

# Mildura Disability Support Services| **Emergency and Disaster Management Policy**

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## *1. Introduction*

### **1.1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Emergency and Disaster Management Policy is to ensure that every participant within Mildura Disability Support Services is protected by our detailed emergency and disaster management procedures. These procedures guarantee that emergencies or disasters are foreseen, prepared for, handled effectively, and reflected upon, in compliance with the NDIS Practice Standards, specifically the Emergency and Disaster Management Standard, and relevant national regulations.

### **1.2. Scope**

This Policy is applicable to all Workers affiliated with Mildura Disability Support. It is the responsibility of every individual, regardless of their employment status, to fully comprehend and comply with the commitments outlined in this policy. All Workers must acknowledge that they have read, understood and will comply with the contents of this Policy.

### **1.3. NDIS Indicators (Objectives)**

In alignment with our commitment, Mildura Disability Support Services endeavours to demonstrate the following quality indicators by implementing and adhering to this policy and other related documentation.

#### **Emergency and Disaster Management**

Outcome: Emergency and disaster management includes planning that ensures that the risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of participants that may arise in an emergency or disaster are considered and mitigated, and ensures the continuity of supports critical to the health, safety and wellbeing of participants in an emergency or disaster.

To achieve this outcome, the following indicators should be demonstrated:

- a) Measures are in place to enable continuity of supports that are critical to the safety, health and wellbeing of each participant before, during and after an emergency or disaster.
- b) The measures include planning for each of the following:
  - 1) preparing for, and responding to, the emergency or disaster;
  - 2) making changes to participant supports;
  - 3) adapting, and rapidly responding, to changes to participant supports and to other

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- 4) interruptions;
  - 5) communicating changes to participant supports to workers and to participants and their support networks.
  - c) The governing body develops emergency and disaster management plans (the plans), consults with participants and their support networks about the plans and puts the plans in place.
  - d) The plans explain and guide how the governing body will respond to, and oversee the response to, an emergency or disaster.
  - e) Mechanisms are in place for the governing body to actively test the plans, and adjust them, in the context of a particular kind of emergency or disaster.
  - f) The plans have periodic review points to enable the governing body to respond to the changing nature of an emergency or disaster.
  - g) The governing body regularly reviews the plans and consults with participants and their support networks about the reviews of the plans.
  - h) The governing body communicates the plans to workers, participants and their support networks.
  - i) Each worker is trained in the implementation of the plans.
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## **2. Policy Statement**

Mildura Disability Support Services is committed to the safety, health, and wellbeing of its NDIS participants and workers. To uphold this commitment, we have established this Emergency and Disaster Management Policy to guide our actions during emergencies or disasters. This policy adheres to the NDIS Practice Standards and seeks to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of all Participants and Personnel before, during, and after emergencies or disasters.

### **2.1. Relevant legislation**

All relevant legislation to this Policy is outlined in the Legislation Register.

### **2.2. Related documents**

- a) Business Continuity, Emergency Response, and Disaster Management Plan
- b) Risk Management Plan
- c) Incident Management Plan

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## d) Participant Emergency Plan

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### 3. *Responsibilities and Roles*

- a) Narelle Margaret Fraser is responsible for the development and review of this policy. It is expected that Narelle Margaret Fraser ensures this Policy remains compliant with all applicable laws, regulations and standards.
  - b) Key Management Personnel play a vital role in ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy throughout Mildura Disability Support. It is the responsibility of all Key Management Personnel to not only assist Workers in understanding and complying with this policy but also to comply with it themselves. By leading by example, they demonstrate the importance of adherence to the policy and foster a culture of compliance within the organisation.
  - c) Workers are responsible for understanding the contents of this policy and complying with all procedures applicable to them.
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### 4. *Definitions*

**Mildura Disability Support Services** means AUS DISABILITY SUPPORT PTY LTD ABN 61 684 083 574.

**Key Management Personnel** means Narelle Margaret Fraser and other key management personnel involved in Mildura Disability Support Services from time to time.

**Director** means Narelle Margaret Fraser.

**Worker** means a permanent, fixed term or casual member of staff, a contractor or volunteer employed or otherwise engaged by Mildura Disability Support Services and includes the Director.

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### 5. *Procedures*

#### 5.1. **Developing Emergency and Disaster Management Plans**

##### a) **Develop Comprehensive Plans**

- 1) The Key Personnel of Mildura Disability Support Services will lead development of comprehensive Emergency and Disaster Management Plans. These plans encompass the broad scope of potential emergency and disaster situations that could impact participants and operations. Emergency Plans also shall detail procedures for responding to these situations, providing a clear framework for action that enhances safety and minimises disruption.

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## **b) Emergency Plans Will Be Based on the Risk Assessments**

- 1) Emergency Plans shall incorporate the findings from the regular risk assessments conducted to identify potential emergencies or disasters and their possible impact.
- 2) Emergency Plans will include strategies to mitigate risks where possible and will specify the actions to be taken when different types of emergencies or disasters occur.

## **c) Emergency Plans Will Include Regular Review Points**

- 1) Regular review points will be established to ensure they remain relevant as situations and environments change.
- 2) These reviews will assess the effectiveness of the Emergency Plans and the extent to which they continue to meet the needs of participants and operations.
- 3) They will also take into account any changes in the risks identified through the ongoing risk assessments.

## **d) Inclusion of All Stakeholders in the Plan Development**

- 1) In developing these plans, the Mildura Disability Support Services shall ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including Workers, participants, and their support networks.
- 2) Stakeholder input will be sought through various means such as meetings, surveys, and consultations.

## **e) Integration of Individualised Emergency Support Plans**

- 1) The Emergency and Disaster Management Plans will also include the completion of individualised Participant Emergency Plans developed for each participant.
- 2) The Participant Individualised Emergency Plans will specify how the plan will be activated and managed in the context of broader emergency situations.

## **5.2. Testing and Adjusting Emergency Plans**

### **a) Conduct Regular Tests of Emergency Plans**

- 1) In order to ensure the effectiveness of the Emergency and Disaster Management Plans, regular testing will be conducted.
- 2) Practical drills will be conducted at least annually to rehearse the response procedures for different scenarios, these tests are to be recorded to assess effectiveness.

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## **b) Use Results of Tests to Identify Areas of Weakness**

- 1) Following each test, a thorough debrief will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of Emergency Plans.
- 2) Participants, Workers, and other relevant parties will be encouraged to provide feedback about their experiences during the test.
- 3) The feedback will be analysed to identify areas of weakness in the Emergency Plans. This could include aspects such as communication issues, lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, logistical problems, or gaps in the provision of supports.

## **c) Adjustments to Emergency Plans**

- 1) Based on the outcomes of the tests and the identified areas of weakness, adjustments will be made to the Emergency and Disaster Management Plans.
- 2) This could involve revising procedures, redefining roles and responsibilities, improving communication systems, or augmenting resources.

## **d) Document Changes and Provide Training**

- 1) All adjustments made to Emergency Plans will be documented clearly and communicated to all relevant parties.
- 2) Training will be provided to ensure that everyone understands the changes and knows how to implement the updated procedures. This could involve briefings, workshops, or additional drills.

## **e) Regular Review of Test and Adjustment Procedures**

- 1) The procedures for testing and adjusting Emergency Plans themselves will be subject to regular review. This will ensure that they remain effective and continue to contribute to the ongoing improvement of the Emergency and Disaster Management Plans.
- 2) The review will consider factors such as the frequency of tests, the methods of feedback collection, and the process of making adjustments.

## **5.3. Reviewing Emergency Plans**

### **a) Conduct Regular Reviews of Plans**

- 1) To maintain the relevancy and adequacy of the Emergency and Disaster Management Plans, Mildura Disability Support Services will carry out regular, comprehensive reviews.

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- 2) These reviews will assess the effectiveness of Emergency Plans, considering factors such as changes in risk factors, feedback from participants and Workers, outcomes from tests and actual emergency situations, and developments in best practices for emergency management.
- 3) Regular review dates will be scheduled, and unscheduled reviews may also be conducted in response to significant events or changes.

### **b) Consult with Participants and Their Support Networks**

- 1) During reviews, consultations will be held with Participants to gather their perspectives and insights.
- 2) These consultations can help foster a sense of ownership and inclusion among participants and their support networks, and potentially identify areas of improvement that may not be immediately apparent to Workers or Management.

### **c) Implement Agreed Changes Promptly**

- 1) Once changes to Emergency Plans are agreed upon, they will be implemented promptly to ensure that the Emergency Plans remain up-to-date and effective.
- 2) Depending on the nature of the changes, this might involve:
  - (i) revising written documents;
  - (ii) updating training materials;
  - (iii) notifying relevant parties;
  - (iv) redistributing resources; or
  - (v) altering procedures or practices.

### **d) Communicate Changes to All Relevant Parties**

- 1) Whenever changes are made to the Emergency Plans, it is essential that these changes are communicated to all relevant parties in a clear and timely manner.
- 2) This includes not only participants and their support networks, but also Workers, volunteers, external partners, and any other stakeholders who play a role in the implementation of the Emergency Plans.
- 3) Communication methods will be adapted to suit the preferences and needs of each group, ensuring that everyone is fully informed and prepared.

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## **5.4. Communication of Emergency Plans**

### **a) Ensure All Workers, Participants, and Their Support Networks Are Aware of Emergency Plans**

- 1) Mildura Disability Support Services will ensure that all workers, Participants, and their support networks are not only aware of the Emergency Plans but also understand their content and implications.
- 2) Plans will be communicated through multiple channels, such as meetings, written documents, emails, and training sessions, to accommodate diverse communication needs and preferences.

### **b) Regular Updates and Training to Ensure Continued Understanding and Readiness**

- 1) Regular updates and training will ensure that individuals maintain their understanding and familiarity with the Emergency Plans.
- 2) The training will be practical and interactive, involving scenarios, role-plays, and drills to help everyone involved fully understand their roles and responsibilities.
- 3) Refresher training will be scheduled at regular intervals and additional sessions will be arranged as needed, such as when significant changes are made to the Emergency Plans.

### **c) Provide Access to Plan Documentation**

- 1) All relevant parties will have access to up-to-date documentation of the Emergency and Disaster Management Plans.
- 2) Digital copies will be readily made available to Workers and physical copies of Participant Individualised Plans will be located in an easily accessible location of the Participant's premises.

### **d) Use Clear and Accessible Language**

- 1) Emergency Plans will be communicated in clear and accessible language to ensure that everyone can understand them, regardless of their level of expertise in emergency management.
- 2) Where necessary, translation or interpretation services will be provided. Information will also be made available in various formats (e.g., large print, braille, audio recordings) to cater to diverse needs.

### **e) Foster Open Communication Culture**

- 1) Mildura Disability Support Services will foster an open communication culture where all individuals feel comfortable asking questions, raising concerns, or making suggestions about the Emergency Plans.

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- 2) Regular opportunities will be held for discussion about Emergency Plans, and individuals will also be encouraged to communicate directly with management or their supervisor about any issues related to the Emergency Plans. By ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, we aim to promote widespread engagement with and ownership of the Emergency Plans.

### **5.5. Training Workers**

#### **a) Regular Training for All Workers**

- 1) Mildura Disability Support Services will provide regular, comprehensive training for all workers, irrespective of their roles.
- 2) This training will cover both the overall approach to emergency and disaster management and the specific responsibilities of different roles.
- 3) It will be designed to equip workers with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to respond effectively in the event of an emergency or disaster.

#### **b) Clarify Roles and Responsibilities**

- 1) The training will clearly define and explain the roles and responsibilities of all workers in the event of an emergency or disaster.
- 2) It will ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them and how they fit into the overall response structure.
- 3) The training will also cover how these roles and responsibilities may change or be adapted in different scenarios, ensuring flexibility and resilience in the face of varying situations.

#### **c) Update Training Based on Changes to the Plans**

- 1) Whenever there are changes to the Emergency and Disaster Management Plans, the training will be updated accordingly.
- 2) Updated training will be provided as soon as possible after any changes are made, and will be tailored to highlight and explain the changes.

#### **d) Evaluate Training Effectiveness**

- 1) Training will be delivered using a range of methods to cater to different learning styles and to make the training engaging and effective.
- 2) The effectiveness of the training will be evaluated regularly to ensure it is achieving its objectives.



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- 3) The results of these evaluations will be used to continually improve the training program, ensuring it remains relevant, effective, and supportive of a high standard of emergency and disaster management.
- e) **Encourage Continuous Learning**
- 1) Mildura Disability Support Services will encourage workers to seek out additional learning opportunities related to emergency and disaster management.
  - 2) This could include attending relevant courses or conferences, reading up on the latest research and best practices, or participating in cross-training with other organisations.

### **5.6. Building Laws Compliance**

- a) Mildura Disability Support Services commits to exert all reasonable efforts and undertake necessary measures to ensure that every residence and building it operates in complies with the appropriate local building laws, regulations, and legislation.
- b) This includes any requirements that apply retrospectively, such as those concerning smoke alarms, to guarantee preparedness and safety during emergencies

### **5.7. Emergency Preparedness Procedures**

The following comprehensive emergency preparedness procedures outline the response for the most common types of emergencies: medical emergencies, fire emergencies, natural disasters, violent incidents, and power outages.

#### **a) Medical Emergencies:**

- 1) If a medical emergency arises, immediately call **000**. Be prepared to describe the condition of the person, the location, and any other relevant details.
- 2) All Workers should be trained in basic first aid and CPR. Training should include recognizing signs of medical distress, initiating emergency response, and providing basic care until medical professionals arrive.
- 3) A file for each participant containing emergency contacts, medical history, allergies, and any relevant health conditions should be maintained. This information should be quickly accessible in an emergency.
- 4) Following the emergency, all involved parties should be gathered for a debriefing. What happened should be discussed, how the situation was handled, and any potential improvements. The incident should be documented in an incident report and any

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necessary external parties, such as insurance providers or oversight bodies should be notified.

## **b) Fire Emergencies:**

- 1) In case of fire, prioritise human life over property. Follow the established escape routes to evacuate the premises, moving towards the nearest exit, and then assemble at the designated safe assembly point. Call **000**.
- 2) Smoke alarms should be installed in every workplace location and monthly checks should be conducted to ensure they are working properly. Replace batteries annually, or as needed.
- 3) All Workers should be trained in the location, use, and maintenance of fire extinguishers. This training should be refreshed annually.
- 4) Fire drills should be conducted regularly, ensuring that each drill involves all parties present at the workplace and covers all exit routes. Record the efficiency and any potential areas for improvement.

## **c) Natural Disasters (e.g., floods, earthquakes, hurricanes):**

- 1) Develop a specific plan for each type of natural disaster likely to occur in the workplace region including Participants homes. This should include potential shelter locations, evacuation routes, and communication systems.
- 2) Subscribe to and monitor national and local disaster alert systems. Share any impending disaster alerts with all Workers and Participants promptly.
- 3) Identify the safest route to assist Participants and Workers to evacuate to the nearest relief centre and leave well as soon as practicable.
- 4) Disaster-specific drills scheduled at least annually. Evaluate and revise the plan based on the drill's outcome.
- 5) Consider preparation of an emergency supply kit including enough water, non-perishable food, medicine, blankets, flashlights, and batteries to last at least 72 hours. Also consider the specific needs of the Participants when preparing the kit.

## **d) Violent Incidents:**

- 1) If a violent incident arises, immediately call **000**.
- 2) Workers are to be encouraged to report suspicious activity or threats to management immediately. Management should evaluate and respond appropriately, potentially including contacting law enforcement.

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- 3) Establish lockdown procedures that include locking doors, closing blinds, turning off lights, and hiding out of sight. Conduct drills to ensure all Workers and participants understand and can follow these procedures.
- 4) Implement an alert system, such as a silent alarm or coded announcement, to notify Workers of a potential threat without escalating the situation.
- 5) Provide Workers with training on de-escalation techniques, recognizing potential threats, and responding to active shooter situations.

### **e) Power Outages:**

- 1) Contact the power company to determine the cause of the outage.
- 2) Store emergency lighting that can be turned on in the event of a power outage. Regularly check these lights to ensure they are functioning properly.
- 3) Maintain a list of participant's family contacts and have a plan for communicating about the power outage and the steps being taken.
- 4) Store data in Cloud storage backup system.

### **f) Infectious/Hazardous Exposure**

- 1) Any potential exposure should be reported immediately to a supervisor or management. Communicate transparently with Workers, participants, and families about the situation and the steps being taken to address it.
- 2) Develop procedures for isolating any potentially infected persons from others.
- 3) If a potentially hazardous material is found, the area should be evacuated and quarantined until professionals can address the situation.
- 4) For infectious diseases, the area should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. If a hazardous material was involved, cleanup should be left to professional cleaning service.
- 5) Train all Workers on how to recognize signs of infectious disease or hazardous material exposure. This training should also cover basic prevention measures, such as proper handwashing and disinfection practices.
- 6) Ensure that PPE like gloves, masks, and gowns are available and Workers know how to use them properly.

### **g) Cybersecurity Breaches**

- 1) Use firewalls, secure networks, and regularly updated anti-virus software to protect digital systems. Regularly backup data in a secure location.
- 2) Regularly train all Workers on safe internet practices, such as identifying phishing attempts, choosing strong passwords, and not sharing sensitive information.

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- 3) Follow Incident procedures in response to a breach. This should include:
    - (i) isolating affected systems;
    - (ii) identifying what was accessed; and
    - (iii) reporting the breach to relevant authorities.
  - 4) Notify affected individuals and other stakeholders about the breach. Be transparent about what happened, what information was potentially accessed, and what steps are being taken in response.
  - 5) Work with cybersecurity professionals to clean digital systems, recover lost data if possible, and strengthen cyber security to prevent future breaches. After a breach, retrain Workers on cybersecurity practices and update them on any new procedures put in place.
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### *6. Policy Review and Updates*

This Policy is to be amended and updated according to the requirements to comply with the applicable law.

<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Narelle Margaret Fraser
<b>Version:</b>	1
<b>Approval Date:</b>	February 2025
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