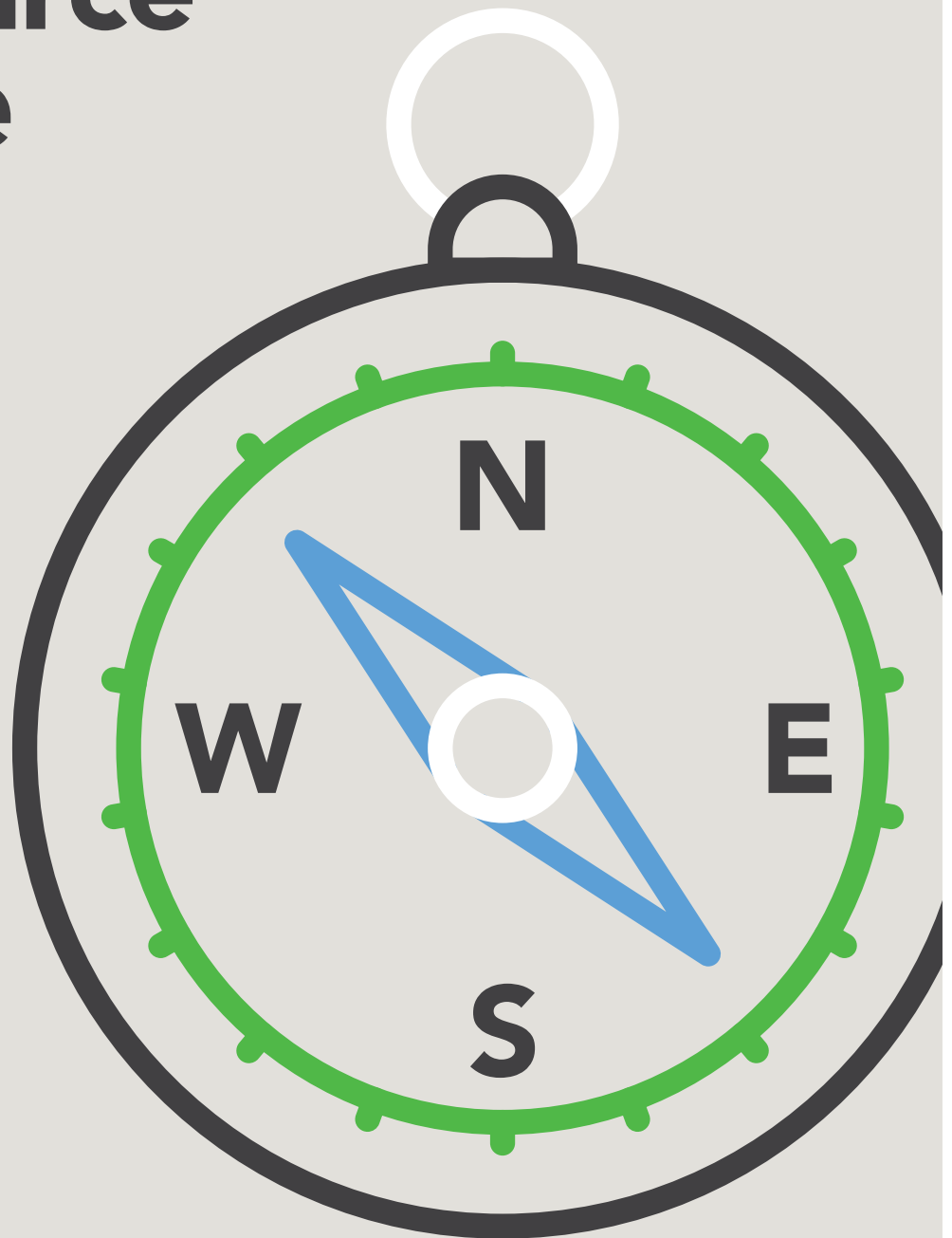


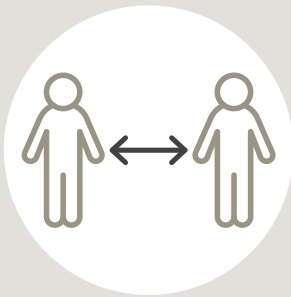
Community Recovery Resource Guide



Introduction to the Resource Guide

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing wide ranging impacts on the social and economic fabric of Queensland communities. These impacts are the result of an essential health response to prevent the negative health impacts of widespread infection of COVID 19 across the community. The measures include:



**SOCIAL DISTANCING
REQUIREMENTS**



**QUARANTINE
AND ISOLATION**



**TESTING AND
TRACING**



**TRAVEL
RESTRICTIONS**

It is already clear that these health imperatives are having a significant impact on the social and economic lives of Queenslanders. Some of these impacts will be short term and as restrictions lift, we will see a 'new normal' emerge, however, some of them will persist through recovery and beyond.



At an **individual** level, Queenslanders are faced with:

- Unemployment
- Financial hardship
- Social dislocation and isolation
- Increased family violence
- Mental health issues
- Disruption to education and training.

At a **community** level, Queenslanders are faced with:

- Business closures
- Loss of services
- Low levels of infrastructure investment
- Reduced property values
- Impacts on social cohesion.

Those who are already experiencing social disadvantage will likely require extra support during this time. However, we anticipate that there will also be many people come forward looking for support for the first time hit hard by the economic and social impacts of COVID-19.

Whatever the challenges, Queenslanders are resilient. This resilience is reflected in the Community Services Industry where extensive experience has been gained responding to and recovering from severe weather events, including bushfire, flood, and cyclone. This means that organisations across the industry are well placed to respond to the unique challenges that COVID-19 is presenting, in fact it is the core business of the industry.



Our Partners

In partnership with the **Queensland Government** and Industry, the **Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA)** has developed a set of resources to support community organisations across Queensland in their response to individuals, families, and communities.

The resources include a set of information guides for individuals and families and a resource guide for community organisations.

These materials build on the strengths and insights of community organisations across five regions, which include:

- Fraser Coast
- Central Queensland
- Whitsunday, Isaac, and Mackay
- Townsville and Mount Isa
- Cairns and the Cape

In each of these regions we worked with a community partner and we thank them for their support in reaching out across regional Queensland. These organisations included:

- Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre
- Capricorn Community Development Association
- Mackay Regional Social Development Coalition
- Centacare North Queensland
- Centacare Far North Queensland





Purpose

The objectives of the project include:

- Exploring and defining the needs of people experiencing disadvantage and those accessing support for the first time at a regional level.
- Using this information to build a set of practical resources that address the social and economic needs of these cohorts.
- Development of a practice guide for community organisations supporting people in the community experiencing social and economic hardship during COVID-19 Recovery.

The information guides and resource kits focus on strategies to support immediate responses, including:

- Emergency financial aid and practical supports
- Access to financial counselling and advice
- Access to ongoing psychosocial support, particularly to cohorts who have been identified as socially isolated
- Counselling
- Complex case management
- Service navigation and linking – in recognition that there are new cohorts of service users who have not previously engaged with services.

They also focus on strategies to support adaptation across communities, including:

- Confidence in returning to work/school/community settings
- Social /employment/ volunteering changes that may emerge
- Psychosocial/coping
- Social cohesion

Target audience

The Information Guides and Resource Kit have two target audiences:

- Individuals and families across Queensland requiring support during COVID-19 Recovery.
- Community organisations requiring support to respond to new and emerging cohorts of people requiring support.



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the world's oldest living culture and civilisation. We invite you and your organisation to walk with us in our journey and commitment to Reconciliation in these lands now called Australia.

You are encouraged to use this guide and accompanying resources to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in their recovery. These resources aim to be culturally accessible and safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, so you and your organisation can provide support in a respectful way.

Response and Recovery

When disaster hits, the operations of businesses across the community are impacted and community service organisations are no exception. In the context of the community services industry, the impacts of disaster causes disruption to the delivery of a range of essential services to vulnerable people. To ensure that these essential services are delivered and that new needs arising directly out of the impacts of the disaster are met, it is critical to undertake planning and preparation. This includes a focus on three key dimensions, which include:



1. Business continuity planning

Business continuity planning is not something that can be done for an organisation. It requires the involvement of key people, and it needs to be based on the knowledge, experience, and practices already at play.

An approach that is participatory, and built on existing foundations, ensures that the resulting plan is practical, purposeful, and feasible.

Business continuity planning will consider:

- Real scenarios that have occurred where there has been learning about the community organisation's strengths and capabilities
- Past and current learning about what could be better and where more strength is needed
- The service delivery model and the Community Based Organisation's (CBO's) purpose and reach within the community
- The capacity for contacting people who are assisted by the CBO, and for knowing what their needs and vulnerabilities are
- Existing plans, policies and procedures that guide practice and quality.

Business continuity plans are not static. They are dynamic and are revisited regularly to ensure currency and relevance.

They grow and develop based on continuous learning, business growth, and development.



2. Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is a key component of managing and responding to disaster. This form of planning requires organisations to articulate the risk and challenges that they face in responding as the basis for workshops that run through the risks in a form of 'live' testing. For example, in the context of COVID-19, organisations have had to work out new arrangements for infection prevention and control. Scenario planning in this context would involve teams of people running workshops that 'play out' an infection occurring as the basis for planning.

COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of Business Continuity Planning and scenario planning. CSIA has developed a range of helpful resources to support the community services industry in business continuity planning. You can access them here:

[CSIA's Disaster Management and Recovery resources](#)

3. Impacts on Vulnerable People



Community organisations engage in a variety of ways with people across their communities to understand and respond to their needs. Disaster may accentuate the existing needs of people already using services, as well as create new need across the community.

There are two approaches to planning in response to existing or new community vulnerability. These include:

- With people with lived experience of the issues as part or at the centre of the planning process. A key aim of this approach is to empower individuals to put their own plans in place in times of disaster, with the support of a community organisation.

CSIA has worked with community partners to support the development of the Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction framework. The framework provides an example of how to approach person-centred planning for times of disaster and although its focus is people with a disability, it provides a good template for working with any group of people with lived experience. You can access this resource [here](#).

The second is to build support for vulnerable populations at a community level and in turn, increase the resilience of these groups by maintaining:

- Family and social connections that enable people in a community to be better prepared and able to adapt to the impacts of a disaster. People face a variety of impacts in disasters as already discussed in the context of COVID-19.
- Support for individuals to be ready to respond to disasters it may also be helpful to plan at a community level. The Queensland Government have produced a resource to support planning for vulnerable communities. You can find this resource [here](#).

Information Guides

During the development of the information guides and resource kit, we heard the stories of service providers on the frontline of service delivery across Queensland in a series of focus groups. Insights from these workers together with stories from community members formed the basis of the development of the information guides. Some snapshots of the focus groups include:

Stigma about accessing services and supports

"There's a lot of shame attached to it [accessing services for the first time]. Some of the new service users have never been unemployed before and pride themselves on the fact that they've never had to access supports for anything". **Jane, Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre.**

Stress and mental health

"We found one of the biggest issues has been in mental health, people are feeling isolated and overwhelmed...particularly with the younger ones that are having severe issues, like too much that services are overwhelmed and can't necessarily help them" **Stacey, National Job Link**

Financial hardship

"And it's better that you get help now and be in early prevention phase rather than wait till you get to crisis. It becomes difficult for us to try and do something for them at that stage. So, if we can get that message to the community, that as soon as you need anything, just connect with the services really early on" **Tanya Stevenson – Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre**

Family breakdown

"I've seen quite a significant increase in reports of domestic violence and family violence reported at a very high end. So, during that time I had a few women who have never accessed any kind of support before calling me at the police station, talking about suddenly their husband has become quite violent or aggressive" **Emma, Centacare Far North Queensland**

Isolation and community connection

"So, one of our biggest struggles in our region, is public transport and with COVID; there was [a service] that usually takes their clients into town to do shopping and those sort of things, but with COVID, they were unable to do it. So, those people were socially isolated before, but with COVID they are even more so, because they do not even have that fortnightly trip to town. They can go to the doctors, things like that, but there is no shopping trips or social outings and those sorts of things. Events, the usual get togethers; they're not willing to really step out, because of the fear that all of COVID brought" **Karen – Coastal Community Development Service Neighbourhood Centre**

Access to food and emergency relief

"And so we had quite a demand then for emergency relief, and in particular, what we like to call those curly ones that, trying to fit those within the guidelines while still assisting people as best we could. Because, of course, there is no accommodation or emergency accommodation in our region, in the Whitsunday local government area of Proserpine and Cannonvale. And so that meant that there were a number of homeless people who were working in the hospitality industry, perhaps here on temporary visas, who were not able to get the funds, to head into other areas, or to accommodate themselves. So, they were literally homeless when that all occurred. From there, once the job seeker payments and the job keeper payments came into effect and the job seeker payments doubled, we did notice a significant decrease in the access to emergency relief and the number of people accessing information, as well." **Rebecca, Whitsunday Neighbourhood Centre**

An overview of the information guides

The information guides are designed with a self-help approach in mind and are written in plain English to maximise accessibility of the information.

They use pictures and a bright colour to make them attractive to the reader. Here is a guide to their use.

This section of the guide defines the content area which forms the focus of the document.


This section of the guide provides a checklist for users to undertake a self-assessment, or alternatively workers can review this information with people.

This section of the guide provides the reader with a story that they can relate to and can be used as an icebreaker or reference point to help define the needs of the person.

This section provides some information about how to access help and a section that can be edited so that you can add local information.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY


Getting started with finding help




Have you been doing it tough lately? You're not alone. Everybody has times in their life when they need help. Worries about relationships, work or study, managing money and family pressures can all add up. When life feels stressful or uncertain, there are people and places in your community ready to offer help and support. Remember that it's good to ask for help. The sooner you do, the sooner you can get back on track.

Do I really need help?
If you have never asked for help before it might feel extra hard to make the first move. These questions will help you work out what sort of help you might need and how to access it. (There are no right or wrong answers. This is just a chance to learn about yourself.)

- I'm feeling a bit stressed or worried about _____
- My relationship with _____ is making me feel _____
- I'd like help finding or returning to work
- I'd like help with study or training
- I'd like help managing my money and finances
- I want to make my health and wellbeing a priority
- This is my first time accessing services so I'm not sure where to start
- I have accessed services before, but this situation is new for me
- I prefer to talk with someone on the phone
- I prefer to talk with someone face to face
- I'd rather look up information on the internet
- I would like culturally appropriate assistance
- I'm looking for a safe place to live




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Mariam's Story

"Mariam was a bit uncertain when she was referred to the local Neighbourhood Centre, after approaching the Community Centre for support. Mariam says "from my first meeting, I felt my problems ease. I was offered petrol vouchers, food vouchers and the support officer showed me how to access Centrelink and helped me with my application. From feeling stressed and helpless, I have become a financially independent living a healthy and happy life, planning for the future education of my child and myself...I feel much more peaceful and confident with a greater urge to contribute positively to society."




Where to get help? When you are ready to connect, there are people and services in your community who are ready to help:


<p>Go online</p> <p>If you're OK with computers, try searching for help in your local area. Type into Google: <i>I would like help paying bills</i> <i>I would like help with my relationship</i> <i>I would like help finding work</i> <i>I would like help with finances</i></p> <p>For a list of community support resources, visit www.qld.gov.au/community</p>	<p>Make a call</p> <p>If you prefer to talk to someone on the phone, try the contacts below.</p>	<p>Find help near me</p> <p>If you prefer to talk to someone face-to-face, you can also find help in your local area.</p>
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Make a change today. Ask for help early so you can start making positive changes to feel better sooner.



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Communication

At times it can be difficult to reach out and ask for help. When disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, strike the impacts are wide ranging. These impacts weigh heavily on people across our communities who are already experiencing disadvantage in some form, however, they can also impact people who have not experienced hardship or disadvantage in any form.

Seeking support early and finding the right help is critical to how well people recover from the impacts of disasters and communicating this across the community is essential.

Engaging in the following ways across the community can be helpful to reducing the stigma of asking for help:

- Reaching out across business, community, and sporting networks to provide them with information about where community members can find support, including speaking spots to talk about impacts on the community.
- Providing information to local media outlets and newspapers about help seeking.
- Communicating information about help seeking through community newsletters.

You can access a template media release and other communications resources [here](#).

Resources

These resources are referenced throughout the document, here are a set of quick links.

Disaster Management and Recovery Toolkit

<https://csialtd.com.au/2020/05/14/disastermanagementandrecoverytoolkit/>

Planning for Business Continuity in Times of Disaster Facilitation Guide

<https://csialtd.com.au/2020/05/14/planningforbusinesscontinuityfordisaster>

The Good Sheppard Money Ready Toolkit

<https://goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/researchreports/money-ready-toolkit/>

Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

https://collaborating4inclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/DIDRR_Framework_document_FINAL.pdf

People with Vulnerabilities in Disaster

https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/55327/supporting-people-with-vulnerabilities-framework.pdf