



# Disaster Recovery Fact Sheet Business Recovery Checklist

▼ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY QUEENSLAND FACT SHEET

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## **BUSINESS RECOVERY CHECKLIST**

Once flood waters and cyclone damage has occurred and you've had the opportunity to address the impacts of the damage for your family, friends and community, you will then most likely turn your attention to dealing with recovering and re-establishing your business.

The checklist below aims to help you take the first steps in the business recovery process. Business recovery will be an intensive process so the sooner you can get through the initial clean up and access the support that you need to recover, the sooner you can get your business operations back to something resembling normal.

### **1. INITIAL DAMAGE ASSESSMENT**

- Can you trade or recommence operations from your usual premises?
- If not, are there other premises you can operate from? Are there other alternatives for operations while repairs occur?
- Is a clean-up possible? What do you need to enable the clean-up? Are there employees or others who can assist with this process? Refer to below section 'Before you start the Clean-up'
- Is any of your stock, supplies or equipment recoverable?
- Of the stock, supplies and equipment that is recoverable is this sufficient to resume business operations?
- How have your employees been affected? When will they be available to return to work? Are there alternatives to help balance both the business recovery and their personal needs?

### **2. INSURANCE COVERAGE**

- Contact your insurer as soon as possible to discuss the situation.
- Find out when payment will likely be made and how much the payment will be.
- Take photos and notes of the damage sustained.
- Seek legal advice or support if you do not feel you are getting fair treatment from your insurer.

### **3. COMMUNICATE WITH EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS**

- Ensure you contact your employees to keep them informed about what is happening, what it means for them, and if there is any way for them to assist the recovery.
- If you have no other option but to stand down employees temporarily, pass on this information to them as soon as possible so they can make their own arrangements to get through this period of time.
- Contact customers that have work in progress with you to advise on the status of their work, what you are doing to get your business operational, and the expected timings and impacts for their work.

- Contact key and/or valued customers or clients whether or not you have current work in progress with them. Staying in contact lets them know they are valued and they will be more likely to stay with you and push business your way.
- Contact suppliers who you have outstanding payments with. Explain your situation and let them know your plans so they know roughly when you will be able to pay. In a large natural disaster such the December- January floods, everyone knows that many businesses will be doing it tough, so you are likely to get extended terms and understanding from suppliers.
- If you have outstanding orders with suppliers and you do not need or are not yet ready to receive the order, contact the supplier and try to cancel or suspend the order. Again, most suppliers will understand when you explain the situation.

#### **4. ACCESS GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE**

- Identify any government assistance you can access (eg. Natural Disaster Relief Grant).
- Make it a priority to submit your application for support – the sooner you apply the sooner you can benefit from the assistance.
- Ensure you complete the application form thoroughly and attach any relevant documents or supporting evidence.

#### **5. FINANCIAL POSITION ASSESSMENT**

- Do you have your financial records, including profit and loss and balance sheet up to the time of the disaster available in hard copy or electronically? Can the records be restored or reconstructed?
- Do you know how much cash your business currently has available? If not, do you have the information available to create a cash flow statement?
- Use the financial data available in your profit and loss, balance sheet and cash flow statement to get a picture of the financial health of your business. What strategies or actions do you need to take to get your business back to good financial health? Talk to your accountant or other business financial adviser to discuss getting your business back on track.

#### **6. PLANNING TO REOPEN YOUR BUSINESS**

- Have you got a planned approach to reopening your business?
- Do you know what you need to do to clean up and prepare to reopen?
- Who will be involved in the clean-up and preparing to reopen?
- Have you communicated to these people?
- Have you prioritised activities so you know what you need to do and when in order to have a smooth transition back to reopening?
- Do you know how much the cost will be to reopen your business and how you will fund this activity?
- Have you thought about your plan for marketing and promotions to your existing and new customers?

- Does your plan take into account the effects of the disaster on the market, including your customers and clients? Given the number of businesses affected by the disaster, what do you need to do with your business to ensure you survive and get back to normal as soon as possible?

## 7. BEFORE YOU START THE CLEAN-UP

- Contact your insurance company **before** you start any cleaning. Can you begin rebuilding or repair work immediately or do you need to wait for your insurance company to inspect or authorise repairs?
- Ensure undamaged stock is in a secure location to minimise theft.
- Contact your local council for information on cleaning and kerbside pickup. Consider
- If you sell food, contact your local council to find out if you will require an environmental health inspection before you begin trading again.
- Keep the health and safety of you and your staff in mind. Consider whether water may have caused damage to electrical wiring, fittings and or equipment; flood waters may have compromised building structures.