



## GOV - Emergency Management Policy & Procedures

Headway Gippsland Inc. takes seriously its responsibilities for the safety and welfare of its participants, staff and volunteers.

Emergencies are incidents that affect a person's safety and wellbeing and can put people at risk. This can include participants of Headway programs, staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the public.

Headway Gippsland Inc. is required through its funding body to have an emergency preparedness plan. Some events that require Headway Gippsland Inc. to enact this plan could be:

- Extreme heat
- Bushfire
- Thunderstorm
- Asthma

Headway Gippsland Inc. aims to reduce the impact that significant events have on the organisation. In some instances, a risk cannot be eliminated and therefore it is necessary to develop a plan to effectively manage this situation.

- Organise tri -annual fire safety training for staff and volunteers
- Emergency evacuation guidelines for the facility in which you are working.
- A detailed site map of the building outlining all fire equipment and entry and exit points.
- Process in place for conducting fire drills four times per year in each venue that Headway Gippsland conducts business.
- Analysis of these fire drills to determine any issues for participants in evacuations, by General Manager.
- (Eg. Hallways kept clear, mobility issues, sight issues, and cognitive impairments)
- Ensure that building owners are aware in each premise's obligations for the maintenance for the fire safety equipment.
- A detailed list of contacts for staff to use in an emergency is available.
- Headway Gippsland Inc. will ensure all venues are listed with the local authorities for notification on days of high bushfire ratings.
- Headway Gippsland Inc. will ensure those participants living independently and in receipt of NDIS Support Funding are listed on the DHHS vulnerable persons register, if they choose to do so.

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- Material Safety sheets are available for all chemicals that are used by Headway Gippsland Inc where possible.
- All staff have a minimum level 2 first aid.
- All staff working with children have a current working with children check
- Headway Gippsland Inc. has clear policies and procedures for those working with children that are accessible on the staff portal.
- All staff receive on line induction training before commencing employment.
- All staff are screened through the NDIS and receive a clear result before commencing employment
- All staff are aware of the headway after hours on call number for support and advice. (headway operates an oncall system outside of office hours 52 weeks of the year)
- All venues (where Headway provides services) and vehicles owned and maintained by Headway have an up to date first aid kit that is replenished every six months or as materials are used.
- Headway Gippsland Inc. will submit an incident report to the appropriate Government agency within 24hrs of an incident occurring through the online reporting tool CIMS
- Headway Gippsland Inc. will provide post incident follow up and critical debriefing as requested or required for those affected by an incident.
- Programs may be ceased in days of high fire, as determined by the most senior person available.
- Programs/ direct support may not be available in areas where a high risk of fire has been declared

### **Disaster preparedness and Planning**

Where required, disaster preparedness and planning will be implemented to enable continuation of critical supports before, during and after a disaster.

The Support Coordinator Team Leader must ensure Headway Gippsland is prepared to rapidly respond in an emergency. This includes:

- having an Emergency Plan in place;
- ensuring the Emergency Plan is tested and linked to broader community emergency frameworks;
- actively engaging with local emergency service agencies and local government about how to respond in different emergencies;
- regularly testing emergency management and evacuation procedures;
- being prepared to make informed decisions about staff and participant safety and whether to cease services, relocate staff or participants, or direct staff and participants to shelter indoors;

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- considering how support for participants can be continued if services need to be altered or ceased in an emergency;
- planning how to respond if critical infrastructure (e.g. Client Management System) fails during an emergency, such as power failures;
- ensuring staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency;
- ensuring all relevant contact details (such as staff, participants, next of kin, emergency services, and relevant government agencies) are up to date and available; and
- training staff to implement emergency procedures, ensuring they are equipped to address individual participant needs.

### Staff must:

- ensure all participant information, including contact details for the participant and next of kin, are up to date and easily accessible;
- consider participants' needs in a range of possible emergency events;
- communicate the Emergency Plan to relevant stakeholders, for example, participants, family members and related service providers;
- as part of support planning, ensure alternative plans for participants exist if service delivery is interrupted;
- support participants living independently to develop their own personal emergency plan; and
- notify participants and their next of kin where relevant, of all relocations and service cessations related to emergencies.

### Obtaining Emergency Information

In the event of an emergency situation, the General Manager and/or their delegate will obtain information about current and forecast conditions from radio, television the internet and its local networks The General manager will monitor Vic Emergency, an all-emergencies website for Victoria ([www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)) and can download the accompanying app. The app allows users to create a location-based profile to access official emergency-related warnings and information.

### Fire Safety

The General manager will ensure that fire equipment is installed, suitable for risks specific to Headway Gippsland workplace and be readily accessible in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards.

Signage within Headway Gippsland premises will assist people to find fire equipment quickly and identify what type of fire it can be used on.

Headway Gippsland will determine which staff require training in the use of first response procedures and fire equipment, based on the nature of their position and on risk assessment. Refresher training will be provided annually.



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The General manager will ensure fire equipment is regularly tested by Headway Gippsland local fire authority or fire equipment supplier in accordance with requirements.

Emergency exits must be kept clear at all times. Emergency exits must be kept unlocked and unblocked and all exit signs must be maintained and kept illuminated.

Headway Gippsland will also screen participants to identify people who should be listed on a Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR), that is, they meet the definition of a vulnerable person and cannot identify personal or community support networks to help them in an emergency.

Headway Gippsland will obtain informed consent from identified people and enter and maintain their information on VPRs in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services' Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy, February 2018.

### **Code Red Fire Danger Days**

A Code Red fire danger rating forecasts the worst conditions for bushfires. A Code Red day may pose a significant risk to Headway Gippsland participants, particularly those in high bushfire risk areas and Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfire (VFRR-B) extreme areas.

Staff must comply with directed actions where services are being delivered in VFRR-B extreme risk areas. Directed actions involving the relocation of participants must be completed before the Code Red day begins, although some services and participants may be exempt and may relocate early on a Code Red day.

If a home or other service location is not considered to be in a VFRR-B extreme risk area, it is still necessary to assess whether a facility or property is exposed to a high bushfire risk. This should be based on:

- local knowledge and the advice of fire services or others with relevant expertise;
- bushfire risk assessments using a combination of factors such as vegetation type, distance from vegetation and slope; and
- other bushfire risk tools such as the bushfire management overlay or bushfire prone areas.

### **Power Failure**

Power failures can be common and unexpected so the Emergency Plan should include a plan to ensure supports can continue to be provided during them. Strategies include:

having access to a phone, such as a charged mobile phone or land line that doesn't rely on electricity to operate;

having access to alternate lighting, such as a torch or a battery-operated light;

having access to a battery-powered radio;

having access to fresh water;

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considering the safety of food supplies and alternative cooking arrangements if the electricity in a participant's residence has an outage, including a plan for participants who require vitamised meals;

where participants require an uninterrupted power supply (for instance, for life support equipment) considering how they can be supported (such as contacting their electricity retailer and ensuring the retailer has the participant's up-to-date contact details), or letting the participant's supporter know to do the same;

if a participant's medication may have been compromised, contact the Coordinator to organise new medication to be dispensed.

### **Extreme Weather**

The Emergency Plan should also plan for extreme weather (such as extreme heat or cold) that is likely to occur where Headway Gippsland supports are delivered. The plan should help staff identify which participants are most at risk and the support they may require.

To support participants on extreme heat days or during heatwaves, staff must be aware of the following:

- which participants are most at risk;
- how to assist participants to reduce the risk of heat related illnesses;
- how to recognise heat related symptoms; and
- what to do if a participant is heat affected.

On days above 30 degrees Celsius, staff should encourage participants to:

- drink plenty of water, even if they don't feel thirsty;
- spend as much time as possible in cool or air conditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries or community centres);
- wear light coloured, loose fitting clothing;
- stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day;
- wear a hat and apply sunscreen;
- avoid strenuous activity, cancel or postpone outings;
- avoid alcohol and caffeine;
- close curtains or blinds to block out the sun; and
- use wet towels and cold foot baths to cool themselves down.

Headway Gippsland also requires all staff to follow the same precautions when working on hot days to ensure their health and wellbeing is maintained.

### **Organisational Resilience**

In addition to planning for the safety and wellbeing of staff and participants in an emergency, Headway Gippsland emergency planning is also based on strengthening its organisational resilience – or building the business' capacity to continue providing necessary services during emergencies.

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To support this, Headway Gippsland undertakes organisational risk assessments related to business continuity and disaster management and recovery.

### **Participant Readiness**

Headway Gippsland services may need to be changed, ceased or relocated in the event of an emergency or other service interruption. Support planning for all participants must consider how services can continue to be provided in these situations. This includes, for instance, considering how changes to services will be communicated to participants and alternative supports that could be provided should Headway Gippsland be unable to deliver normal services.

For services provided to a participant in their own home (whether rented or owned by the participant), Headway Gippsland expects that they (and where appropriate, the owner of the home) will be responsible for their own fire safety and ensure the home meets all relevant building laws, regulations and legislation.

Participants receiving services in their home should be encouraged and supported to develop personal emergency plans that cater for all types of emergencies and address their needs.

Headway Gippsland staff will support participants with personal emergency planning in the following situations:

- where Headway Gippsland provides the majority of supports required by a participant, and these supports are provided in the participant's home;
- where multiple providers support the participant and it is agreed by all providers and the participant that Headway Gippsland will support the participant with personal emergency planning; and/or
- where assessment and planning activities identify that the participant requires support with personal emergency planning.

Staff will support participants to exercise choice and control in emergency planning by listening to their needs and preferences and involving them and their families and carers in the planning process.

Key considerations include:

- health needs;
- transportation;
- location of the participant's home in regard to fire or flood risks; and
- ensuring emergency information is available and relevant for the participant.

Personal emergency management plans should:

- be appropriate to the location, physical environment and participant and staff profile;
- include planned emergency responses for different emergency situations, such as options for altering or ceasing services, relocation, sheltering and evacuation;
- include clear triggers for when the plan is activated, including processes for maintaining situational awareness and sourcing accurate and up-to-date information;



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- be tailored to meet the particular CALD needs of participants, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, to ensure a culturally responsive approach;
- outline clear authority for decision making and communication arrangements; and
- include business continuity arrangements and options should emergency services be unable to respond immediately.

Personal emergency plans should be reviewed and updated regularly as part of the participant's Plan reviews.

### **Reporting**

Incidents relating to emergencies and service interruptions should be reported in accordance with Headway Gippsland Incident Management policies and procedures.