

**The Gold Coast Primary Care Partnership Council met at the GCPHN offices on 12 September 2024.**

### Panel Members/Presenters:

- David Youseff, Principal Advisor Disaster and Emergency, City of Gold Coast
- Lois McCreddan, Director Disaster, Emergency and Business Continuity, Gold Coast Health
- Kay Drabsch, Officer - Emergency Services, Australian Red Cross
- Blaize Van Niekerk, Senior Project Officer (Mental Wellbeing and Disaster Response), GCPHN

### Attendees:

- Troy Nichols, Kalwun Development Corporation
- Nicole McClure, Diabetes Australia
- Tracey Mackie, Momentum Collective
- Susan Gardiner, Runaway Bay Doctors Surgery
- Tenille Griffiths, Dementia Australia
- Toni Eachus, Goldbridge Rehabilitation
- Kellie Trigger, GCPHN
- Sian Daniel, Bond University
- Rob Libeau, The Noledge House
- Ben O'Rourke, Relationships Australia
- Jessica Slack (PCPC Chair), Bolton Clarke
- Jordana Northwood, Nerang Neighbourhood Centre
- Susan Sullivan-Green, GCPHN
- Kerry McCormick, GCPHN

### Apologies

- Malcolm McCann, Gold Coast Health
- Nicole Langsford, General Practice Gold Coast
- Julie Jomeen, Southern Cross University
- Deanna Romain, Cancer Council Australia
- Sheree Sheridan, Ozcare
- Ben O'Rourke, Relationships Australia
- Shane Klintworth, Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast
- Ryan Tatnell, Bluecare
- Kate Macleod, City of Gold Coast
- Renata Jones, Multicultural Families Org Inc.
- Matt Lunn, Gold Coast Health

## MEETING TOPIC:

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

As the Gold Coast approaches storm season, PCPC members discussed disaster preparedness with a panel of representatives from:

- **City of Gold Coast** - leads the disaster management for severe weather, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, and other events.
- **Gold Coast Health** - leads disaster management for heat waves, pandemics, and biological and radiological incidents.
- **Australian Red Cross** - are often appointed to evacuation centres to assist and reunite displaced people by connecting them to human-recovery services.

The City of Gold Coast's Disaster Management Plan outlines the GCPHN's role as:

*"mobilise and coordinate primary healthcare services quickly to provide the appropriate care, reducing burden on hospitals before, during, and after a disaster".*

Nationally, there are calls to formally include the role of primary care, particularly GPs, in the disaster plans. The RACGP have made some recommendations to government including:

- Keeping local General Practices open and operational as essential services
- PHNs to keep a register of GPs for deployment at evacuation centres/willingness to scale up services
- Training to prepare for work in an evacuation centre
- Red-tape reductions including Medicare compliance activities

**PCPC members shared their experience during disaster events, such as severe weather and flooding:**

DISCUSSION	IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION
The capacity of evacuation centres to cater for people presenting without a carer.	Vulnerable populations require extra support to prepare for disaster events to ensure that their individual needs are met.
People receiving support services often, but living at home, have multiple providers.	Clarification is required on which provider would take the lead for an individual's disaster preparedness and welfare checks during disaster response and recovery.
Locating vulnerable individuals during disasters is challenging.	While some people with serious chronic conditions are registered with Energex's Life Support Program for priority reconnection during power outages, this opt-in service misses rough sleepers and other vulnerable people.
People often rush to evacuation centres without essential mobility aids, continence supplies, medications, and dosage information.	At the centres, no resources are allocated to access these supplies or assist these individuals, who are often elderly. Disaster preparedness to include a care kit with essential items
Disaster support services scaling down too quickly, limits long-term support for the community.	Reducing support services too early can be as traumatic as the disaster itself.
Knowing which information sources are providing reliable, accurate and timely information.	Clearly identify, to the community, who the lead agency is for public information and where credible, accurate, timely and consistent messaging can be obtained during a disaster or emergency.

## NEXT STEPS

- PCPC members are encouraged to complete the Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Resilience topic evaluation survey sent after the meeting.
- Information provided during the meeting and through the topic evaluation survey will be collated and will assist GCPHN with planning disaster and emergency preparedness activities for primary care.