Emergency Management and Continuity of Services Plan

For Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd

Document Control

Policy Title: Emergency Management and Continuity of Services Plan

Date Policy Developed: 24/09/2025

Review Date: 24/09/2027

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Director, Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure the **safety of participants, staff, and visitors**, and to maintain **continuity of service delivery** in the event of emergencies or disasters, including pandemics. It provides guidance on prevention, response, and recovery to minimise harm and disruption.

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2. Scope

This plan applies to:

- All staff employed by Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd
- All participants receiving services from the organisation
- Visitors to the office or participating in community-based services

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3. Definition of Emergencies and Disasters

Emergency:
An emergency is any situation that poses an **immediate or potential risk** to the safety, health, or wellbeing of participants, staff, visitors, or property, requiring urgent action to prevent or minimise harm. Examples include:

- Medical emergencies (e.g., severe allergic reaction, cardiac arrest)

- Fire or explosion

- Security threats (violence, aggression, criminal activity)

- Utility or infrastructure failures (power outage, water failure)

- Participant-related crises (sudden behavioural or mental health escalation)

Disaster:

A disaster is a **large-scale event or situation** that significantly disrupts service delivery and has widespread impact. Examples include:

- Natural disasters: bushfires, floods, storms, extreme heat or cold

- Technological disasters: major power outage, telecommunications failure, hazardous material spill

- Public health emergencies: pandemics or infectious disease outbreaks affecting staff or participants

Key Principle:

Both emergencies and disasters require prompt action, clear communication, and documented procedures to **protect participants and staff, minimise disruption, and comply with NDIS Quality and Safeguards requirements**.

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

Director: Overall coordination of emergency and disaster responses, ensures plan is implemented, communicates with regulators, maintains emergency contact lists

Staff: Follow this plan, report emergencies, assist participants, document incidents, implement continuity procedures as required

Participants: Follow staff instructions during emergencies, report personal safety concerns

External Support: Emergency services (fire, police, ambulance), local council, healthcare providers

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5. Risk Assessment and Prevention

Soaring Sparrows staff:

- Conduct regular risk assessments for the office, mobile services, and participant environments.

- Identify hazards such as fire, medical emergencies, extreme weather, or unsafe participant environments.

- Maintain and check first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and PPE.

- Ensure staff are trained in first aid, CPR, manual handling, and infection control (including pandemic protocols).

- Identify **Essential Services:** Services that are critical to a participant's health and wellbeing are recorded in the participant's Care and Support Plan.

  If a participant has any "Essential to Life" services, these are documented in the **Risk Awareness Assessment** and noted in the **Risk Register** to ensure continuity of care during emergencies or disasters.

Definition – Essential to Life Services:
Supports or interventions that are **critical to a participant's immediate health, safety, or survival**, necessary to prevent serious harm or life-threatening situations. Examples include:

- Personal care supports required to maintain breathing, feeding, hydration, or essential medication administration

- Assistance with mobility or transfers necessary to prevent serious injury

- Medical treatments or therapies required to sustain health

- Any other service identified in a participant's Care and Support Plan as critical to survival or immediate wellbeing

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6. Emergency Communication

- Maintain an **Emergency Contact List**, including staff, participants, emergency services, and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

- Use mobile phones, SMS, email, or CRM alerts to notify staff and participants.

- Document all communications in participant notes

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7. Emergency Procedures

All Emergencies are documented as incidents in the Incident register and any relevant Participant files.

7.1 Fire

- Evacuate via nearest exit and assemble at designated meeting point.

- Call 000 and inform Director.

- Account for all staff and participants.

- Do not re-enter until cleared by authorities.

7.2 Medical Emergency

- Assess and provide first aid where trained.

- Call 000 if serious.

- Notify Director immediately.

7.3 Severe Weather / Natural Disaster

- Monitor warnings from local authorities.

- Notify participants and advise of government-issued safety measures.

- Suspend or modify mobile services if travel is unsafe.

- Document actions in participant notes.

7.4 Security Threat / Aggression

- Remove self and participants from immediate danger.

- Call 000 if necessary.

- Report incident to Director and document in Incident Register.

7.5 Pandemic / Infectious Disease

- Follow government and public health advice.

- Implement infection control measures (PPE, hygiene, physical distancing).

- Suspend or modify services if required.

- Maintain remote communication options where possible.

- Document staff and participant exposure and actions taken.

8. Continuity of Services

- Maintain up-to-date participant records to allow temporary staff to continue supports.

- Identify backup staff for mobile and office-based services.

- Delegate responsibilities in the absence of the Director.

- Review and update continuity plans quarterly.

- Prioritise **Essential to Life Services** for participants, as recorded in their Care and Support Plan, and ensure these are clearly noted in the **Risk Awareness Assessment** and **Risk Register**.

- Ensure continuity of services for participants with the highest need during widespread disruption, including emergencies or disasters such as natural events, pandemics, or service interruptions.

- Staff must be aware of which participants require Essential to Life Services and take all necessary steps to maintain these supports in any emergency situation.

- **Communication Protocol in Case of Disaster:** In the event of a disaster, contact will be made in the following order:

  1. Participant or Participant Representative

  2. Emergency Contact / Plan Nominee

  3. SIL or SDA provider (if applicable)

  4. Regular Support Worker

  5. Emergency Services

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9. Training and Drills

- Conduct annual emergency drills (fire, evacuation, medical emergencies, pandemic response).

- Include emergency procedures in staff induction and refresher training.

- Maintain records of all training sessions.

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10. Record Keeping

- Document all incidents, near-misses, and emergency responses in:

  o Participant notes

  o Incident Register

  o Staff training and supervision records

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11. Review

- Review this plan every two years, or after any significant incident, regulatory change, or service expansion.

- Incorporate feedback from staff, participants, and regulators.

Approval

Approved By: Kathryn Soar
Position: Director, Soaring Sparrows Pty Ltd
Date: 27/09/2025