

General Practice Disaster Preparedness

4 December 2025



AGENDA

 Emergency Response Planning Tool (2 Minutes)

 National Health Service Directory (2 Minutes)

 Reviewing and Updating a Business Continuity Plan (2 Minutes)

 Early Warning Systems for Heatwaves (2 Minutes)

 Cold Chain Preparedness in General Practice (2 Minutes)



Emergency Response Planning Tool (ERPT)

Purpose & Overview

- ☁ **Cloud-based tool** developed by **Healthpoint** with the **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)**.
- ⚙ Generates a **customised emergency response plan** tailored to your practice's structure and needs.

How It Works

- ✍ Practices input key operational details → ERPT produces a **practice-specific plan** and **recovery roadmap**.
- 🔄 Regular updates maintain relevance, protecting **staff safety**, ensuring **service continuity**
- ⚙ Contingency planning covers a range of scenarios including :
 - ⚡ Power, water, or telecoms failures
 - 💻 IT/data system loss or cyber incidents

Why It's Useful for General Practice

- 📄 Provides **step-by-step actions** for staff during emergencies resulting in **minimal disruption** to patient care.
- 🏥 Demonstrates **proactive risk management** to patients, insurers, and accrediting bodies.

Key Takeaway

- 📄 The tool will create an emergency response plan which is individually tailored to your general practice.


Key Resources

- 📄 The GCPHN fund ERPT licences so please get in touch if you are interested in using the platform– shannonh@gcphn.com.au




National Health Service Directory (NHSD)





Purpose

 A **national online directory** connecting patients with healthcare providers and services in their local area.

 Used by both **patients** and **health services** to find, share, and refer to available care options.

 Managed by **Healthdirect Australia**, with over **1 million searches each month** – accuracy is essential.

Why It Matters for Your Practice

-  Ensures patients can **find your practice easily online**.
-  Maintains **accurate, trusted contact and service information** across national health platforms.
-  Supports **continuity of care** by improving referral accuracy and patient access.
-  Prevents misinformation that could lead to **missed appointments or service delays**.

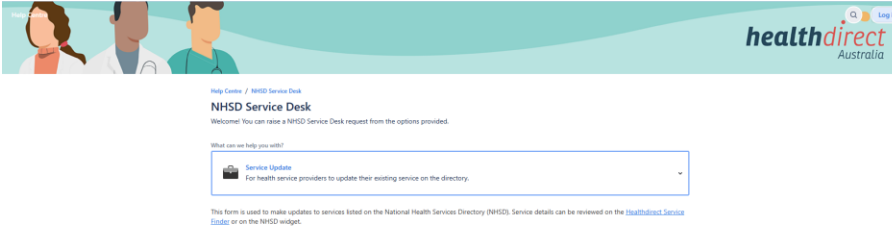
Key Resources

 Refer to the healthdirect website – [Service Finder](#)

How to update your details

You can update your practice information in two ways:

- Directly via NHSD – using the [NHSD Service Update form](#). For assistance or corrections, contact nhsd@healthdirect.org.au
- Via [Provider Connect Australia™ \(PCA™\)](#) – link NHSD in PCA™ and update once and publish to healthdirect's NHSD and other partners.



The screenshot shows the 'NHSD Service Desk' interface. At the top, there's a header with 'Help Center / NHSD Service Desk' and 'healthdirect Australia' logo. Below the header, a welcome message states: 'Welcome! You can raise a NHSD Service Desk request from the options provided.' A dropdown menu is open, showing 'Service Update' as the selected option. Below the dropdown, a description reads: 'For health service providers to update their existing service on the directory.' At the bottom, there's a small note: 'This form is used to make updates to services listed on the National Health Services Directory (NHSD). Service details can be reviewed on the [Healthdirect Service Finder](#) or on the NHSD widget. Required fields are marked with an asterisk *'.

Already registered?




Search your practice in the healthdirect [Service Finder](#).

- If listed, follow the steps below to update your details.
- If not listed, see the registration information [here](#).






Reviewing and Updating Your BCP




Why It Matters

-  A **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** outlines how your practice continues essential services during and after disruptions.
-  Regular reviews ensure the plan remains **current, practical, and aligned** with changing risks, staff, and systems.
-  RACGP recommends **annual reviews** or after significant events, ensuring readiness for accreditation and emergencies.

Key Risks

-  Risks and staff roles evolve — outdated plans can create confusion in critical moments.
-  Keeps emergency contacts, suppliers, and resources up to date.
-  Supports **compliance with RACGP Criterion C3.3** (contingency planning) and strengthens audit outcomes.

When to Review Your BCP

-  **Annually** – routine review and simulation testing.
-  **After incidents** – pandemics, natural disasters, cyber events, or power failures.
-  **When changes occur** – new staff, relocation, system upgrades, or policy changes.

Benefits of Being Prepared

-  A **regularly reviewed and updated BCP** will help you recover faster, and with less impact to your practice and patients

Key Resources

-  Refer to the Queensland Government Business continuity planning template or create within your ERPT.





Protecting vulnerable populations from Heatwaves

Why It Matters

🔥 Queensland is among the **most heatwave-prone regions** – and many vulnerable populations often **don't perceive heat as dangerous**.

Key Findings (2022 Survey – 547 QLD adults aged 65+)

📊 **37% of all hospitalisations** due to extreme heat (2019–2022) were among **people aged 65+** (AIHW, 2023).

📈 **25%** aware of heatwave health impacts.

❤️ **87%** had chronic conditions; **30% unaware** this increased heat vulnerability.

Barriers & Influences

🔥 Cultural normalisation of heat (“part of life”) reduces perceived risk.

⚠️ Messages seen as less urgent than other natural disaster warnings.

🧠 Factors like **knowledge, perception, and communication**, not age or gender, shape behaviour.

What You Can Do

🗣️ Reframe heatwaves as a **serious health hazard**, not just “hot days.”

📢 Improve **risk communication** and **message reach** to share targeted advice to at risk patients.

👥 Encourage patients to develop **personalised heat action plans** for at-risk groups.

Key Resources

📄 Refer to the Extreme heat and heatwaves stakeholder toolkit 2025-26





Cold Chain Preparedness in General Practice


Why It Matters

 Vaccines are **temperature-sensitive biological products** – even short breaks in the cold chain can make them ineffective.


Core Elements of Cold Chain Preparedness to ensure things don't go wrong!

 **Policy & Procedure:** Maintain a written cold chain policy aligned with RACGP and National Vaccine Storage Guidelines.

 **Staff Training:** Ensure all staff understand procedures for temperature control, breach response, and documentation.

 **Emergency Plan:** Develop a cold chain contingency plan covering power failure, fridge breakdowns, or transport delays.

Reporting

 APPENDIX 3 of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing national vaccine storage guidelines (4th Edition) outline the requirements for reporting

 Report via the QLD Health Reporting Form [Cold Chain Breach Reporting Form](#)



COLD CHAIN BREACH REPORTING FORM

- Use this form to report any cold chain breach (CCB) for any temperature excursions outside of +2°C and +8°C (excludes fluctuations up to +12°C lasting no longer than 15 minutes). Includes any temperature excursions in the Purpose-built vaccine refrigerator (PBVR) or during transportation, outreach clinics or temporary storage (esbies/coolers).
- The person who noted the cold chain breach is to complete this form.
- Please email the completed form to the Immunisation Program at QHIP-ADMIN@health.qld.gov.au
- For information about vaccine storage, refer to the National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5
- It is a requirement for ISPs to have an up-to-date Immunisation Management Protocol (IMP) lodged with your local Public Health Unit (PHU).

Note: Only PBVR are approved for storage of vaccines - contact your local Public Health Unit for further information

Practice name	
ISP number	
Date breach reported	
Date of breach	
PBVR 1 - Location of PBVR (e.g. pharmacy, treatment room)	
PBVR temperature range during a CCB (e.g. minimum 8.2°C to maximum 10.4°C)	PBVR Min Temp °C <input type="text"/> PBVR Max Temp °C <input type="text"/>
Duration of breach	Please select one: <input type="text"/>