimising Downtime: Our technology and data security measures are aimed at minimising downtime and ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of services to our stakeholders. By investing in robust IT systems, implementing stringent data protection measures, and maintaining comprehensive disaster recovery plans, we can quickly recover from disruptions and safeguard our operations against cyber threats.

Recovery Strategy

Our recovery strategy is a crucial component of our business continuity plan, ensuring that we can swiftly and effectively restore critical operations to pre-disruption levels. It is designed to minimise downtime and mitigate the impact of disruptions on our organisation and stakeholders.

Clear Recovery Objectives and Timeframes: We establish clear recovery objectives and timeframes to guide our recovery efforts. These objectives are aligned with our business priorities and critical functions, ensuring that we focus our resources on restoring the most essential operations first. Timeframes are set to ensure a rapid and efficient recovery process, minimising the duration of disruption to our services.

Establishing a Roadmap: Our recovery strategy includes the development of a detailed roadmap for returning to normal operations. This roadmap outlines the steps and actions required to restore each critical function, including reallocating resources, implementing alternative processes, and leveraging technology solutions. By following this roadmap, we can systematically address the impact of the disruption and ensure the continuity of essential services.

Resource Reallocation: During a disruption, we may need to reallocate resources to prioritise the recovery of critical operations. This may involve reallocating staff, equipment, or financial resources to ensure that essential functions are restored as quickly as possible. By strategically reallocating resources, we can maximise our recovery efforts and minimise the impact of the disruption on our organisation and stakeholders.

Leveraging Technology Solutions: Technology plays a critical role in our recovery strategy, enabling us to quickly restore technological functions and access to critical information. We leverage technology solutions such as cloud-based systems, remote access tools, and data recovery services to facilitate the rapid recovery of our

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operations. By leveraging these solutions, we can minimise downtime and ensure the continuity of essential services for our stakeholders.

Training and Awareness

Ensuring that our staff is equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively to disruptions is vital to our business continuity efforts. We prioritise regular training sessions and drills to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.

Regular Training Sessions: We conduct regular training sessions to familiarise staff with our business continuity plans, procedures, and protocols. These sessions provide an opportunity for staff to learn about potential risks, response strategies, and their individual roles in ensuring the continuity of our operations.

Drills and Exercises: In addition to training sessions, we conduct drills and exercises to simulate various disruption scenarios and test our response capabilities. These drills allow staff to practice implementing our business continuity plans in a controlled environment, helping to identify areas for improvement and enhancing overall preparedness.

Fostering a Culture of Preparedness: Our ongoing education efforts foster a culture of preparedness and resilience within ARC. By ensuring that staff are knowledgeable and confident in their ability to respond to disruptions, we empower them to act decisively and effectively in any situation, minimising the impact on our operations and stakeholders.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continuously improving our business continuity plan is fundamental to our approach. We prioritise regular reviews and updates to adapt to new challenges, incorporate feedback, and apply lessons learned from past incidents. This iterative process ensures that our strategies remain effective and relevant, safeguarding our operations against future disruptions.

Regular Reviews: We conduct regular reviews of our business continuity plan to assess its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. These reviews allow us to stay proactive in addressing emerging risks and evolving threats, ensuring that our plan remains robust and resilient.

Incorporating Feedback: We actively gather feedback from stakeholders, including staff, participants, and external partners, to gain insights into the effectiveness of our business continuity plan. This feedback helps us identify strengths and weaknesses in our strategies and prioritise areas for improvement.

Applying Lessons Learned: We analyse past incidents and near-misses to identify lessons learned and best practices. This analysis informs our continuous improvement efforts, allowing us to proactively address vulnerabilities and strengthen our resilience against similar disruptions in the future.

Iterative Process: Continuous improvement is an iterative process that involves ongoing refinement and enhancement of our business continuity plan. We remain vigilant in monitoring changes in our operating environment and industry trends, adapting our strategies accordingly to ensure their continued effectiveness.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Business Continuity Plan
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Emergency and Disaster Management Policy
- Emergency and Disaster Management Plan
- Human Resource Management Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Framework

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REFERENCES

- Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (QLD)
- Disability Services Act 2006 (QLD)
- NDIS Act 2013 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (QLD)

AUTHORISATION

This Policy is approved and issued by:



BENJAMIN KEAST

Chief Executive Officer

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