

Aged care facilities boosted by disaster toolkit

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A free national resource is helping aged care providers ensure they are

optimally prepared for fires, floods and other emergencies, equipped to respond comprehensively and recover swiftly.

The Toolkit for Assessing Disaster Resilience for Aged Care Facilities is the culmination of a two-year project to create a unique resource for aged care providers to assess their ability to sustain operations, adapt and be self-reliant in the face of adversity.

Developed by Flinders University's Torrens Resilience Institute (TRI) with funding from the South Australian and Australian Governments, it includes a scorecard that measures the four components of resilience, together with practice scenarios for use in training exercises.

"The resource was developed in response to the lack of a readily available disaster resilience resource for this sector," says Professor Paul Arbon, Director of the TRI.

"Disruptive events are inevitable and organizations that are well prepared are better able to deal with them, then get back to normal operations as seamlessly as possible—minimizing their consequences.

"Aged care providers must be particularly diligent given the vulnerability of their populations and the associated challenges, so this toolkit is finetuned to their specific needs."

A total of 12 facilities in South Australia completed the scorecard during its testing. Professor Arbon says staff and managers who participated reported that the process helped them think more broadly and consider a range of critical aspects such as accountability.

"Completing the exercise is more important than the actual score," he says. "The process brings teams together to build understanding, connect and agree on priorities, and this forms the foundation of [resilience](#)."

Large South Australian aged care provider Resthaven has worked with the TRI on earlier research and was pleased to be involved in testing the scorecard. Chief Executive Officer Darren Birbeck explains: "Resthaven commenced its involvement in the testing of the Resilience Scorecard during 2017, with the Earthquake and Flood Resilience scorecard.

"The process not only helped to raise discussions around preparedness activities and understanding of the risks that could impact our residential aged care homes, it also facilitated the education and sharing of information relating to the sites, and identified gaps in engagement with site teams.

Mr Birbeck says a risk was identified at the Resthaven Leabrook residential site during the completion of the scorecard, which they were able to action.

"In 2018, Resthaven also took part in the improvement of the scorecard to become an all-hazard scorecard, including bushfire risk.

"As part of this project, generators were installed at all Resthaven residential homes and Head Office.

"The scorecard benefited Resthaven by identifying risks, and analysing systems and processes in place to support the continuity of service in the event of an unforeseen disaster."

The TRI is one of Australia's longest-standing research institutes dedicated to disaster preparedness and management. It guides government policy, prepares communities and empowers people to minimise the impacts of potential emergencies.

More information: Toolkit for Assessing Disaster Resilience for Aged Care Facilities: [www.flinders.edu.au/torrens-re ... -institute/resources](http://www.flinders.edu.au/torrens-research-institute/resources)

Provided by Flinders University

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