

COUNCIL POLICY – Community Care

Community Care Business Continuity policy and



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POLICY TITLE:	Community Care Business Continuity Policy and Plan
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REVISION NUMBER:	1
TRIM REFERENCE:	SF14/411 – R26/3858
RESOLUTION NUMBER:	4555
POLICY TYPE:	Operational
APPROVING OFFICER:	Council Adoption
DATE OF ADOPTION:	31 August 2026
TIME PERIOD OF REVIEW:	3 Years
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	31 August 2029
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	Community Care

1. OBJECTIVE

This plan outlines how the community care services will continue delivering essential aged-care supports to older people living in the Flinders Shire during disruptions. It ensures safety, continuity of care, and rapid recovery of operations.

This plan sits under the wider Flinders Shire Council Business Continuity Framework and is aimed at meeting Aged Care Quality Standard:

Standard 2: The Organisation

The organisation is well run. I can contribute to improvements to care and services. My provider and aged care workers listen and respond to my feedback and concerns. I receive funded aged care services from aged care workers who are knowledgeable, competent, capable and caring

Outcome statement 2.4

The provider must use a risk management system to identify, manage and continuously review risks to individuals, aged care workers and the provider's operations.

2. SCOPE

The Business Continuity Plan applies to:

- In-home aged-care and disability care services (domestic assistance, personal care, social support, transport, respite, home maintenance).
- Staff, volunteers, associated providers, and partner organisations.
- Service delivery across Hughenden, Prairie, Torrens Creek, Stamford, and surrounding rural properties.

3. DEFINITIONS

Business Continuity	The capability of Council to continue delivery of aged care services at acceptable pre-defined levels following a disruptive incident.
Business Continuity Management	All management processes that provide Council wide resilience against the impacts of disruptions. It includes identifying: • Threats which might cause disruption to aged care.

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	Impacts to business operations of those threats: effective response that safeguard the interests of key stakeholders, including regulatory authorities, the community and Council's reputation.
Business Continuity Plan(s)	Documented procedures that guide Council to respond, recover, resume, and restore to pre-defined level of aged care operations following disruption. (Some procedures may be referenced to other documents).
Incident	Situation that did, might be, or could lead to a disruption, loss, emergency, or crisis.

4. POLICY

- Risks impacting on the continuity of the delivery of community care services will be planned for in the case of disruptions to community care service delivery.
- Council will maintain a vulnerable clients register to ensure they know risks associated with individual community care clients and are able to respond to individual needs depending on the type of business disruption.
- Client risks will be prioritised and the service response will be based on client needs.
- The Marketing and Communications plan will be used to identify internal and external stakeholders who need to be informed about disruption to services.
- Following a disruption to business the objective is to:
 - Resume essential services within 24 hours.
 - Resume full services within 72 hours (where possible).
 - Conduct post-incident review within 7 days.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Elected Members	Communicate with the community about the response to the specific type of business disruption.
CEO	- Activate the Flinders Shire Council Business Continuity Plan. - Liaise with Council, emergency services and funders.
Director Community Services & Wellbeing	- Coordinate the response of the community care team. - Allocate resources to the service. - Maintain communication with the community care team.
Community Care Team Leader	- Manage the staff rosters. - Provide guidance on client welfare checks. - Prioritise service delivery.

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Carers and Support Staff	• Deliver essential services. • Report client or environmental risks to the Community Care Team leader. • Maintain client safety.
Administration Staff	• Maintain vulnerable clients register. • Maintain communication logs during business disruption. • Assist with client updates on service disruptions.
Clients and Families	• Notify the aged care service if they are changing location. • Notify the aged care service if there are changes to family support that impacts on their care.

6. COUNCIL EXCEPTIONS

This policy applies only to Community Care services within the Community Services and Wellbeing Directorate. If this policy does not apply to a situation, staff must follow the general corporate policies and procedures used across all Council service areas.

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

7.1 Potential service disruptions

The key disruption scenarios for the Flinders Shire Council include:

- Power outages affecting communication and client equipment
- Extreme heatwaves affecting staff safety and client wellbeing
- Cyclone impacts (even inland, causing supply chain delays)
- Pandemic or infectious disease outbreaks
- Workforce shortages due to illness, isolation, or travel disruption
- Vehicle breakdowns in remote areas
- IT system failures or cyber incidents

7.2 Risk Prioritisation

The risk assessment of the disruption scenarios is shown in the table below:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Priority
Flooding / road closures	High	High	Critical
Workforce shortages	High	High	Critical
Heatwaves	High	Medium	High
Power outages	Medium	High	High
Pandemic	Medium	High	High
IT failure	Medium	Medium	Medium

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7.3 Critical services and prioritization

The following services are considered essential and must continue during a business disruption:

- Personal care (showering, toileting, medication prompts)
- Welfare checks for high-risk clients
- Meal preparation for clients with no alternatives
- Transport for urgent medical needs
- Support for clients with cognitive impairment or no informal supports

The following services are considered important and should continue if safe to do so:

- Domestic assistance
- Social support
- Shopping assistance
- Non-urgent transport

Services that can be deferred until normal business is reestablished:

- Home maintenance
- Group activities
- Non-essential social outings

7.4 Communication Plan

The communications mechanisms that will be used for internal staff include:

- Microsoft teams for staff updates
- Daily situation briefings during disruptions

Communication with external providers will be by telephone or in person if communications are down. External stakeholders to be contacted to explain changes in services during the business disruption:

- Emergency services: If the business disruption involves flooding or bush fire, communication with emergency services will be managed by the Flinders Shire Council Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)
- Vulnerable clients
- Hughenden Multipurpose Health service
- Hughenden Doctors Surgery
- Associated Providers

7.5 Client Welfare Checks

The response time for client welfare checks will depend on how the business disruption impacts on the client.

- Clients who are assessed as vulnerable based on the type of business disruption e.g. if power is out and they need electricity for their equipment they will be a vulnerable client, will be contacted within 2 hours of the disruption.
- All clients contacted within 4 hours if there is an ongoing disruption to the service.

7.6 Service Continuity Strategies

Service continuity strategies to be implemented are as follows:

Service	Strategies
Workforce Continuity	• The casual's employee's hours will be increased to respond to increasing demand. • Staff will be multiskilled to be able to cover all services. • Remote work options will be offered for administration staff.
Service Delivery Adaptations	• Backup mobile phones and chargers. • Satellite phones and starlink for out of town vehicles. • Maintain a supply of portable power banks. • Maintain paper-based client lists and care plans. • Fuel reserves for vehicles. • PPE stockpile for infection outbreaks.
Information Technology and Data Continuity	• Maintain daily cloud backups. • Offline access to essential client information. • Cybersecurity protocols and rapid response plan.

7.7 Business Continuity Response Procedures and Recovery plan

The Flinders Shire Council Disaster Coordinator will activate the Flinders Shire Council Disaster Manager Plan when BOM warnings or other warnings are issued. The Community Care Team will implement the strategies in the Community Care Business Continuity Plan attached as Appendix 1.

7.8 Recovery Plan

Once the disruption is over, implement the strategies listed below in addition to those outlined in the Community Care Business Continuity Plan attached as appendix 1.

- Assess staff availability to determine if there is any need for workforce strategies to be continued.
- Update clients and families and let them know the disruption is over and if there needs to be any catch-up service delivery.
- Document lessons learned

8. TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Annual BCP training for all staff.
- Scenario-based exercises (flood, heatwave, pandemic).
- Review and update BCP every 12 months or after major incident.

9. RELATED LEGISLATION

- Aged Care Act 2024
- Local Government Act Qld 2019
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)

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10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Flinders Shire Council Business Continuity Framework

11. REVIEW TRIGGER

Community Care policies are to be renewed every three years, or earlier if significant issue or change in legislation affecting this policy occurs.

12. PRIVACY PROVISION

Council respects and protects people's privacy and collects, stores, uses and discloses personal information responsibly and transparently when delivering Council services and business.

13. APPROVAL

Adopted at the August 2026 Council Meeting - Resolution Number 4555

Community Care - Business Continuity and Recovery Plan

Scope:

This plan ensures a coordinated contingency and recovery response when internal or external emergencies disrupt the delivery of community care services, with a primary focus on maintaining client safety and continuity of care.

Primary objective:

1. Ensure client safety and continuity of essential services during disruptions.
2. Restore normal service delivery as quickly and safely as possible.

Problem	Service Area	Impact	Contingency Response	Resources	Recovery Response	Position Responsible
Preparedness						
Vulnerable clients register not current	Client home	Ineffective disaster support planning	• Review and update register prior to season • Confirm evacuation plans and support persons • Categorise risk levels •	• Vulnerable clients register	• Evaluate effectiveness of arrangements • Update records accordingly	Community Care Team Leader
Medication access disruption	Client home	Deterioration of health conditions	• Confirm medication supply (min. 7–14 days) • Support GP/telehealth engagement • Liaise with pharmacy	• Client care plan • Pharmacist • GP	• Verify ongoing supply stability with Pharmacy • Update care plans if issues identified	Community Care Team Leader
Food and water shortages	Client home	Malnutrition / dehydration	• Discuss the need to have emergency supplies of canned and dried food and bottled water. • Assist client to prepare supplies of food and drink •	• Client care plan	• Review adequacy of supplies • Improve preparedness education	Community Care Team Leader
Generator availability	Client Home	Loss of power affects safety and health	• Confirm generator functionality • Ensure fuel availability • Provide safety guidance	• Client home risk assessment	• Review outcomes from client preparations and any opportunities for quality improvement	Community Care Team Leader

Problem	Service Area	Impact	Contingency Response	Resources	Recovery Response	Position Responsible
Infrastructure Failure						
Power outage impacting medical equipment	Client homes	Inability to use essential equipment	• Conduct welfare checks • Relocate clients if required (MPHS) • Contact emergency services if critical	• Car to move clients / Contact QAS	• Return clients home safely • Inspect equipment	Community Care Team Leader
Cooling system failure	Client home	Heat stress risk	• Encourage frequent drinks • Encourage client to wear loose fitting clothes • Encourage the client to use a spray bottle or cool sponge for extra cooling • Encourage the client to close their windows and draw their curtains or blinds (especially on north- or west-facing windows that get direct sun) to block heat from the sun. • Encourage clients to open over night to cool the homes • Encourage the use of hand fans to people who can use them	• Hand fans • Water	• Following the return of power contact vulnerable clients to ensure fans/air conditioning has returned	Support workers
Heating failure	Client home	Cold exposure risk	• Keep windows and doors closed to prevent draughts • Encourage older person to dress in warm clothing and use extra blankets	• Blankets	• Following the return of power contact vulnerable clients to ensure heating has returned	Support workers
Communications outage	Office	Inability to coordinate services	• Use mobile/emergency phones • Activate alternative contact methods	• Charged mobile phones	• Following the return of power recharge emergency and mobile phones	Community Care Team Leader

Problem	Service Area	Impact	Contingency Response	Resources	Recovery Response	Position Responsible
IT systems failure	Office	Loss of digital records and scheduling	• Shut down computers in all areas • Care staff to have access to a hard copy of each resident's care plan or at least a summary • Staff to revert to hand written documentation • Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) to protect against power surges and to operate the system during a power outage	• Offsite Remote Desktop Connection can be used to print required forms	• Following the return of power restore the computer system and data recovery from the backup with IT support if necessary • Catch up on data entry and resume use of computers • Additional staff hours maybe required for data entry	Admin/ Support workers
Extreme Weather - Heat wave						
Extreme heat conditions	Client homes / community	Heat-related illness	• Adjust service times to early morning for clients receiving accompanied activities/services outside of home • Increase hydration checks for clients • Suspend outdoor activities • Carry additional water in vehicles In home • Encourage frequent drinks • Encourage client to wear loose fitting clothes • Encourage the client to use a spray bottle or cool sponge for extra cooling • Encourage clients to close their windows and draw their curtains or blinds (especially on north- or west-facing windows) • Encourage clients to open over night to cool the homes • Encourage the use of hand fans to people who can use them	• Hand fans • Water	• Following the drop in temperature check in with vulnerable clients to ensure they have remained hydrated	Support workers

Problem	Service Area	Impact	Contingency Response	Resources	Recovery Response	Position Responsible
Flooding Events						
Road closures / access issues	Client home and outdoor venues	Inability to deliver services	• Pre deliver essential supplies to high-risk clients • Suspend all travel in flood zones • Implement phone-based welfare checks	• Consumables	• Restock consumables used • Inspect vehicles to ensure there is no damage and they are safe to place back into the worker pool	Community Care Team Leader
Loss of potable water	Client home	Dehydration risk	• Work with client prior to the disaster to ensure they have prepared for any disruption to the water supply	• Bottled water	• Assist with calling tradesmen to fix supply issues once disaster has passed (if required)	Community Care Team Leader
No water for hygiene	Client home	Infection risk	• Staff to use alcohol -based hand rub/gel and disposable wipes for hand care • Staff to use disposable gloves	• Stock of alcohol-based hand rub/gel and disposable wipes • Stock of disposable gloves	• Following the return of water supply resume standard operating procedures	Support workers
No water for cleaning	Client home	Reduced environmental hygiene	• Suspend non-essential cleaning		• Following the return of water supply resume cleaning schedule	Support workers
Infectious disease outbreak/Pandemic						
Disease outbreak	Client home	Consumer /staff health and well-being at risk	• Ensure the continuity of quality care and services to consumers • Implement PPE and infection control • Reduce face-to-face contact where possible • Isolate symptomatic staff • Check vaccination status of staff and remove unvaccinated staff from exposure	• Outbreak Management Plan • Local Public Health Unit • IPC Outbreak Kits	• Return to normal staffing levels and rostering system • Reputation maintained	Community Care Team Leader

Problem	Service Area	Impact	Contingency Response	Resources	Recovery Response	Position Responsible
Staff shortages / skills gap	Client homes / in office	Reduced service delivery	• Redeploy staff • Use multi-skilled workforce • Offer additional shifts	• Staff availability lists • Locum agencies	• Recruitment and education of staff to ensure rights skill mix and availability of staff	Community Care Team Leader
PPE Shortages	Client home	Increased infection risk infectious disease	• Provide storage for available PPE • Ensure PPE is easily accessible • Always use good hand hygiene and practice safe distancing • Seek supplies from HMPHS and GP practice	• PPE Stock	• Replenish stock • Review supply chain resilience	Community Care Team Leader
Data security breach						
Data breach / cyber incident	Office	Loss of consumers trust, reputation and employees with data breach. Fines, lawsuits, media scrutiny	• Shut information system down until the source of the breach has been identified and isolated. • Implement paper based recording processes until system has been resecured. • Assess the risks of harm to affected individuals by investigating the circumstances of the breach; • Notify affected individuals if deemed appropriate in the circumstances; • Review the breach and the organisation's response to consider longer-term action to prevent future incidents of a similar nature and improve the organisation's handling of future breaches	• Password Management and computer Security Process	• Confirm that a data breach has occurred. • Then take immediate measures to limit the extent of the breach.	CEO IT support Company