Procedure

Developing a business continuity plan

Implementation Date: 12/10/2018
Version: 4.0

Audience

Department-wide

Purpose

This procedure outlines how to identify critical business functions and how to develop business continuity plans. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the department's Business Continuity Management Framework.

Overview

Business continuity plans (BCPs) document how the department's critical business functions prepare for, respond to and recover from a disruptive event that cannot be managed within our normal capabilities. Critical business functions are identified by conducting a business impact assessment (BIA).

For the purposes of this procedure, the Office of Industrial Relations should be considered the same as a division.

Responsibilities

BCP owner – Deputy Director-General/Regional Director

- Ensure a BIA is conducted for their branch/division/region and approve the BIA.

- Ensure the BIA is reviewed annually and approve updated version.

- Ensure Operational/Coordination/Regional BCPs are developed for their branch/divisional/regional critical business functions and approve all developed BCPs.

- Assess and prioritise the resumption of critical business functions and operational resources as required by their branch/division/region during a disruptive event.

- Ensure annual review and testing of all BCPs, approving testing schedules and test plans.

- Approve completed test reports and any changes required to BCPs.

Operational BCP lead – minimum level Director

- Lead the identification of response strategies to continue service delivery if critical operating resources are seriously impacted by a disruptive event.

- Develop, test and maintain the Operational BCP for their critical business function(s).

- Liaise with any interdependent functions identified in the BCP, and any necessary resource recovery support contacts, to ensure they support the BCP requirements of the critical business function(s).

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Coordination BCP lead – minimum level Executive Director

- Develop, test and maintain the Coordination BCP, ensuring it addresses requirements for all Operational BCPs in the branch/division.

- Liaise with resource recovery support contacts to address the Coordination BCP resource requirements and ensure correct contact and communication information is captured.

- Coordinate the annual review of the BIA and seek approval from the BCP owner.

- Approve Operational BCP test schedule and reports.

Regional BCP lead – minimum level Director Regional Services

- Develop, test and maintain the Regional BCP, ensuring it addresses the regions operational and coordination BCP requirements (including regional services and schools).

- Liaise with interdependent functions identified in the BCP and resource recovery support to ensure they support the Regional BCP requirements and correct contact and communication information is captured.

- Coordinate the annual review of the BIA and seek approval from the BCP owner.

All BCP leads

- Monitor the currency and effectiveness of their BCP(s) and update as required, at least annually.

- Actively identify and implement improvements following review or activation of their BCP(s).

- Ensure controls necessary for successful BCP implementation are in place.

- Ensure business continuity kits are up-to-date and accessible, both onsite and offsite, remembering access to technology and facilities may be affected during a disruptive event.

- Ensure staff involved in the BCP understand their roles and responsibilities under the plans, and are involved in test scenarios.

All employees

- Maintain awareness of business continuity arrangements.

- Understand roles and responsibilities under business continuity arrangements.

Resource recovery support – Information Technology, Infrastructure Services and Human Resources Branches

- Ensure contact officers are identified in consultation with each BCP lead.

- Ensure necessary systems and processes to support activation of any BCP are in place, including outside of a disaster or emergency event.

- Liaise with BCP leads to ensure BCP requirements are captured.

- Participate in exercises designed to test BCPs when required.

Emergency and School Security Unit, Infrastructure Services Branch

- Capture lessons learned following activation and reviews of business continuity plans and emergency response plans.

Strategy and Performance Branch

- Develop the department's Executive BCP.
- Maintain a scheduled testing program.

Process

The department's business continuity planning process is summarised in the diagram below:

Identify critical business functions	Identify response strategies	Develop business continuity plan	Maintain and improve business continuity plan

Step 1: Identify critical business functions

- BCP owners must ensure their division/branch/region conducts an annual BIA using the [Business impact assessment tool](#).

- Using the tool, identify business functions necessary for achieving the department's objectives (regional offices should identify both regional services and support services provided to schools).

- For each function determine the level of risk posed to each of the following critical service categories if the function could not operate for 15 business days:
    - direct service delivery
    - safety of children and students
    - workplace health and safety of staff and the community
    - fraud and corruption
    - security of personal and confidential information
    - legislation and regulation compliance
    - short-term financial viability of staff and stakeholders

- Consider the worst case scenario when assessing the risk, as some functions are more critical under certain circumstances or at particular times of the year.

- For each function, determine if the level of risk exceeds the department's risk tolerance.

- For each function that would exceed risk tolerance if disrupted for 15 business days, determine how many business days it would take for risk tolerance to be exceeded – this is the maximum acceptable outage.

- If the maximum acceptable outage is five business days or less, the function is a critical business function and requires a BCP.

- For each critical business function, assign an activation priority using a scale of 1–3 (where 1 = most important). Higher priority should be given to functions with shorter maximum acceptable outage periods, higher levels of risk impacts and/or where a critical service area is highly dependent on the critical business function.

- The BIA must be approved by the BCP Owner.

Step 2: Identify response strategies

Response strategies must be developed for each critical business function, based on the 'all hazards' approach to business continuity planning. These strategies will be captured in the business continuity plan.

- Consider alternative ways of operating if the disruption causes a loss or reduced access to one or more of the following:
    - buildings or infrastructure
    - information and communications technology
    - staff.

- When evaluating response options consider:
    - effective management of areas of lowest risk appetite
    - operational viability, cost and time to implement within the maximum acceptable outage period
    - resource requirements and current capabilities
    - ability to effectively deploy response strategies and then transition back to business-as-usual
    - impact to staff, interdependent functions and other stakeholders.

- Refer to the Response strategies development guide for examples.

Step 3: Develop business continuity plans

Developing an Operational BCP

Operational BCPs must be developed for individual critical business functions.

- Some business functions can be broken down into individual activities. Identify and prioritise these activities. Consider whether these activities could perform at a BCP service level (minimum acceptable level of service to ensure appropriate business continuity), or even be temporarily halted during a significant business disruption.

- Identify the minimum resources required to ensure the BCP service level can be achieved and the response strategies identified in step 2 can be actioned.
    - Staff: What is the minimum number of staff required to perform the activities of the critical business function?
    - Building: What building requirements are necessary to accommodate the required staff?
    - ICT: In addition to the standard work environment (i.e. desk, MOE computer, telephone, printer etc.), what ICT requirements are needed?
    - Vital records: Are there vital records that must be referenced during BCP arrangements?

- Consider whether the critical business function has any interdependencies. If so, conversations should occur between the two parties to ensure BCP requirements are consistent and maximum acceptable outages are aligned.

- Using the response strategies identified in step 2, list the actions required for each of the business continuity phases – prepare (before), respond (during) and recover (after). Identify responsible officers for each action where possible.

- Identify who needs to be communicated with during each business continuity phase. Consider the information that needs to be communicated and how it will be delivered. Refer to the Communication considerations for further guidance.

- Progress completed plan to the BCP Owner for approval.

Developing a Coordination BCP

Branches/divisions must develop a Coordination BCP to provide line-of-sight when there are multiple Operational BCPs.

Part 1 – Capturing branch/division business continuity plans

The coordination role must have its own business continuity arrangements in place so coordination actions can continue to operate during a disruptive event. This detail is captured in Part 1 of the Coordination BCP.

- Identify the minimum resources required to ensure the coordination function within the branch/division can continue during a disruptive event
- Determine the most appropriate response strategies and actions required for each of the business continuity phases – prepare (before), respond (during) and recover (after). Identify responsible officers for each action where possible.

Part 2 – Coordination of branch/division critical business function BCPs

It's important for branches/divisions to have a clear, consolidated overview of all critical business function BCPs in their area to allow for effective prioritisation and coordination of individual continuity arrangements. The collation of these arrangements is captured in Part 2 of the Coordination BCP:

- Collate all operational BCP details and populate the table in Part 2 of the Coordination BCP template. BCP's should be ordered based on their activation priority. The activation priority and business impacts can be found within the relevant BIA
- List the minimum resources identified in each Operational BCP
- Record the various interdependencies across the branch/division
- Once the Coordination BCP is complete, progress to the BCP Owner for approval.

Developing a Regional BCP

Regional BCPs are multi-purpose and unique to other BCPs, as they:
- address regional office BCP needs, as well as the BCP needs for the schools in the region
- include critical business functions based on geographical location (regional corporate service functions such as IT, HR and infrastructure are part of the regional BCP for a more integrated implementation at the local level, whilst structurally reporting to central office divisions)
- outline operational BCP details for each critical business function, as well as coordination details for the implementation of multiple BCPs.

Each education region must develop a Regional BCP to address BCP coordination requirements (Part 1) and operational BCP requirements for each critical business function (Part 2).

- For each critical business function identified in the regional BIA, follow the process for developing an operational BCP. An operational BCP is also required for Regional BCP coordination and the disaster and emergency management functions.
- Record content as follows:
    - Part 1: resourcing requirements and interdependencies
    - Part 2: prioritise and adjust service levels, strategies and actions, vital records and communication plan

- Collate all operational BCP details to populate table 1.1 in Part 1 of the Regional BCP template. BCP's should be ordered based on their activation priority. The activation priority and business impact can be found within the relevant BIA.
- Once the Regional BCP is complete, progress to the BCP Owner for approval.

Developing the Executive BCP

The Strategy and Performance Branch develops and annually reviews and updates the Executive BCP, summarising information from Coordination and Regional BCPs to enable senior executive management to make strategic judgements during BCP activation. The following information must be included in the Executive BCP:

- Activation priorities, including BIA summaries
- Key contacts for lines of communication
- Summary of resource requirements.

The completed plan is progressed to the Executive Management Board for approval.

Step 4: Maintain and improve business continuity plans

Creating a business continuity kit

- BCP Leads must prepare and maintain a business continuity kit, containing as a minimum:
    - hardcopy and electronic copy of BCP
    - hardcopy and electronic copy of vital records identified in the plan
    - contact details for:
        - staff required to perform the critical business function
        - all staff in the branch/division/region (for Coordination and Regional BCP kits only)
        - interdependent functions (internal and external)
        - emergency management and resource recovery functions.
- Ensure two copies of the business continuity kit are provided, as a minimum, to the below positions:
    - BCP Owner
    - BCP Lead
    - BCP lead backup
- Each recipient should store the business continuity kit in an accessible location onsite and offsite, remembering access to technology and facilities may be affected during a disruptive event.
- Ensure business continuity kits are kept up-to-date. Contact lists should be regularly reviewed and updated, particularly prior to and during the wet weather season.

Informing staff

- Inform staff (including backup personnel) involved in the BCP so they:
    - are aware of the department's business continuity management framework and business continuity planning process
    - understand the response and communication strategies, and their role and responsibilities under the plan
- Update staff of any changes to the BCP or the department's broader business continuity arrangements.

Review business impact assessment

- Coordination BCP and Regional BCP leads must review the BIA annually, ideally between July – August, to ensure the necessary BCPs are in place and current prior to the start of the storm season.
- Revised assessments must be approved by the BCP Owner.
- If new critical business functions are identified, refer to Step 2 of this procedure.

Test BCPs

- BCPs must undergo a minimum testing program:
    - Every 12 months — Level 1 (walkthrough self-assessment) or Level 2 (supervised walkthrough)
    - Every three years — Level 3 (process or plan simulation), unless the plan has been activated during this period, which is equivalent to a level 4 (full end-to-end simulation).
- Refer to the Testing BCPs factsheet for more information on each test level.
- Each division and region should develop a BCP testing schedule to ensure thorough and regular testing is undertaken.
    - Divisional testing schedules should be developed by the Coordination BCP Lead and approved by the BCP Owner.
    - Regional testing schedules should be developed by the Regional BCP Lead and approved by the BCP Owner.
- BCP Leads should create a test plan to ensure the proposed test is effective and rigorous.
    - Operational BCP test plans should be developed by the Operational BCP Lead and approved by the Coordination BCP Lead
    - Coordination BCP test plans should be developed by the Coordination BCP Lead and approved by the BCP Owner
    - Regional BCP test plans should be developed by the Regional BCP Lead and approved by the BCP Owner.
- Further guidance on the development of testing schedules and test plans can be found in the Testing BCPs factsheet.
- Interdependent functions and resource recovery support areas should be involved in all BCP tests.
- BCP Leads must:
    - complete a post-test debrief and complete a BCP test report detailing what worked well, areas for improvement and recommended actions.
    - liaise with interdependent functions and resource recovery support areas to agree on requirements between the two parties if any changes are proposed.
    - amend the plan as soon as possible and record changes in the 'event log' section of the BCP.
    - progress the test report and the updated BCP to the BCP owner for approval.
- The above process should be completed by the end of October to ensure the currency of plans prior to storm season.

Other review triggers

- BCP Owners must ensure review of BIA and BCPs following any significant changes to the operating environment, such as:
    - changes to the risk profile
    - machinery-of-government changes
    - implementation of new services and/or functions
    - significant changes to the external environment
    - significant changes to business process or system.

Document management

- Save the approved BIA, BCP and test report in the business areas HPRM location and relate the documents to the Strategy and Performance branch HPRM location 500/29/210.

Definitions

All hazards approach	Business continuity management response strategies focus on the outcome of the disruption rather than the cause, this is known as an 'all hazards approach'.
Business continuity management	A holistic approach to managing risks related to disruptive events.
Business continuity plan	A documented collection of strategies and actions for use in a disruptive event to enable a critical business function to continue to deliver its services to an acceptable minimum level and transition to normal operations and performance levels.
BCP kit	Readily available storage box containing information and resources that are required to implement the BCP during a disruptive event.
Business impact assessment	A risk-based assessment used to identify the department's critical business functions.
Coordination BCP	Coordination BCPs are overarching plans developed for each branch/division. A Coordination BCP ensures more effective prioritisation and coordination of the continuity response should multiple Operational BCPs be activated. It also helps reduce duplication of communication, expediting recovery of operating resources.
Critical business function	A business function, or part thereof, identified as essential for the continuation of critical services (direct service delivery, managing areas of lowest risk appetite and our contribution to the short-term financial viability of staff and stakeholders).
Executive BCP	The Executive BCP provides an overarching view of all departmental BCPs. It provides a platform for senior executive management to make strategic judgements, prioritise resources and support more effective communication to areas coordinating and operationalising BCPs.

Interdependent functions	The reliance of a critical business function on another function (not necessarily a critical business function) to fulfil its operational requirements. For example, receiving essential data (input) from elsewhere or sending required data (output) to another business area. An interdependent function can be with another internal business area or an external organisation.
Maximum acceptable outage	The maximum period of time the department can tolerate a disruption to a critical business function.
Operational BCP	Operational BCPs are used to ensure individual critical business functions are able to continue to operate, at least to a minimum level of capability and performance, following a disruptive event and transition back to normal operations and performance levels.
Regional BCP	Regional BCPs are used by each region. Regional BCPs contain a combination of operational and coordination BCP requirements. Regions cater for school BCP requirements through the Regional BCP.
Resource recovery support contact	A contact in one of the department's three key resources areas – Information Technology Branch, Infrastructure Services Branch and Human Resources Branch. These contacts should be identified when completing a BCP and be Director level or above. Their role is to support BCP activation by triaging, escalating and managing the components of their service area (IT, infrastructure, HR) affected by the disruptive event.
BCP service level	A revised service level used under business continuity arrangements.

Legislation

- *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (Qld) s78(1)(b)(ii)
- *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Related policies

- Business Continuity Management Policy
- Business Continuity Management Framework
- Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- Enterprise Risk Management Policy
- AS ISO 22301:2017 Business continuity management systems - Requirements
- AS/NZS 5050:2010 Business continuity – Managing disruption-related risk

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Related procedures

- [Implementing a business continuity plan procedure](#)
- [Disaster and emergency management procedure](#)
- [Enterprise risk management procedure](#)

Guidelines

- [Communications considerations guideline](#)

Supporting information/websites

Templates and tools

- [Business impact assessment tool](#)
- [Operational business continuity plan template](#)
- [Coordination business continuity plan template](#)
- [Regional business continuity plan template](#)
- [Test report template](#)

Factsheets and checklists

- [Response strategies development guide](#)
- [Resourcing requirements factsheet](#)
- [Testing business continuity plans factsheet](#)

Online resources

- [Privacy and managing disaster events](#)

Contact

Business Capability and Quality Improvement
Phone: (07) 3028 8263
Email: GSPmailbox@qed.qld.gov.au

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Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

1.0   Business Continuity Management (BCM)

2.0   Business Continuity Management (BCM)

3.0   Business Continuity Management (BCM)