

Procedure
5.03.8

Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Management

Department	Organisational Development & Governance
Responsible Officer	Executive Manager

Introduction/background

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a core component of good governance and is integral to Council's Enterprise Risk Management framework. BCM is the development, implementation and maintenance of policies, strategies and programs to assist Council in the management of a business disruption, as well as build entity resilience. It is the system that assists in preventing, preparing for, responding to, managing and recovering from the impacts of a business disruption event. An effective BCM framework will ensure Council is able to continue delivering critical services following a disruptive event.

Disruption-related risks may be infrequent, but have severe consequences for critical services, and are not able to be resolved by routine management. Disruption-related risks include physical and non-physical events such as natural disasters, pandemics, significant loss of utilities, financial crises, accidents, and incidents that threaten Council's reputation.

Objectives

The aim of this procedure is to provide an effective framework that equips Council to:

- Ensure services that are critical to our corporate objectives continue despite the occurrence of a potentially disruptive event;
- Stabilise the effects of a disruptive event and return to normal operations as quickly as possible;
- Minimise financial effects and impacts on service delivery targets in the event of a disruption;
- Protect Council's assets and reputation through the development of organisational resilience; *and*
- Capitalise on opportunities created by the disruptive event.

Responsibilities

The successful implementation of any Business Continuity Management System requires relevant stakeholders to commit and deliver on responsibilities assigned to each in a BCP event. Bega Valley Shire Council identifies two key roles, each with specified responsibilities to drive this BCP implementation. These roles and subsequent responsibilities are outlined below:

Business Continuity Plan Manager

- Provide a single point of contact for business continuity to the business area;
- Provide leadership to the business area for business continuity;
- Ensure that necessary resources are available in the event of a disruptive event; *and*
- Coordinate business continuity activities.

Business Continuity Plan Coordinator

- Develop the Plan, incorporating strategies, actions and resources to ensure critical services can continue to operate and be delivered through and beyond the business disruption;
- Test the Plan and train staff on its use;
- Prepare a Business Continuity Kit; *and*
- Review and update the Plan and Kit.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Business Continuity Management (BCM)	The development, implementation and maintenance of strategies and procedures to assist an entity manage a business disruption event, as well as build entity resilience. It is the capability that assists in preventing, preparing for, responding to, managing and recovering from the impacts of a business disruption event.
Business Continuity Plans	Identifies the responses the department will use to deliver a critical business function following a disruptive event. Earliest possible restoration of such functions after disruption is the main objective of business continuity planning.
Business Continuity Sub Plan	An agreed documented course of actions to be taken by the critical function in the preparation, response and recovery phases of a Business Continuity Event.
Business Impact Analysis (BIA)	The process the department uses to identify which functions are critical business functions and to ascertain the maximum acceptable outage period (MAO) for each identified function.
Critical Business Activity	Business activities are processes, procedures and actions that are required to deliver the department's objectives. They are outlined in the department's strategic plan, operational and regional plans, and other corporate planning documents.
Continuity Business Function (critical function)	A vital function of the department without which the department cannot operate or carry out its key functions. If a critical business function is interrupted, the department may not achieve its objectives or deliver its services, suffer a financial loss, result in negative reputation or image, breach a legal or regulatory requirement or fail to meet stakeholder expectations.
Critical Management Team (CMT)	A Group of individuals responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for responding to a disruptive incident. The team consists of a core group of decision-makers trained in incident management and prepared to respond to any situation.
Disruptive event	Any event which causes a significant disruption (no building/ infrastructure, no ICT, significant staff unavailability or any combination of the above) in the delivery of the department's services.
Interdependencies	Interdependencies relate to the reliance of one critical business function on another critical business function internal or external to a department or business area.
Maximum Acceptable Outage (MAO)	Maximum period of time a critical business function can be disrupted before the impact is unacceptable to the department.

Business Continuity Process

Bega Valley Shire Council's business continuity management framework involves a logical process that when undertaken in sequence enables effective decision making and facilitates continuous improvement in relation to continuity response. The steps in the business continuity management process are outlined below.

Step 1: Identify critical business activities

1. Identify the critical business activities (processes, procedures and actions) necessary for achieving Council's objectives.
2. Assess how each of the Council's departments will be impacted if these critical business activities are not provided. For example, if the business activity is not provided, how will this impact other departments in reference to the following considerations:
 - a. Fulfilment of objectives;
 - b. Service delivery;
 - c. Financial loss;
 - d. Stakeholders' expectations;
 - e. Reputation or image, *and*
 - f. Compliance to legal or regulatory obligations.
3. Determine the Maximum Acceptable Outage (MAO), the MAO is the number of business days the department can tolerate a disruption to a business activity. This number is determined by assessing the impact of losing this critical function against the length of time the department is prepared to operate without that activity. For example, activities classified as 'critical' would be allocated a MAO of 1 day. Activities that do not have such criticality would be classified as 'insignificant' and allocated a MAO of 16 or more days.
4. Prioritise critical business activities with similar MAOs.

Step 2: Identify response strategies

1. Using an 'All Hazards Approach' identify response plans that best suit the circumstances for re-establishing and maintaining continuity of Council's critical business activities. An all hazard approach indicates the organisation has:
 - a. No access to buildings or infrastructure;
 - b. No access to ICT;
 - c. Significant number of staff unavailable; *and*
 - d. Any combination of these.
2. Select the most appropriate options to continue business within the required MAO timeframe by considering:
 - a. Time and cost;
 - b. Minimum resources;
 - c. Practicality and preparation;
 - d. Transition demands; *and*
 - e. Customer impact.
3. Identify the resources necessary for each response activity. The resources that should be considered include:
 - a. Office arrangements;
 - b. Minimal level of staff; *and*
 - c. ICT requirements.

Step 3: Develop a Business Continuity Plan

1. Prepare an individual Business Continuity Plan for each Critical Business Function that has been identified. The plan must contain the following information:
 - a. Who is the plan owner and coordinator;
 - b. Impact of critical function failure;
 - c. Internal and external Interdependencies;
 - d. Immediate response: immediate actions required if function is lost;
 - e. Continuity response: actions required to ensure continued availability of the function;
 - f. Resumption Response: action required to return to normal operations; *and*
 - g. Communication Plan: key Information that must be communicated internally/externally during a disruption.
2. Consolidate all Business Continuity Plans by prioritising actions so that business functions with shorter MAO are re-established as quickly as possible. The consolidation of plans will generate the document that is to be used as the overarching Business Continuity Plan for Council. This document will be the main source of information for the Critical Management Team (CMT) when making strategic decisions regarding the management of a disruptive event.
3. The General Manager is to approve the final consolidation of plans.

Step 4: Develop a Critical Function Sub Plan

1. Each Critical Business Function must create a sub plan detailing exactly how the function intends on ensuring the continuity of its critical activities. This is an operational document that must be maintained by the critical functions' coordinator. The sub plan should be:
 - a. Action-orientated to direct people quickly in an emergency situation;
 - b. Flexible to respond to varying disruptive events within the MOA period;
 - c. Scaled as required to continue the minimum service delivery;
 - d. Practical and easy to understand so there is as little disruption as possible to service delivery; *and*
 - e. Succinct using plain English with limited use of acronyms or technical language.
2. The General Manager is to approve the final sub plan for each Critical Business Function

Step 5: Organise a Business Continuity Kit

1. Prepare a Business Continuity Kit (Kit) as a readily accessible collection of all the electronic and/or hardcopy resources identified in the Plan, including:
 - a. Business Continuity Sub Plans;
 - b. Contact details for: staff required to perform Critical Business Activities;
 - c. Stakeholders such as essential suppliers or customers; *and*
 - d. Data and information necessary to carry out Critical Business Activities including Vital Records identified in the Plan/s.
2. Store the Kit in an easily accessible location and keep more than one copy in offsite locations.

Step 6: Maintain the Business Continuity Plan and Kit

1. Test by stepping through an activation of the Plan and Kit to check:
 - a. They are fit for purpose, practical and can be activated quickly and easily;
 - b. Response and recovery results are within acceptable timeframes (MAO); *and*
 - c. Staff are trained in the use of the Plan so they know what to expect and what their role is to avoid confusion.
2. Report the results of the test to the Continuity Management Team (CMT) and update the Event Log in the plan with the date and type of test completed.

Step 7: Review the Business Continuity Plan and Kit

1. The BCP and associated Kit will undergo a review on a two-year basis or as required. The purpose of the review is to maintain the Plan and Kit so the department remains prepared for a disruptive event by checking they are current, correct, complete and actionable. Note the revision in the Plan's Event Log.
2. The Risk Coordinator will oversee the review process in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
3. The Executive Manager | Organisational Development and Governance, ensure to review is completed and signed off by the Leadership Executive Group (LEG) prior to implementation.