



Divisions of General Practice

Information Management Maturity Framework (IMMF)

Toolkit – Division's business continuity plan (BCP) scenarios



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Toolkit – Division’s business continuity plan (BCP) scenarios

Purpose

The purpose of the “Division’s business continuity plan (BCP) scenarios” is to assist Divisions address the action tasks below.

| Action Tasks | Capacity Gap | IMMF Element |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| Run a simulated business continuity scenario each year to test the business continuity plan. | Defined to managed | Compliance and Quality |

This task should have been identified from the Information Management Maturity Framework (IMMF) gap analysis and toolkit specification.

Divisions need to have a business continuity plan (BCP) including a disaster recovery strategy in order to gain or maintain accreditation. This tool provides a suggested approach to maintaining and testing the Division’s BCP. It includes a suggested template for estimating information management (IM) and information technology (IT) resources required to restore critical business functions to an acceptable level and a brief list of suggested testing scenarios.

Knowledge of the tools “Business continuity checklist” and “Business continuity template” are pre-requisites for using this tool. Tools that relate to risk management such as “Guidelines for IM risk management” may also assist with using this tool.

Explanatory notes

Business continuity planning requires Divisions to have a formalised approach to identifying and dealing with potential risks and interruptions to business functions and resources. A BCP is not complete until it has been tested, evaluated and revised to address any significant short comings.

Key documents - This tool was developed with reference to: *AS/NZS HB 292-2006 A Practitioners Guide to Business Continuity Management* and *AS/NZS 4360, Risk Management*, June 2006.

Instructional design

This tool consists of three Parts:

Part 1 – BCP maintenance

Part 2 – BCP testing methods

Part 3 – BCP scenarios

Appendix 1 – Templates for estimating resources to support critical business functions

Part 1 – BCP maintenance

A BCP is a dynamic document that needs to be maintained. A very effective way of maintaining a BCP is through testing scenarios with outcomes for improvement incorporated into the Division’s BCP.

The BCP maintenance guidelines should be read and discussed with senior staff at the Division, as well as any staff identified as critical to the business continuity planning process.

CEOs may also discuss BCP scenarios with other Divisions to better understand how to approach their BCP and to share any useful business continuity planning related experiences.



Part 2 – BCP testing methods

There are a range of methods to test the adequacy of a BCP, each having advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost, disruption and effectiveness. For example, a desktop review is low in cost and disruption, but is limited in testing the BCP, whereas a live scenario has a high cost and disruption but is a robust test of the BCP.

Through discussion with staff and/or other Divisions, CEOs should identify the BCP testing method that will adequately test their Division's BCP.

Part 3 – BCP scenarios

A number of examples are listed as possible situations that could lead to a disruption to business operations. Whilst not all scenarios can be anticipated, a robust BCP should ensure resources are available to resume business operations regardless of the type of interruption. The type of interruption will have an impact on the recovery procedures.

Suggested templates to assist with identifying critical business functions and relevant resources are contained in Appendix 1.

Summary of outcomes and resources

| Workstreams | Outcomes | Resources |
|--|---|--|
| Skills or knowledge acquisition requirements for staff | Staff understand and implement business continuity policies and procedures. | <p>This tool is self administered by the CEO and senior staff.</p> <p>New processes or procedures may be mentored by Divisions with greater experience in IM business continuity planning.</p> |
| New processes or procedures to be adopted | <p>The BCP is tested, evaluated and updated annually.</p> <p>Key staff have business continuity related responsibilities aligned with each stage of business continuity planning.</p> | |
| Technology solutions | <p>The Division has the technology infrastructure and support to implement its BCP.</p> <p>Technology infrastructure and support for the BCP is tested annually.</p> | |
| Culture and change management requirements | <p>The Division's Board supports the need to maintain the BCP.</p> <p>Staff are aware of and apply business continuity procedures in their day to day activities.</p> | |



Part 1: BCP Maintenance

The adequacy of even the most well developed BCP remains unknown until it is tested. In many cases this only occurs when it is needed, at which time it may not have the desired outcomes and / or be out of date.

A BCP is a dynamic document that needs to be maintained. The maintenance of a BCP is based on the key concepts of understanding, resourcing and assurance.

- Understanding - staff need to understand and implement business continuity policies and procedures.
- Resourcing - resources to perform critical business functions need to be adequate, or access is available to alternate adequate resources.
- Assurance - the performance of a BCP needs to be verified through regular monitoring, review, audit and testing.

A very effective way of maintaining a BCP is through testing scenarios with outcomes for improvement being incorporated into the Division's BCP.

Testing different scenarios is an effective method of training. It increases staff awareness of the BCP, can help identify gaps between the BCP and staff's interpretation of the BCP, and can improve staff confidence in implementing the BCP.

Testing different scenarios will also highlight resource and logistical gaps (for example, how to relocate essential staff). The overall adequacy of the BCP during the testing scenario may also be a good indicator of the adequacy of the testing cycle.

Part 2: BCP Testing Methods

There are a range of ways of testing the BCP, each having advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost and disruption to an organisation. As a guide, the following testing methods could be used:

- Desktop review - low cost and low, if any disruption.
Staff with key responsibilities attend a guided presentation with discussion on the BCP and its implementation.
- Desktop scenario - low cost and medium disruption.
Similar to desktop review except that hypothetical disruption scenarios are used to examine assumptions made during the development of the BCP.
- Recovery exercise - medium cost and medium disruption.
Closing down or removing access to systems, resources or infrastructure. The recovery or establishment of alternatives is examined to determine adequacy.
- Live scenario - high cost and high disruption.
Activation of BCP(s) based on a hypothetical scenario that provides a robust test of a BCP.

To optimise the effectiveness of BCP testing, a CEO should:

- determine participants - participation will promote increased familiarity of the BCP for responsible staff;
- decide on resources to be tested;
- develop a sequence of events;
- observe responsible staff to ensure they understand their responsibilities during a disruption;
- consider the response of key stakeholders (media, suppliers, employees etc.);
- review the exercise to confirm that resource requirements and key contacts are appropriate;
- review the exercise to verify that the BCP is current, practical and feasible; and
- understand that outputs will drive continuing improvement in the BCP.



Part 3: BCP Scenarios

There are numerous possible disruptions to business. Therefore, the development of a BCP needs to be based on restoring critical business functions, regardless of the interruption. For example, a Division may have identified that a critical business function is the return of National Performance Indicator (NPI) data and, therefore, there needs to be an appropriate response to recover the relevant data. This response will be irrespective of the interruption, which may be a fire, flood, power disruption or hardware failure.

The type of interruption is more relevant to the recovery process. Following on from the above example, if the back-up data is stored in a fireproof safe on-site and the Division experiences a long-term power outage, then the recovery of data will be relatively straight forward. However, if the Division suffers an interruption due to a fire for example, and even though the data may be available, it may not be accessible because of lack of access to the building.

It is worth considering various scenarios in order to test the adequacy of the BCP. Scenarios should include both external and internal situations. Different time scales should also be considered. For example, a short term power interruption will have less impact than a longer term outage.

External scenarios can include any of the following:

- catastrophic event: eg building destroyed by fire/flood/explosion;
- power interruption;
- telecommunication interruption;
- neighbouring building destroyed by fire/flood/explosion;
- influenza pandemic;
- terrorist attack; or
- interruption to supply chain.

Internal scenarios may include:

- employee sabotage to data;
- water damage eg accidental activation of fire sprinklers;
- loss of back up data; or
- unexpected staff shortages (influenza pandemic).



Appendix 1 – Templates for estimating resources to support critical business functions.

As part of developing a BCP, the CEO of a Division should identify the Division's critical business functions and the necessary IM and IT resources to maintain acceptable levels of those functions during unplanned interruptions (refer to tools: "Business continuity checklist" and "Business continuity template").

The resources required for routine operational functions may act as a good starting point to estimate additional business continuity resource requirements (refer Template 1).

The Division's BCP needs to identify its critical business functions and the IM and IT resources necessary to maintain acceptable levels of those functions during unplanned interruptions (refer tools "Business continuity checklist" and "Business continuity template"). If desirable, responses can be further prepared for different levels of interruption such as:

- emergency response – protection of life and property;
- continuity response – minimum acceptable level of performance; and
- recovery response – returning to normal operations.

Template for estimating the resource requirements to maintain critical business functions.

The Division's BCP will have identified its key functions that rely on IM and IT (refer "Business continuity template"). For example, a critical business function may be "staff payroll".

| Critical Function | Critical success factors | Functional interdependencies | Priority |
|-------------------------|--|---|----------|
| Example - staff payroll | Payroll must be lodged by the 10 th of each month | IT functionality including software must be operational | High |

The resource requirements to maintain routine operational requirements are then identified (refer HB 292-2006, page 8).

| Critical Function | Staff | Office equipment | IT and supporting documents | Budget | Additional requirements |
|-------------------------|-------|--|---|-------------|---|
| Example - staff payroll | 1 | 1 Desk and 1 PC with relevant software | Payroll file Pay adjustment forms Payment instructions/authorisations | \$50,000 pa | Need to ensure that payments are processed by the 12 th of the month |

The next step is to determine resource requirements to restore critical business functions (this is tested during the BCP scenarios).

| Critical Function | Staff | Office equipment | IT | Budget | Additional requirements |
|-------------------------|-------|--|---|---|---|
| Example - Staff Payroll | 1 | 1 Desk and 1 PC with relevant software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Payroll file - Pay Adjustment forms - Payment instructions/authorisations | \$50,000 pa - \$5,000 additional resource - \$10,000 to outsource | Need to ensure that payments are processed by the 12 th of the month If adequate time engage contract staff If inadequate time outsource payroll with company - xx |

References and further reading

AS/NZS 4360:1999 Risk management Standards Australia, August 2004.

HB 292-2006 A Practitioners Guide to Business Continuity Management,
June 2006

Available on www.saiglobal.com

Last viewed April 2008

Business Continuity Management – Keeping the Wheels in motion
(Australian National Audit Office, January 2008)

Available on www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/Business_Continuity_Management.pdf

Last viewed: April 2008

Network Resource Library – Australian General Practice Network

Available on <http://www.agpn.com.au/site/index.cfm>

Last viewed: April 2008

There is considerable material on business continuity and risk management available on the AGPN website.

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