



# Connecting with Australians through times of disaster and crisis.

A support kit for Business and Government



Australia Post

## Contents

<b>Foreword.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Keeping Australians connected in times of need.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Your customer and community support checklist.</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Partnering to help keep Australia strong.</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our focus on supporting communities.</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Disaster and crisis support services.</b>	<b>8</b>
Distributing essential supplies.	8
Providing access to cash and banking services.	8
Keeping people informed.	9
Providing access to Government assistance.	10
Supporting communities in need.	10

This toolkit is provided for general information purposes only and is not an exhaustive guide. It is not intended to be specific advice for your individual or business needs.

# Foreword.

The year 2021 has shown us that Australians have a remarkable ability to unite in the face of a crisis – and that turning that solidarity into action is critical for helping individuals and communities manage and recover from a disaster.

Living in a land of extremes, Australians are not unfamiliar with flood, fire, storm or cyclone.

But when a crisis or natural disaster strikes close to home, it's not easy to know what to do. Emotions run high. Uncertainty can overwhelm a rational response. That's why being prepared ahead of time is really important.

This support kit looks to aid businesses and Government organisations in their planning and preparation ahead of disaster and crisis to best support their customers, employees and the community. The kit also includes the services and offerings Australia Post can partner with you to provide to help support impacted Australians when they need it most.

A coordinated, organised response - especially one where individuals and organisations follow a well-thought-out, well-documented plan - can deliver far better outcomes for customers, neighbours and communities.

And knowing how to partner with other organisations, across a range of sectors, and being able to make use of their particular strengths, capabilities and assets, has the potential to dramatically reduce the impact

on you, your organisation and the people in your community, by sharing the load. This holds true not just as a crisis is unfolding, but also during the all-important recovery effort.

As an iconic Australian organisation, with a presence in almost every corner of this nation, Australia Post is proud to play a part in helping Australians when times are tough. We've learned a lot during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, and this knowledge informs, in part, the way forward.

Australians are incredibly resilient, but the more we can do to boost our crisis-readiness, the more we'll contribute to the nation's collective resilience.

If we work together, and prepare ahead of time with the help of people who've been through it before, we can make a difference.



**Gary Starr**  
EGM, Business,  
Government &  
International

# Keeping Australians connected in times of need.

The past two years have tested Australians' resilience more than any other time in living memory.

From the 2019-20 bushfire disaster, the floods that followed in NSW and Queensland, to the ongoing crisis and devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic on lives and livelihoods, there's never been a greater need for business and Government to prepare for and adapt to uncertain times.

Helping people stay connected is key to providing vital support in periods of crisis, whether that means ensuring essential supplies reach those in need or giving businesses the tools to adjust to a post-pandemic world.

Australia Post is well-placed to assist business and Government in supporting their customers and communities with disaster preparedness and mitigation. Our partnerships and resources mean we can help provide access to critical services and supplies to Australians when they need it most.

Batemans Bay Post Office on NSW's south coast is just one example. During the 2019-20 bushfire disaster, locals relied on the Post Office as a link to information, a place to use the internet, and even a source of power when electricity was cut. Locals came in to charge their phones, get cash out and simply talk to someone familiar.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought its own challenges in terms of business and Government delivering services and support during a crisis, and in communicating important information to the community.

Australia Post has risen to the challenge and implemented a range of systems

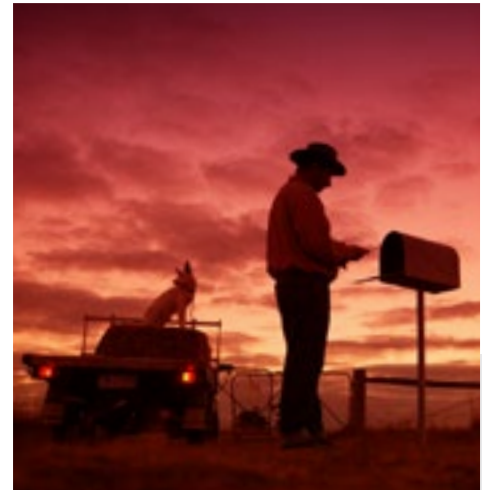
and processes that's made it easier for Government and businesses to connect with communities and customers across Australia.

Throughout the pandemic, for example, Australia Post's Pharmacy Home Delivery Service has delivered essential medical supplies to over 24,000 vulnerable Australians from over 1800 pharmacies across the country.<sup>1</sup>

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, our partner, Beyond Blue has seen an average monthly increase of 30 percent in demand for their support services. We're helping to support Australian communities by actively promoting the Beyond Blue NewAccess service; promoting the Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing support service and resources; and developing social media videos featuring Beyond Blue motivational speakers.

There's no doubt the pandemic has set a new precedent for the way services are communicated and delivered, and for how Government and businesses can utilise these services to better support and prepare themselves, and their communities and customers.

Our vast retail footprint, existing digital capability and extensive letters and parcels delivery network, means that Australia Post can rapidly reconfigure and deploy omni-channel services in times of crisis, working with businesses and government to build more resilient communities.



We're helping keep all Australians connected:



**4,300+**

Post Offices nationwide.



**2,500+**

Post Offices in rural and remote locations in Australia.



**12.4 million**

delivery points throughout Australia.



**64,000+**

team members across our network.

1. [Media Release: Australia Post extends essential medical supplies deliveries to support vulnerable community members](#). Australia Post, 25 September 2020

# Your customer and community support checklist.

## Distribute essential supplies

### **Be prepared to distribute essential supplies at short notice.**

If there's a need for certain supplies on the ground that your business can provide, Australia Post can work with you to plan the best way to transport items and freight to disaster-affected areas.

### **Establish plans for the distribution of bulk supplies and large items.**

With 15,600+ vehicles and access to a dedicated fleet of freighters, your Account Manager can discuss available solutions to help you deliver vital support quickly to where it's needed most.

### **Encourage donations from customers in non-affected areas.**

Cash donations are the most effective way of helping impacted communities. Use your business communications to encourage monetary donations to Australian Red Cross or other charities to enable them to provide immediate support.

## Provide access to cash and banking services

### **Implement a solution to provide fast financial relief to those in need.**

Disburse emergency cash to disaster-affected communities through their nearest Post Office.

### **Promote the availability of agency banking services\* at Post Offices.**

Let customers and communities know they can transact with more than 80 banking institutions at participating Post Offices in their area through our Bank@Post service.

### **Communicate with customers in affected areas about available emergency relief.**

Provide timely and accurate information about Government and other financial aid programs for those in need.

## Keep people informed

### **Leverage Australia Post's channels for distribution of information.**

In-store displays at the nearest Post Office can be used to provide critical news and updates to customers and the community.

### **Help keep the lines of communication open.**

Let your customers know that Australia Post offers free 12-month Mail Redirection<sup>#</sup> for victims of natural disaster.

### **Engage with your customers and the community.**

The Australia Post website provides continuous updates on service disruptions when a disaster strikes. Use your business communications to direct customers and communities to reliable sources of information to advise them of important changes.

## Provide access to Government assistance

### **Help disaster-affected individuals identify themselves, even without physical identity documents.**

Offer in-store identity checks through Post Offices to help individuals access aid quickly.

### **Enable agencies to work remotely with minimal interruption in the wake of a disaster.**

Establish digital workflows with Decipha - Australia Post's inbound information management service - to ensure agency staff can review and process applications from anywhere with an internet connection.

## Support communities in need

### **Encourage eligible groups to apply for an Australia Post Community Grant.**

Eligible not-for-profit organisations can apply for grants of up to \$10,000 which can help improve connection and mental health and wellbeing in local communities.

\* Bank@Post is an agency service provided by Australia Post on behalf of over 80 financial institutions. Bank@Post is available at participating Post Offices. Services available are cash withdrawals, deposits and balance inquiries. Consult your financial institution for terms and conditions of the Bank@Post service. Limits apply.

# This offering is available for eligible customers only. Terms & Conditions apply, please visit [our website](#) for more information.

# Partnering to help keep Australia strong.

Given the complexities of the natural disaster recovery process, pre-planning and coordination is essential. The recovery process should draw governments, non-government organisations, businesses, communities and individuals together. More will be required of all. Neither individuals nor any one level of government will be able to cope alone.<sup>2</sup>

Across sectors, organisations have unique strengths, capabilities and assets to contribute. Leveraging them has the potential to strengthen Australia's national resilience. Part of this idea puts the philosophy of 'shared responsibility' – which emerged from the devastating impact of the 2002–03 Australian bushfires – into practice.<sup>3</sup>

As people in crisis look for support and reassurance, Australia Post is one of the entities they turn to. For others not directly impacted, we are relied upon for our major infrastructure and network – to help them connect and contribute to the recovery effort.<sup>4</sup>

Australia Post can work with you to service five essential community needs that emerge in the wake of an emergency event:



**Distributing essential supplies**



**Providing access to cash and banking services**



**Keeping people informed**



**Providing access to Government assistance**



**Supporting communities in need**



## More than a postal service – the Batemans Bay story.

Bushfires tore through Batemans Bay on New Year's Eve in 2019, destroying 460 homes.<sup>5</sup>

In the face of such devastation, the Batemans Bay Post Office quickly transformed into a community hub. With banks closed and ATMs offline, residents used Bank@Post services to withdraw cash.

The Post Office offered free Mail Redirection and Mail Hold for those who had lost their homes, and the building's generator provided electricity for charging phones and using the internet. Some residents even used the Post Office as a gathering place, where they could have a chat with fellow community members or grieve together.<sup>5</sup>

2. [Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report](#), 28 October 2020

3. [Disaster and its impact on mental health: a narrative review](#), Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care, 31 October 2019

4. [Australia Post submission to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements](#), 15 May 2020

5. [In difficult times, human connection matters](#), Australia Post, 24 June 2020

# Our focus on supporting communities.

Through a range of programs and partnerships, Australia Post supports individuals, businesses and communities across Australia.

We're committed to making a positive impact in three key focus areas:

**Disaster preparedness, response and recovery;**

**Mental health and wellbeing; and Literacy.**

## Our community-focused partnerships.



### Australian Red Cross

Australia Post has joined Australian Red Cross as a National Community Partner, to support our commitment to helping communities prepare for – and recover from – events like bushfires, flood and drought.<sup>6</sup>

Our efforts involve using our Post Office networks in high risk areas to be disaster-ready and the targeted distribution of resources to help people think about what they need to do to be prepared. We've also helped with the distribution of information about the availability of Australian Red Cross cash relief grants as part of recovery efforts following drought and Black Summer fires.

**Learn more** about our disaster response focus.



### Indigenous Literacy Foundation

Access to books and literacy programs help young Australians learn, and can provide building blocks for future opportunities. That's why we've partnered with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) to help them with the delivery of culturally relevant books and learning resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote communities across the country.

As part of our three-year partnership with the ILF, we support the Book Supply Program, and will deliver almost 300,000 books to more than 350 remote Indigenous communities over the life of the partnership.<sup>7</sup>

**Learn more** about our literacy programs.



### Beyond Blue

Australia Post and Beyond Blue<sup>8</sup> have formed a national partnership to help Australians stay mentally well and build stronger, more connected communities. Together we use our vast network to help deliver information that supports mental health and wellbeing across Australia. Because when we connect, we feel better.

**Learn more** about our mental health focus.

6. [Supporting communities](#), Australia Post website  
7. [Improving children's literacy](#), Australia Post website  
8. [Supporting mental health and wellbeing](#), Australia Post website

# Disaster and crisis support services.



## Distributing essential supplies.

From food and clothing to educational materials, the need to deliver everyday necessities to impacted communities and individuals is typically one of the first considerations when disaster strikes.

### Our unrivalled delivery network

With over 64,000 team members, 15,600+ vehicles, 12.4 million delivery points and more than 4,300 Post Offices across Australia, our network has the scale and reach to deliver smaller care packages and medical supplies to individuals and manage larger bulk distribution to service providers.<sup>9</sup>

This extensive network also means that businesses can continue to deliver items to customers without disruption during times of disaster and crisis. We support businesses in providing continuity and assistance to their customers when it's needed most.

Establishing a plan for distributing essential items and assistance, and having contingency plans for road closures, grounded flights or other logistical issues, can help us mobilise quickly to get vital support into the hands of Australians when needed.



## Providing access to cash and banking services.

When ATMs are offline, banks are closed or inaccessible, and card transactions are disrupted, people need access to cash to purchase essential items. This can be especially important for those in rural or remote areas, where the Post Office may be the only place to bank for miles.<sup>10\*</sup>

### Bank@Post\*

Bank@Post\* allows customers of more than 80 banking and financial institutions to make withdrawals and deposits, and check balances at over 3,500 participating Post Offices around Australia.\* The service also enables banks to give their customers access to emergency relief funds during a crisis.<sup>10</sup>

### Emergency cash disbursements

Australia Post's cash disbursements service also supports agencies and other organisations with the distribution of emergency relief funding. Recipients are sent a barcode by phone, email or physical mail, which they then present at their nearest Post Office to obtain emergency funds.<sup>10</sup>



9. Australia Post Annual Report, 2021.

10. Australia Post submission to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, 15 May 2020

\* Bank@Post is an agency service provided by Australia Post on behalf of over 80 financial institutions. Bank@Post is available at participating Post Offices. Services available are cash withdrawals, deposits and balance inquiries. Consult your financial institution for terms and conditions of the Bank@Post service. Limits apply.





## Keeping people informed.

Staying connected in times of crisis is important to stay safe and support recovery – because when we connect, we feel better.

Power outages can make digital communication difficult or impossible during a disaster, and more than 2.5 million Australians are not online to begin with.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the destruction of homes can result in people no longer being able to receive physical mail at their home or business address.

### Helping to keep people connected

In a 2020 survey of 2,020 Australian consumers, commissioned by Australia Post and conducted independently by Bastion Insights, 63% of respondents said they would find it valuable to receive information about local services, including bushfire and flood evacuation sites, from in-store displays at the Post Office.<sup>12</sup>

Our Post Offices can help emergency services and other providers inform Australians about how to prepare for potential disasters and provide essential information and updates in the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

We can also help businesses assist their customers in times of crisis with information about our services - such as using the Australia Post app for Mail Redirection and Mail Hold services - and encouraging them to use Collection Points to retrieve their items from the Post Office.

Our digital channels can also be useful tools for sharing updates with Australians. During the 2019–20 bushfire crisis, hundreds of thousands of people turned to our website for service updates.<sup>13</sup>

With a robust information distribution plan in place, we can help you share important news with your communities and customers and help them feel less isolated in times of disruption.



### Going above and beyond.

Adapting to evolving circumstances quickly was critical when delivering aid to Victorians impacted by the bushfires in 2019–20.

When bushfires left farmers struggling to feed their livestock, a team from Dandenong Letters Centre (DLC) in Victoria led a convoy to deliver three truckloads of hay to Gippsland.

Wayne Bezzina, the Delivery Manager from DLC received donations from his local community of Arthur's Creek, and with money raised by the DLC and Research Delivery Centre teams, they were able to deliver a whopping 98 bales of hay and 60 small squares.

The team members involved gave up their long weekends to take part in the convoy to help deliver these important farming supplies.<sup>11</sup>



11. [Australia Post submission to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements](#), 15 May 2020

12. [Digital inclusion and COVID-19 CSI Response](#), Centre for Social Impact

13. [Effectiveness of Mail for Government, 2020](#), Bastion Insights. N=2,020



## Providing access to Government assistance.

The sooner Australians can apply for, and access, Government grants and funding, the sooner individuals, families and communities can start working toward recovery.

### Identity verification

Australia Post's in-person identity checks can help verify the identity of those who have lost personal documents during a disaster – such as a driver's licence - which is important for helping facilitate aid.

We can also assist businesses in ensuring customers impacted by disaster receive any goods they've ordered. If a customer has redirected parcels or mail, Australia Post can verify their identity, so they can collect their items.

### Document digitisation

When a crisis keeps agency staff from working in their office, our Decipha document digitisation service enables organisations to review and process letter applications for aid and support, from any remote work location.

Decipha also allows businesses and organisations to keep the lines of communication open with their customers, clients and employees in disaster affected areas.



## Supporting communities in need.

Australians have proven their willingness to pitch in during disasters. Australia Post's Community Grants and Workplace Giving initiatives can help support impacted communities.

### Community Grants

The Australia Post Community Grants program invites not-for-profit community organisations to apply for grants of up to \$10,000. The program is subject to strict eligibility criteria and organisations must deliver community benefits aligned to the enterprise Community strategy.

### Workplace Giving

We also run a Workplace Giving Program that provides the opportunity for eligible Australia Post Group employees to make a pre-tax donation to charities they are passionate about. Donations can be made to any charity registered on the Good2Give platform used by many organisations. Australia Post matches donations made by eligible employees up to \$200 per year per employee.



## The giving spirit of Australians.

Since November 2019, we've supported Australian Red Cross by helping to raise more than \$1.6 million for their Disaster Response and Recovery Fund.

This includes accepting more than \$1.2 million in over-the-counter donations at Post Offices, more than \$41,000 via a donation link on the Australia Post website and \$62,000 from the Australia Post Workplace Giving Program, in addition to a \$200,000 donation from the creation of our Disaster Relief Stamp Packs.

This contribution helps Australian Red Cross to provide immediate on-the-ground physical and psychological assistance to communities in times of need.

Our alliance with Australian Red Cross is now stronger as we have entered a formal long term partnership. Australia Post is now a National Community Partner and Official Postal and Logistics Provider of Australian Red Cross.



We welcome the opportunity to build long-term partnerships with organisations that share our belief in the importance of reliable disaster preparedness, response and recovery for all communities, consumers and businesses. Together, we can help serve Australians to the best of our abilities when the next disaster hits.

**Get in touch with your Account Manager or Service Partner today to discuss how Australia Post can help you support Australians and your customers when they need it most.**



**Australia Post**