



QPASTT

Queensland program of assistance
to survivors of torture and trauma

COVID-19 Risk Management and Business Continuity Statement – 23 March 2020

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, QPASTT has developed a Risk Management and Business Continuity Plan. The Plan focuses on protecting the health and safety of clients, staff and stakeholders while ensuring that our clients and communities from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds continue to be supported to the best of our capacity throughout the duration of the pandemic.

Approach to Managing Risk

As a first step, QPASTT established a COVID-19 response team who is regularly monitoring and reviewing information, as well as developing and implementing the COVID-19 response plan. Our decisions are made based on expert advice from the Queensland Department of Health, and the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.

The Plan incorporates actions across the following areas:

- Response planning and risk mitigation based on possible scenarios including service delivery as usual; awareness raising and hygiene protection; social (physical) distancing, selective isolation and partial work from home; complete work from home; and complete office closure;
- Developing of organisation specific safeguards and prevention control;
- Effective communication to promote accurate awareness and robust procedures to mitigate risk;
- Monitoring of public, client, community and stakeholders' information;
- Safe workplace safeguards – keeping people and working environment safe;
- Client and community vulnerability safeguards – responding to emerging need;
- Organisation safeguards – enabling service continuity

To ensure a safe workplace environment and slow the spread of the virus we are promoting and facilitating good hygiene practices and physical distancing among staff, clients and stakeholders. Staff have been encouraged to: (i) ask clients about recent overseas travel and/or respiratory symptoms; (ii) notify management if they or their close family members develop respiratory symptoms; and (iii) stay home if they develop respiratory symptoms.

Business continuity

Our Business Continuity Plan is based on client and community vulnerability safeguards to ensure vital support service delivery is maintained as much as possible. For each possible scenario, the Plan reviews and assesses duty roster, group work and activities, generic support to all clients, targeted support to most vulnerable clients, crisis intervention, other agency collaboration, and supervision to staff.

From this week (23 March 2020) most of our staff will be working from home and continue communicating with and supporting clients using a variety of technologies. We have suspended our face to face group work and community activities and events. We are working with government and other stakeholders to ensure gaps in service provision for refugee and asylum seeker clients and communities are addressed during the pandemic, and communities receive reliable and culturally appropriate information regarding COVID-19.

We are continuously monitoring the situation and assessing changes in circumstances, and will adapt our plan based on both government advice and our organisation safeguards.

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