



Issue 74

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Insight aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Occupational Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

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Business Continuity after Cyclone Debbie

At a regional level, in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the subsequent flooding emergency, response and recovery systems are being assessed and a major review has been ordered by the Police, Fire and Emergency Services Minister Mark Ryan into how Queensland disaster management groups responded to ensure that "lessons were learned".

Whilst Business Continuity Management is recognised as an important part of the planning which is necessary to successfully manage business disruptions, many business don't use the opportunity after an event to assess (or re-assess) these arrangements.

Larger organisations typically have very structured business continuity plans in place, while medium and smaller business use 'response strategies' to manage disruptions and often these are not documented systems.

There is tendency, particularly after a business disruption event for complacency to set in. This is especially true if the organisation was not severely impacted by the event or if the event by-passed the direct area within which the organisation operates.



In the lead up to Cyclone Debbie, practical preparations were put in place across a number of regional areas, ranging from sandbagging to mobilising electricity maintenance workers to areas where they would most likely be needed to effect repairs. Much of this preparation came from the lessons learnt from past events.

As a business, being well prepared for a disaster event can provide an opportunity to create a competitive advantage. An interview was heard with a local bakery owner the day before the Debbie impacted the region where the baker stated that they would remain open "as long as they had electricity", implying that if there was no



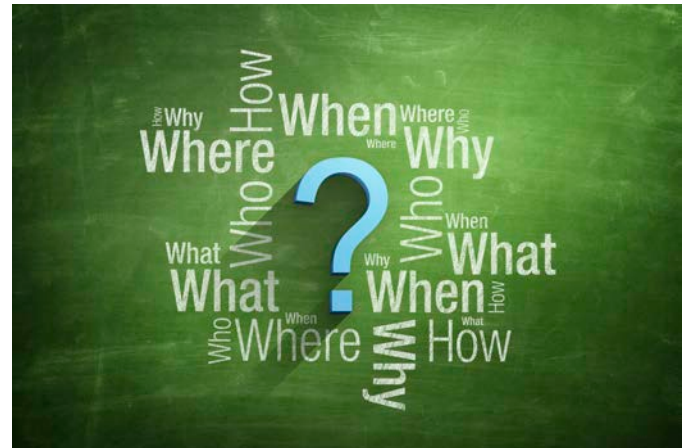
electricity they would have to close. During disaster events, businesses cannot always rely on outside agencies for utilities such as power, water and communications, and often it is those businesses with effective alternate plans that not only limit their losses, but also create a positive image to both their customers and the community at large and use adversity to create opportunity.

It is important to remember that a BCP, no matter how well crafted, is useless if no-one in the organisation understands it or is prepared at short notice to implement it. Most business, by this time after the event, would have passed the immediate recovery phase, and now is a good time to assess whether the BCP was understood, properly utilised, and effective. A formal review and testing of Business Continuity arrangements whilst it is fresh in peoples' minds benefits organisations by ensuring that lessons learnt are not simply relegated to water cooler stories and anecdotes, but are formally documented within the business continuity planning arrangements.

QRMC can provide advice and assistance in facilitating the review for your organisation's BCM needs. [Contact us](#) for an obligation-free discussion or quote.

Auditing Planning to prevent poor performance

While an audit process is never intended to review everything on the site or within the organisation, as it is based on a snapshot in time, it is important for the organisation to undertake prior planning in order to ensure that the audit process is based on an appropriate sample of the operations undertaken at the site. While the sample does not need to be statistically based, it does need to be representative.



The selection of the sample needs to consider:

- The full range of 'groupings' within the overall workplace population – whether this is executive management, line managers, supervisors and the workers;
- All the various small teams of workers within the workplace – such as the electricians, mechanics and cleaning staff, as well as any contractors;
- The legislative duties that relate to the work – for example, is the organisation a designer of plant or importer of hazardous chemicals?
- The hours of operation – any out-of-hours work can present a heightened level of risk with minimal management support;
- The range of work being undertaken, and the related risk exposures; and
- The location of the work – is it done on another site, a construction site, or within client's workplace; and if so how safe are these workplaces? Is there a 'work from home' component and if so how is this managed?

To get the most out of the audit process all these elements need to be considered during the audit planning stage. Naturally the effectiveness of the on-site audit process is also dependent on the thoroughness of the review of the related documented management system.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information about our auditing services.



Next Safety Networking Group Meeting

The City of Gold Coast will host the next meeting of the Safety Networking Group on Friday 16 June at the Coomera Indoor Sports Centre. Topics will include a presentation on Managing WHS for the Commonwealth Games.

ABOUT THE SNG:

In 2005 QRMC founded the Safety Networking Group for senior safety professionals in SE Qld. QRMC continues to coordinate and arrange for speakers to present at quarterly meetings and discuss information on contemporary WHS issues. Group members also share information from their workplaces or industries, which other members frequently find interesting and useful.

More information on the Safety Networking Group can be found on our website. Senior safety professionals contemplating attending meetings in Brisbane can contact QRMC.

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**RISK MANAGEMENT
SAFETY MANAGEMENT
BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

QRMC Risk Management Pty Ltd

ABN 43 119 425 991

PO Box 199,
Brisbane Q 4001

 (07) 3229 1744
 enquiries@qrmc.com.au
 www.qrmc.com.au