# Emergency and or Disaster Plan

**Implemented:** 15/02/2022

**Revision History:**

| Version Number | Changes made | Person Responsible | Date Updated |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Version 1.0* | *Designed and implemented February 2022* | *Emma O'Neill* | *15/02/2022* |
| | | | |
| | | | |

**Leading organisational preparedness for disasters and emergencies**

**Introduction**

Every year communities across Australia are subjected to the damaging impacts of disasters and emergencies. The effects of these events on people experiencing disadvantage and the organisations who work with them serve as a reminder of our need to continuously strengthen our resilience.

Building the preparedness of Towards the Horizon for disasters and emergencies is a priority because we are committed to delivering tailored individual support services to our participants within our community.

We recognise that if our organisation is put under strain or ceases operation because of an emergency our participants will be impacted. They will lose important services just at the time when they themselves may be suffering acute difficulty because of the emergency.

Though disasters and emergencies may be infrequent in the Darwin, services are especially important before, during and after an emergency because many of our participants are beyond the reach of other services; we provide an essential lifeline of support.

We therefore recognise that preparedness for disasters and emergencies is a priority for us and our participants.

**Objectives and Scope**

The goals of our organisational resilience plan are:

1. We can provide an adequate level of service to our participants before, during and after an emergency
2. Our participants are supported to build their resilience by preparing for emergencies
3. Our staff and volunteers are well prepared to cope with an emergency
4. Through strengthening our organisation's disaster and emergency resilience, we strengthen the resilience of our whole community
5. Our organisation is well positioned to work with our community to 'build back better' after a disaster or emergency

**Endorsed by the Director:**
**Name: Emma O'Neill**
**Signature:**
**Date:** 15/02/2022

**Context**

For many of our participants we the team at Towards the Horizon is their primary source of interaction and access to community.

Each and every team member at Towards the Horizon plays a significant role in the health and wellbeing of our participants.

Towards the Horizon is committed to providing individual tailored supports to meet their ever-changing needs of our participants.

Being prepared to assist and support them in the event of an emergency or disaster will ensure continuity of our services.

In the event of an emergency or disaster that would negatively impact on our participants if Towards the Horizon was not prepared and equipped with a comprehensive management plan this would add unnecessary trauma and negative outcomes for them.

Towards the Horizon completes a full risk safety assessment for each client prior to commencing services and or supports.

Team members i.e. behaviour support practitioners are responsible to report any identified risk or changes to a participants environment that increase the risk of emergency or disaster.


**Disaster Resilience Team**

| Name | Position | Resilience Role | Responsibilities | Contact Details |
|------|----------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Emma O'Neill | Director | Consultation and management - Implementation of assistance and support. | *Consult with Participants and Services Manager and Towards the Horizon WH&S committee members to ensure that all identified risk is managed, and risk reduced. To ensure that all resources required in the event of a disaster are made available.* <br> Maintain working relationship with emergency services providers. <br> Provide expert leadership and guidance to the Towards the Horizon Management team, behaviour support practitioner team and participants. | emma.oneill@towardsthehorizon.com.au <br> *mobile: 0481 211 600* |

| Person left in charge will be delegated by Director | Behaviour Support Practitioner | Consultation with DSW teams, WH&S committee and Implementation assistance and support. | Consult with Director, behaviour support practitioners and Towards the Horizon WH&S committee members to ensure that all identified risk is managed, and risk reduced. To request resources required in the event of a disaster. Ensure that resources are made available to individual participants as per needs. Maintain working relationship with emergency services providers.<br><br>Keep behaviour support practitioners up to date with any changes to any and all known risk to Surround Support participants in the event of an impending disaster.<br><br>Provide expert leadership and guidance to the Towards the Horizon middle Management team, and participants. |  |

# Building Networks

Towards the Horizon understands that we have an important contribution to make in the community and our participants to improve our own and the community's disaster resilience and that effective relationships with emergency services and other community service organisations in our area will help us before, during and after an emergency.  They are a vital source of information and expertise that can be used to inform our resilience activities.  It is also through collaboration and coordination that we are able to deliver quality services and support to our community.

Local government plays an important role and will have emergency management plans and personnel with designated roles during an emergency. They work closely with emergency service organisations. Local government is the best starting point for finding out about local emergency management arrangements and the terminology used to describe them in our state or territory and local government area) Local emergency management arrangements


**Emergency service organisations**
Emergency service organisations such as the police, fire brigade, State Emergency Services (SES), the Country Fire Authority and ambulance services have clearly defined responsibilities and different agencies

will take the lead in an emergency depending on the type of hazard being addressed. Local councils and some non-government organisations, including the Australian Red Cross and the Salvation Army, also have a formal role in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

We are networked with emergency service organisations, local government and non-government organisations in our local area.

| Organisation | Key Contact | Date of last meeting | Meeting Description and Frequency | Person Responsible |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Fire Brigade* | *000 or 8995 5222* | Dispatch or Duty officer | *To be discussed and times set* | *Emma O'Neill- Director, or Towards the Horizon Team* |
| *Police* | 000 or 131 444 | Dispatch or Duty officer | *To be discussed and times set* | *Emma O'Neill- Director, or Towards the Horizon Team* |
| *SES* | Life threatening emergency 000 Flood or storm 132500 | Dispatch or Duty Officer | To be discussed and times set for meeting | *Emma O'Neill- Director, or Towards the Horizon Team* |
| *Local Council* | 08 8930 0300 After hours: 08 89892843 | Duty officer | To be discussed and time set for meeting | *Emma O'Neill- Director, Or Towards the Horizon Team* |

## Community service organisations

A small number of key community organisations (e.g. Red Cross) have a formal role in emergency management planning and processes, however many do not.

Community organisations can play a vital role in helping their communities prepare and recover from emergencies at the national state and local levels.

We are networked with community organisations in our local area to ensure we are well-prepared to deliver services to our participants and the community during and after a disaster or emergency.

| Organisation | Key Contact | Date of last | Meeting | Person |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | meeting | Description and Frequency | Responsible |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Salvation Army* | *Local person responsible to be identified* | *To be arranged on or 15th of December 2022* | *To be set on or before the 15th of December 2022* | *Emma O'Neill-Director* |
| Red Cross | Local person responsible to be identified | *To be arranged on or 15th of December 2022* | *To be set on or before the 15th of December 2022* | *Emma O'Neill-Director* |

## Identifying our vulnerable participants

People who are experiencing poverty and disadvantage will be worst affected by a disaster.

There are different risks for people within different situations. For example, in relation to evacuations:

- Some people may need support to evacuate but at the same time are well connected family, friends or neighbours and have the necessary support available within their networks.
- Other people may need support to evacuate but at the same time are more isolated and will need support from services.

Towards the Horizon  is well connected with people who are experiencing disadvantage for a variety of reasons it is important to identify participants who may need supports from services in disaster or emergency.

## Know your Risks

All participants of Towards the Horizon will have an initial risk assessment performed by the WH&S Coordinator and or director and or their chosen representative prior to commencement of supports. Identified risks and strategies to minimise or reduce risks will be documented and actioned within the autonomy of the client or Towards the Horizon

Risk assessments to be reviewed and updated regularly for each client of Towards the Horizon.

All Towards the Horizon team members are responsible to report any and all changes to the client's environment - homes or selves that may increase their vulnerability in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Towards the Horizon will work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all preventative measures are in place and participants are aware of their individual safety plan in the event of emergency and or disaster.

Being emergency disaster resilient means knowing and understanding the risks that Towards the Horizon faces.

Disasters and emergencies that have occurred in our community/area in the past include- heat wave- fire-flood-hail -heavy snow fall- pandemic.

The impact of previous disasters and emergencies that Towards the Horizon has identified on the participants we serve, and the local community include homelessness-impact on financial stability-damage to homes -impact on individual wellbeing - mental health wellness and isolation.

Knowing our risks for Towards the Horizon participants:

The disasters and emergencies that have affected our organisations in the past include:

| # | Hazard | Date | What harm was caused and why? |
|---|--------|------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Covid 19 Pandemic | Ongoing | Restricted access to external service providers for some participants- increased mental health unwellness -increased isolation. |
| 2 | Heavy rain potential flooding | Dec 21- Feb22 | Restricted access to external service providers for some participants- increased mental health unwellness -increased isolation- potential loss of home for a period of time |

The disasters and emergencies that may affect our organisation in the future (including as a result of climate change) include:

| # | Hazard | What harm might be caused? |
|---|--------|---------------------------|
| 1 | *Heavy rain resulting in flooding* | Participants becoming homeless or needing to relocate for a period of time. Restricted access to external service providers for some participants- Increased travel risk for team members- increased mental health unwellness. Risk of falls increased |

| 2 | Bush Fires | Restricted access to external service providers for some participants- Increased travel risk for team members- increased mental health unwellness. - risk of death or injury |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Pandemic | Restricted access to external service providers for some participants- Increased contamination risk for team members- increased mental health unwellness. Increased isolation for participants |

## Manage your risks

Being disaster resilient means effectively managing your risks.

There are very practical ways that organisations manage risks. While each organisation and the risks to be managed may be different it is useful to have a plan for disasters and emergencies, which includes:

 Core elements of a Disaster Plan, including:

- Prevention and adaption strategies
- Risk Register
- Business Continuity Plan
- Insurance
- Preparing for recovery
- Disaster and emergency policies and procedures
- Prevention and adaption strategies

## Identified future risks

| # | Hazard | Harm | Strategy to reduce harm |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Excessive rain/ Cyclone | Flooding and damage to homes and entry and exit points- risk of falls increased | Ensure that entry and exit points are monitored to facilitate speedy repairs if needed<br>Home surrounds and gutters are kept debris free to ensure smooth running for excess water<br>*Follow the Cyclone Plan* |
| 2 | Bush Fires | Damage to homes - loss of home- closure of entry and exit points | Support participants to have an individual fire safety plan- appropriate fire safety equipment if identified that they may be at risk during a bush fire. Support participants to minimise rubbish and fire accelerants around and in the home |
| 3 | Pandemic | Risk of death to the | Educate and promote universal standard infection control |

| | | client-cross contamination and infection | measures for both participants and team members |
|---|---|---|---|

## Risk register

Towards the Horizon has comprehensive **Risk Register** that is used to record:

a) All of our organisation's identified risks
b) The likelihood and consequences of a risk occurring,
c) The actions you are undertaking to reduce those risks and
d) Who is responsible for managing them?

This allows for best practice of identifying potential risks in advance, analysing them and taking precautionary steps to reduce/minimise the risk or potential impacts.

### Business Continuity Plan

Business continuity planning refers to the activities Towards the Horizon undertakes to prepare to manage disruptions.

### 1) Critical Services

In case of an emergency these are our pre-identified service priorities. We have developed these priorities based on our organisational strategic goals, the needs of our participants and with consideration of the services provided by other local organisations.

| Priority | Service Area | Reason for being a critical service | Service requirements | Person Responsible |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | DSW support for all Supported Independent Living Homes. Provision of essential services and supports to all participants in need | This is our organisation's core business; this is the type of service our participants need most because of vulnerability and for some their limited access to other support services | Team members to provide the services. Up to date and current information for participants. Comprehensive continuity plan that details action to be taken in the event of a disaster | Emma O'Neill-Director Team members Towards the Horizon PTY LTD |

## Temporary Accommodation

In the event of our Towards the Horizon premises being unavailable we have identified community options such as other Towards the Horizon sites, motels and other service accommodation that can be quickly accessed during and after an emergency.

## Data Security and Back-up

Our data is essential to our organisation's ability to operate effectively which is why we have data security, back-up, and recovery plan.  We test this regularly to ensure that the data can be recovered.

## Insurance

Insurance is an important risk management tool that is sometimes referred to as 'transferring' risk. This is because it doesn't reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring, rather, it transfers the cost of the consequence of the risk to someone else. Towards the Horizon has comprehensive insurance for our sites and team members.

## Disaster and emergency policies and procedures

Towards the Horizon has an extensive suite of policy and procedure that provide the framework for managing emergencies and disasters.

# Preparing others

Being disaster resilient means being prepared to help keep people safe and get them back on their feet after a disaster or emergency.

Towards the Horizon is well placed to support participants and team members to become more prepared. There are simple actions we can take now to help people for when they may be at their most vulnerable, during an emergency; a time when you may not be able to support them in the way you usually would.

- Have a plan and relevant strategies in place for preparing participants
- Have plans and strategies in place for preparing staff and volunteers

### Participant preparedness

Towards the Horizon acknowledges that our participants may be more adversely impacted by an emergency than other people in our community.  We are also aware that our organisation may not be able to provide the same level of services to our participants during and immediately after an emergency. For these reasons it is important that we help our participants to prepare for emergencies through discussing

their emergency plan and ensuring that they are confident to implement the plan in case of emergency or disaster.

Towards the Horizon is committed to the best practise in emergency and disaster response for or participants and team members. Best practise that provides the opportunity for building resilience in a safe and structured way.