

Emergency and Disaster Management Policy

1.0 Types of emergencies and disasters

YBSS recognises that emergencies and disasters may arise from a wide range of causes and may affect individual participants, the organisation, or the broader community. For the purposes of this policy, emergencies and disasters include but are not limited to:

Natural Disasters

- Bushfires
- Severe storms, cyclones, and high wind events
- Flooding and flash flooding
- Earthquakes
- Extreme heat events
- Other location-specific natural hazards

Human-Caused Emergencies

- Building fires
- Structural failures or hazardous building conditions
- Traffic and transport accidents
- Assault, violent crime, or threatening behaviour
- Riots or civil unrest
- Robbery or security incidents
- Utility or infrastructure failures (power, water, communications)
- Cyber incidents or data breaches affecting service delivery

Health and Medical Emergencies

- Pandemics and infectious disease outbreaks
- Individual medical emergencies involving participants or workers
- Mental health crises requiring urgent intervention

NDIS-Specific Service Disruptions

- Unexpected loss of a key worker or sudden workforce unavailability
- Loss of access to a service delivery location
- Sudden changes to a participant's living situation or support environment
- Funding or provider-related disruptions affecting participant supports

2.0 Planning for emergencies and disasters

YBSS will maintain current, documented a Emergency and Disaster Business Continuity Plan that is proportionate to the size and nature of the organisation's service delivery and consistent with the requirements of the NDIS Practice Standards.

When developing and maintaining these plans, YBSS will:

- Conduct and document regular risk assessments identifying the types of emergencies and disasters most likely to affect our participants, workforce, and service delivery locations – with particular consideration given to the geographic and environmental context of our regional service area
- Develop plans that address:
 - Risk identification, assessment, and mitigation strategies
 - Preparation and response protocols for each identified type of emergency or disaster
 - The location and accessibility of emergency kits, facilities, and equipment
 - The roles and responsibilities of workers, managers, key management personnel, and the governing body during an emergency or disaster
 - How participant supports will be modified to ensure continuity during and following an emergency or disaster
 - Communication protocols for participants, support networks, workers, and external agencies
 - Processes for escalation to emergency services, the NDIS Commission, and other regulatory bodies where required
 - Strategies for supporting participants with complex communication needs or high support requirements during an emergency
 - A schedule of plan review dates
- Communicate the content of the plans to all workers, participants, and participant support networks in accessible formats, including Easy Read versions where required
- Consult participants and their support networks in the development, review, and updating of plans – recognising participants' right to be involved in decisions that affect their safety and supports
- Ensure emergency management arrangements are incorporated into each participant's service agreement
- Review plans at least annually, or more frequently following an emergency or disaster event, a significant change in the organisation's service delivery, or an update to relevant legislation or guidelines
- Ensure plans are easily accessible to relevant workers and participants, including through BimbiHub

3.0 Continuity of supports

The continuity of participant supports during and following an emergency or disaster is a primary obligation under the NDIS Practice Standards. YBSS will:

- Maintain a current Business Continuity Plan
- Record alternative support arrangements in each participant's individual service agreement
- Identify participants who are at heightened risk during emergencies or disasters – including those with complex support needs, limited mobility, communication barriers, or who live alone – and ensure enhanced contingency planning is in place for those individuals
- Communicate support continuity arrangements to workers, participants, and participant support networks in a timely manner during an emergency event
- Maintain up-to-date records of participant contact details, emergency contacts, and support network information to facilitate rapid communication during an emergency
- Establish and maintain relationships with relevant emergency services, local government disaster management bodies, and community organisations that may be called upon to support participants during a major emergency or disaster
- Document and report on any disruption to participant supports in accordance with the YBSS Incident Management Policy and NDIS Commission reporting requirements

4.0 Individual Participant Emergency Plans

Each participant supported by YBSS will have an individual emergency and disaster management plan, developed in consultation with the participant and their support network, and maintained as part of their support plan.

Each individual plan will include:

- Strategies for ensuring the participant's safety, health, and wellbeing in the event of any type of emergency or disaster, including individual, provider-level, and community-wide events
- The participant's specific vulnerabilities, health conditions, communication needs, mobility requirements, or other factors that must be considered during an emergency
- Emergency contact details for family members, carers, advocates, and support network members
- Preferred communication methods and any communication aids required
- Strategies for responding to medical emergencies specific to the participant, including known health conditions, medications, and escalation pathways
- Strategies for maintaining continuity of the participant's supports during an emergency or disaster

- The participant's own preferences and any specific cultural or personal considerations relevant to their safety and evacuation

Individual plans will be reviewed at least annually and whenever a participant's circumstances, health status, or support requirements change significantly. Workers supporting each participant must be familiar with that participant's individual emergency plan prior to providing supports.

5.0 Service agreements

YBSS will ensure that each participant's service agreement includes clear provisions for emergency and disaster management, including:

- The support arrangements that will be put in place in the event of an emergency or disaster
- How YBSS will communicate with the participant and their support network during an emergency
- Any agreed modifications to supports that may be necessary during an emergency or disaster event
- How the participant's individual emergency plan will be maintained and updated

6.0 Worker training

YBSS is committed to ensuring all workers are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to respond effectively to emergencies and disasters in a manner that prioritises participant safety.

Training needs will be identified by considering the key emergency management capabilities required for each role and the specific emergency risks relevant to each participant's support context.

Emergency and disaster management training will be delivered during worker induction and refreshed regularly throughout employment. Worker training will cover:

- The content and purpose of YBSS's Emergency and Disaster Management Plans
- The individual emergency plans of each participant the worker supports
- Implementation of emergency management plans in practice
- Identification of and response to specific types of emergencies and disasters, including how to distinguish between urgent and non-urgent health situations
- Procedures for escalating incidents in accordance with the YBSS Incident Management Policy and NDIS Commission requirements
- Strategies for maintaining and adapting continuity of supports during an emergency
- Effective communication with participants, including those with complex communication needs, during an emergency

- Evacuation procedures relevant to each service delivery location
- Use of emergency equipment, including first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and emergency communication tools
- Child safe practices in emergency situations, consistent with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Training records will be maintained for all workers.

7.0 Inducting a workforce in the event of a disaster

In the event of an emergency or disaster, YBSS will:

- Identify essential workers based on their availability, location, skills, and the needs of participants requiring ongoing support
- Rapidly induct and brief identified workers on the specific requirements of the emergency response, including any modifications to usual support arrangements
- Maintain an up-to-date Emergency Contact and Essential Worker Register to facilitate rapid activation of the workforce during an emergency
- Ensure workers are not required to place themselves in unreasonable danger and that worker safety considerations are balanced appropriately with the obligation to maintain participant supports
- Arrange for appropriate personal protective equipment or other resources where required by the nature of the emergency

8.0 Emergency toolkits and facilities

YBSS will ensure that all relevant emergency tools, equipment, and facilities are documented in the Emergency and Disaster Management Plan and are accessible to workers and participants at all service delivery locations.

Emergency tools and facilities maintained by YBSS include, but are not limited to:

- First aid kits (regularly inspected and restocked in accordance with Work Health and Safety requirements)
- Emergency evacuation maps, displayed prominently at each service delivery location
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets, maintained and inspected in accordance with the Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008 (Qld)
- Smoke alarms, tested and maintained in accordance with legislative requirements
- Torches and battery-powered lighting
- Emergency contact lists, including contacts for emergency services, NDIS Commission, participants, and key management personnel
- Battery-powered or satellite communication devices where service delivery occurs in areas with limited mobile coverage
- Emergency weather monitoring access, including the regional council emergency disaster dashboards integrated within BimbiHub

All emergency equipment will be inspected and restocked on a scheduled basis. Inspection records will be maintained and reported to the relevant manager.

9.0 Responsibilities of key management personnel

All key management personnel at YBSS must:

- Take overall responsibility for emergency and disaster management planning, response coordination, and recovery
- Oversee and coordinate the organisation's response to emergencies and disasters, activating the Emergency and Disaster Management Plan as required
- Conduct, review, and update risk assessments that address emergency and disaster scenarios relevant to YBSS's service delivery context
- Monitor announcements, alerts, and updates from local, state, and federal government bodies – including Queensland Disaster Management arrangements – and adapt response actions accordingly
- Communicate promptly with all relevant workers, participants, and participant support networks regarding changes to supports or safety arrangements during an emergency
- Ensure the organisation maintains adequate and current insurance coverage for all relevant emergency and disaster scenarios
- Report notifiable incidents arising from or during an emergency or disaster to the NDIS Commission within required timeframes, in accordance with the YBSS Incident Management Policy
- Test emergency and disaster management plans at least annually, including through tabletop exercises or simulations, and adjust plans based on the outcomes of testing
- Review and update plans following any emergency event, significant change in service delivery, or update to relevant legislation or NDIS Commission guidance
- Audit the effectiveness of existing emergency and disaster management approaches and implement improvements identified through audit or incident review
- Communicate the content of emergency and disaster management plans to participants and support networks using accessible formats and communication aids as required
- Ensure workers receive appropriate and current training in emergency and disaster management
- Manage all complaints and incidents arising during an emergency or disaster in accordance with the YBSS Incident Management Policy and all applicable legislation

10.0 Responsibilities of workers

All workers must:

- Actively participate in emergency and disaster management training during induction and throughout their employment
- Familiarise themselves with the content of YBSS's Emergency and Disaster Management Plans and the individual emergency plans of each participant they support
- Adhere to emergency and disaster management plans, and all relevant policies, procedures, and legislative obligations
- Escalate and respond to incidents in accordance with the YBSS Incident Management Policy and applicable legislation
- Support each participant to understand emergency situations and their potential impact on the participant's safety and supports, using communication aids and accessible formats as required
- Promptly report any hazards, near misses, or concerns related to emergency preparedness to their manager
- Follow the reasonable directions of key management personnel during an emergency or disaster response
- Maintain confidentiality of participant information during emergency communications, consistent with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and YBSS's Privacy Policy

11.0 Reporting and Review

YBSS will document and report on emergency and disaster management activities as follows:

- Emergency and Disaster Management Plans will be reviewed at least annually and reported to the Board
- Any activation of the plan in response to an actual emergency will be documented,
- Notifiable incidents occurring during an emergency will be reported to the NDIS Commission in accordance with legislative timeframes
- Worker training completion rates for emergency management training will be monitored
- The outcomes of plan testing exercises will be documented and used to inform quality improvements