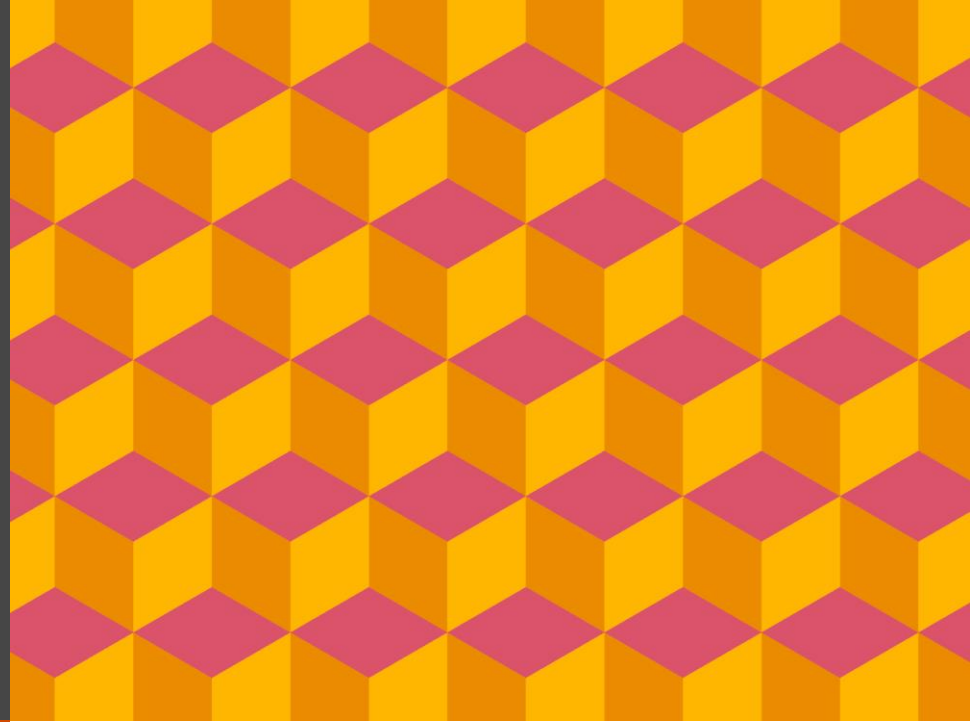


# Managing Coronavirus risk Not-for-profit sector



March 2020

Coronavirus is a complex and evolving issue. The information contained within is accurate at the time of this report and is not a substitute for the guidance and direction provided by the Government. Organisations should keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 information and advice, to ensure that they take action to address health and safety risks, and that such action is properly considered and appropriate.



# Overview

The spread of COVID-19 continues to present significant challenges for people, organisations and the economy, both globally and domestically.

The World Health Organization has now declared it as a global pandemic. It is still a complex and rapidly evolving situation with over 140 countries reported at least one case of COVID-19\*.



The pandemic event has caused economic shocks, temporarily shutting down borders and sectors in the economy, impacting people's way of life and creating a huge demand for essential services. The not-for-profit sector needs to find a way to navigate through these challenges and uncertainty and continue to serve their purpose.

\* 19 March 2020

The crisis presents the not-for-profit sector with several significant potential challenges. The various activities and services the not-of-profit sector engages in or provides which may be at risk or may become a risk for others. This document provides insights into some of the factors which should be considered.



**Short-term response and long-term resilience to emerge stronger**

# Key considerations for the not-for-profit sector



## Leadership and Governance

- Use the opportunity to communicate and demonstrate clear purpose and values
- Review and refresh business continuity plans and establish a core team overseen by the CEO to provide the framework and strategic guidance, supported by an extended team to address the specific actions
- Initiate a regular forum for senior executives to discuss and document plan and issues, assign clear responsibility and timeframe
- Review and revise any delegations to allow for speed of decision making during planning and execution
- Document all key decisions made which impact finances, operations, stakeholders
- Consider re-prioritising other business initiatives and timing to allow capacity for response to the coronavirus
- Review insurance policies in place (in cases of business interruption) and notify insurers
- Be audit ready and document compliance for any government agencies to review and assess KPI performance
- Continue to motivate staff and volunteers across all areas and levels



## Staff and Volunteers

- Have clear and definitive policies in place to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers
- Stay up to date with government directives
- Understand your legal position and policies with respect to staff employment and leave entitlements
- Review responsible/key positions and establish deputies in case of unavailability. Establish essential staffing model and explore virtual working environment for staff and volunteers to work remotely if possible
- Ensure staff and volunteer contact details and emergency contact information is up to date and are in a form that enables mass communication, eg. database with sms or email facility
- Plan for fluctuations in volunteer numbers and time commitment
- Emphasise the importance of identifying symptoms and staying at home if any symptoms are shown or staff and volunteers have been exposed to the virus
- Let people know that it is ok if they cannot serve, some may push through illness which is a risk of feel bad if they cannot continue. People must feel comfortable to decide for themselves and the organisation think longer term.
- Have carelines for all staff and volunteers.

# Key considerations for the not-for-profit sector (cont.)



## Crisis communications

- Appoint a key spokesperson and agree a clear approval process for communication
- Key messages should show the duty of care the organisation has for all stakeholders. There should be timely and concise communications with the latest updates and information
- Develop stakeholder specific communication plans, including what their requirements are and the best methods of two-way communication
- Tell people how and when you will communicate with them and create avenues for people to raise concerns. This may include website information and direct information to email, messenger accounts, hotline
- Pre-draft media and communication for the risk that someone contracts the virus and details that can be released in relation to safety practices
- Ensure your contact lists are up to date and that the database enables mass communication and have system on standby for broadcasting messages to all stakeholders.
- Raise issues with funding providers early regarding inability to meet funding and grant related KPIs
- Coordinate internal and external social media to identify trending issues
- Have open communication channels between key personnel across the organisation to identify risks and issues, and create a risk management plan



## Finance and Operations

- Urgently review cash flow forecasts and develop several cash flow scenarios (adjusting any underlying assumptions to reflect current environment) to determine how long you can sustain operations using fund/grant income or whether reserve funds would need to be drawn down
- Prioritise provision of essential goods and services ahead of non-essential to maximise reach and impact and halt discretionary spending
- Monitor debts and borrowings and assess whether any facilities can be refinanced
- Explore options to apply for government relief, temporary financial assistance funding and consider discussing with Funding Providers whether grants could be repurposed for critical or urgent essential community needs
- Consider adjustments to staff pay to reflect business impact, including a short term reduction in pay or deferring payment to free up cash flows
- Consider alternative fundraising ideas such as virtual seminars and workshops or crowd sourced funds
- Forecast and create a response plan for any shortfall in supplies required to service the community and consider alternative sourcing options
- Discuss with critical suppliers/landlords extensions to payment terms, repayment holidays
- Consider collaborating with other not-for-profit organisations to combine funds and resources
- Review insurance policies in place (in cases of business interruption) and notify insurers

# Engagement and collaboration in a virtual world

“ “ For a while, life is not going to be the way it used to be.

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Dr. Anthony Fauci  
Director, National Institute for Allergy  
and Infectious Diseases, USA

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# Principles for stakeholder engagement in these challenging times

## Trust in leadership



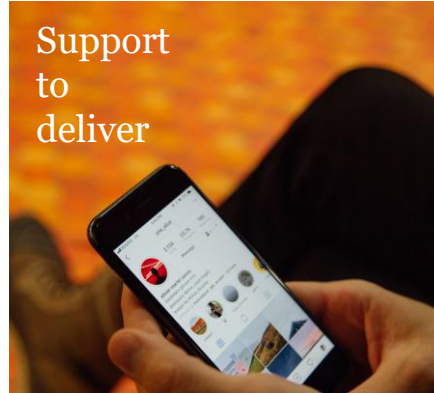
Your staff, volunteers and stakeholders will be looking to leaders at this challenging time. They won't expect you to have all the answers in an evolving situation, but will appreciate hearing that you're working on it - and that you continue to care and appreciate them.

## Clear direction



While much is unknowable in the short term, the long-term purpose of your organisation still stands. Reiterating your vision and commitment could provide much-needed comfort - as will clearly communicating what's not changed, what new measures are being put in place, and what you are doing to help.

## Support to deliver



With more people having to work from home, virtual channels to connect and deliver are more important than ever before. Consider how best to provide direction to your staff, volunteers and stakeholders in these virtual times. If they do not have access to specific apps and platforms, consider using a dedicated page of your website for audience-specific updates. This should include sharing the sources of support available to them in difficult times.

## Connect with purpose



Involvement with a purposeful organisation fulfils an important role in people's lives – including a sense of community with their fellow staff and volunteers. When usual channels such as physical get-togethers and events are not possible, it's vital to create new ways for people to continue connections with the organisation they love. This can be anything from a multi-person videoconference, to sending something in the mail, to simply picking up the phone to ask someone how they are.

# Leading in a crisis

## Be calm and considered in response



The global circumstances caused by COVID-19 are changing daily, if not hourly.

We can't predict the future, but it is becoming clear that times ahead will be tough – and leaders will face difficult decisions now and in the future.

Responses must be considered and measured, as appropriate for the circumstances.

**Your stakeholders will look to leaders for example,** and the way you respond – from the tone of voice, to the setting and the medium – all affect how a message is received. Taking a calm approach will help to lessen fear and uncertainty that staff, donors and volunteers may be feeling.

Make the best decisions with the information available to support health and wellbeing and the viability of your organisation. Don't overcommit, or respond in a knee-jerk manner.

## Articulate the process



The truth is, we don't know where we're headed, but **the endpoint is not as important as the steps we take to get there.**

Leaders need to talk about what's changing – and what's not – to the best of their ability at any given point in time.

Where possible, acknowledge the knowns and unknowns in the situation, to give people an understanding of the assumptions and clarity about what is going on.

Change is constant right now – decisions need to be made quickly and actions swiftly taken. Communications must be consistent and frequent so that everyone can stay up-to-date.

In a fake news world, it's more important than ever to use credible sources, rooted in fact rather than sentiment. Use trusted sources as a basis for decision-making.

## Speak authentically

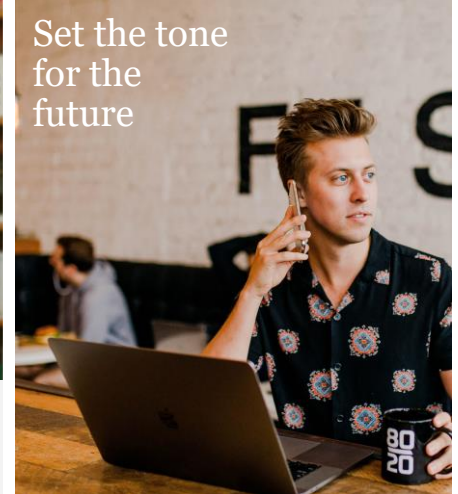


We are all in this together – which means we're all having similar experiences.

**Australians are looking to leaders for support.** The best way to do this is to demonstrate it through action.

Speaking authentically about how it is affecting you. By opening up the conversation, you are giving employees permission to feel and act as humans do – creating connection, and supporting a positive culture that focuses on what can be done, rather than being overwhelmed at what can't.

## Set the tone for the future



We are clearly facing trying circumstances, but with it there is also opportunity.

It looks as though we will continue to live and work differently in the months ahead. Inadvertently, we have a perfect storm to try, test and iterate new ways of working.

Setting a positive tone now will **support your people, donors and volunteers to adjust and adapt to the future.**



# Engaging with stakeholders during turbulent times



## Communicate with clarity

Have clear, consistent messages that address both your people's concerns and your organisational needs – making the complex simple.



## Connect as a community

Feeling connected to a shared purpose and a sense of community, particularly in these isolating times, is vital to motivating teams.



## Co-create with your people

Developing a new normal can't be done by a select group of people – everyone should be able to contribute.



## Communicate with clarity

Have clear, consistent messages that address both your people's concerns and your organisational needs – making the complex simple.

### Align the internal with the external for your people

Employees will be looking for internal and external clues about what is going on.

Assume that everything that goes internal will go external, and vice versa. Communicate with both audiences in mind.

Consider both business needs and the impact on people. Balance factual information with empathy, as needed for your audiences.

Strong leadership is essential. Agree on who the appropriate spokespeople are for your organisation. Less voices are preferred to many.

### Speak with a clear, single voice

With COVID-19 dominating everything from headlines and emails to socials, it is more important than ever to be considered and consistent with communications. A clear, single voice will give your people confidence.

Messaging always takes time to land with audiences – now, more than ever, don't assume one communications touch point is enough for your audiences.

Ensure internal stakeholder alignment

Communicate regularly – even if nothing has changed.

Consider the appropriate tone of voice. Factual communications should be precise and honest. Communications about people should be empathetic.

Messaging doesn't need to be one-dimensional – it can be nuanced, but it must be clear and simple.

### Communicate with direction and intention

In a noisy environment, it can be hard to know what messages take priority. Being clear about what you want to elicit from your communications will ensure they are successful.

Connect to the broader story, ensuring the 'why' is covered as much as the 'what' and 'how'.

If you want action, be clear about what that is, and how your audiences (e.g. leaders and employees) can be successful.

Consider using headlines that communicate the response you want e.g. for information or for action.

Write communications with the audiences in mind, using a frame such as 'think, feel, do' for what you want audiences to experience or action as a result.



## Connect as a community

Feeling connected to a shared purpose and a sense of community, particularly in these isolating times, is vital to motivating teams.

### Concentrate on your purpose

Now is the time to be focusing on your core business – doing what's most important to maximum effect.

People instinctively want to contribute to something greater than themselves. In times of uncertainty, your purpose gives a strong focal point that people can connect with and feel pride and satisfaction in working towards.

Revisit your purpose and articulate what it means to your business during the current circumstances. Consider how the actions of your people can contribute to achieving your purpose.

Using the purpose as a guide gives a decision-making tool that can clarify why particular tasks will be put on hold for the time being.

### Live your values

Values guide the way we act and the cultural attributes we hold dear. In times of uncertainty, fear and a sense of a loss of control can take over, causing people to experience reinforcing cycles of negativity.

Your organisational values are important in helping people to feel in control and positive.

Focus on recognition and reward of your people who demonstrate your values in times of change.

Consider refreshing the behaviours that underpin your values at a time where people are likely to be working remotely or in different patterns.

### Team first

Working distantly from one another makes people feel isolated. It's important to give people ways to feel part of the team – even if the team isn't physically together.

Create regular check in rhythms that let your team connect – such as a virtual daily standup, or regular points throughout the day.

Consider which parts of your work would be hardest to do remotely, or in different patterns, and establish new ways of working that ensure the feeling of a team remains strong.

### Create and strengthen a sense of community

We're all going through this together.

The stories that are shared directly impact how people feel, creating connections between people and reducing fear and uncertainty.

Create psychological safety so that people feel that it's normal to feel uncertain or anxious and that it's ok to talk.

Amplify messages about how your people have positively responded to working in new ways. Tap into people's desire to help in a crisis.

Share stories that instill pride and purpose – building on the cultural strengths that already exist in the organisation.

Don't shy away from tough conversations. Be prepared to speak authentically and vulnerably about the challenges we are facing.



## Co-create with your people

Developing a new normal can't be done by a select group of people – everyone should be able to contribute.

### Establish effective listening loops

As important as it is to be heard, it's also important to listen to others. Presentations with dialogue and discussion will be more impactful than without.

Create feedback loops to let you know what your organisation is experiencing – especially if people are not physically co-located.

Create space in meetings or forums to have conversation. Consider giving people questions in advance so they have time to reflect.

### Engage employees to design solutions for business challenges

It's not up to leaders to have all the answers – it's up to them to create space for the team to get the answers they need. A solution built by many will work better than a solution built by one.

Consider how you increase the 'group genius' of your teams by bringing in people with different thoughts, experiences and perspectives.

Articulate the big questions that the business is facing, and then give people the opportunity to design the solution.

### Give people the tools to test, learn and iterate

Working virtually requires new skills and capabilities – whether it's learning how to navigate a new technology, or holding a meeting in a different format. Humans are natural problem solvers, so give your people the tools and the time to figure out how to best use them.

Rather than a 'build it and then they will come' mentality, start with the minimum needed so that people can begin quickly – whether it's dusting off something existing, or building something new.. Leverage people's willingness to 'have a go' in a crisis.

Give people access to tools and resources – even unconventional ones – to help them learn.

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