5.28	**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

Applies to: All Staff	**Version: 1**
Specific responsibility: HECIS CoOrdinator, President	**Date approved: 6/9/2016**
	Next review date: Aug 21

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	
Legislation or other requirements	
Contractual obligations	

POLICY STATEMENT

HECIS is committed to responding to emergencies calmly, immediately and with identified and effective priorities for the safety and wellbeing of staff, volunteers and visitors to the service.

HECIS acknowledges that staff members may have personal obligations to their own families (including dependent children and parents, animals/stock and personal property) that conflict with the priorities and procedures of HECIS during an emergency, and will endeavour to include these when planning and assessing what decisions are required.

PROCEDURES

Critical responsibilities

- The physical safety of staff members, volunteers and visitors.

- The emotional wellbeing of staff members, volunteers and visitors.

- Reliable communication with staff members families and their dependants, and emergency services

Every emergency situation will involve different contextual elements and therefore require a unique and considered response from staff members and the HECIS Management.

Decision making skills may be significantly affected by the stress of emergency and crisis situations. Therefore clear parameters for decision making will support staff and management members in making appropriate decisions in emergency situations.

Triggers and goals will support the staff in their decision making, and support staff and management to make the best possible decisions under the pressure of an emergency.

Emergencies common to the Hawkesbury are adverse weather events causing localised flooding and bushfire emergencies.
In some cases, we will need to decide whether or not to open the service, and in other cases, whether to close during the day.

Emergency response procedures and planning is a standing agenda at staff meetings, and staff members are encouraged to develop their own personal emergency response plans.
Where the plan impacts the ability of a staff member to undertake their duties for HECIS, staff should discuss this with the **HECIS CoOrdinator**.

Staff members are required to provide HECIS with a current '*Staff Emergency Contact Record'* which includes emergency contact information, and details of any dependants that are to be included in a personal emergency response during HECIS work-hours.

Triggers
The following situations will trigger a review to determine if it is appropriate to open the HECIS service, or to send staff home and close the service,

1. Adverse weather:
   - flood warnings for :
     - bridges over the Hawkesbury/Nepean River at Windsor, North Richmond, Yarramundi and McGraths Hill at South Creek
     - low lying areas of the Hawkesbury LGA including Pitt Town, Londonderry etc.

2. Fire danger ratings:
   - **extreme or catastrophic**

3. Bushfire threatening staff members homes (in Hawkesbury or Blue Mountains LGA)
   - **Severe, extreme or catastrophic**

Consider: *Is it safe for HECIS to open or remain open?*

1. Is expert advice required to determine if it is safe to open?

2. Can staff members and volunteers safely travel to the office, and to outreach areas to undertake service delivery?

3. Is it safe for staff members and volunteers to travel home?

4. Is expert advice required to determine if it is safe to travel?

5. Can the environment (both HECIS office and outreach sites) be kept warm/ cool/ safe?

6. Can food and drink be provided and stored appropriately?

7. Can we communicate with staff and volunteers when they are offsite?

8. Can staff members and volunteers communicate with their families and dependants?

9. Do staff members need to return home (or elsewhere) to meet their personal obligations to family and property?

The decision to open or close the service is the responsibility of the **HECIS CoOrdinator** or if unavailable, the **HECIS President.**

In all situations, the most important priority is the physical safety of staff members, volunteers and visitors of HECIS, followed by their emotional safety, the ability to communicate with their families, and with emergency services.

Emergency Services:

Fire, Ambulance, Police:	000 or 112 (mobile)
Police (safe travel)	www.police.nsw.gov.au
Roads & Maritime Services (RMS)	www.livetraffic.com for roads/transport status updates
State Emergency Service:	13 25 00 www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Rural Fire Service:	000 for emergencies 1800 679 737 (general information) www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Potential Emergency Situations

Evacuation:
Follow emergency evacuation procedure from the HECIS WHS Manual WI- Evacuation Procedure
- Fire alarm sounds, staff/volunteers and visitors assemble at outside meeting point
- Fire warden checks building on exit, close doors, collects in/out board, mobile phone, first aid kit, key and visitors sign in book.
- Carry out roll call.
- Call emergency services (if appropriate)
- Remain at evacuation meeting point until all clear is given

Lockdown:
Follow Lockdown procedure from the HECIS WHS WI-Lockdown Procedure
- Lockdown signal sounds, or if discrete approach is required, use of '***RedFile'*** code word
- Staff assemble inside the building and/or inside a HECIS Office (as appropriate for situation)
- Senior staff member collects the in/out board, mobile phone, key, first aid kit (if appropriate0
- Carry out roll call (by phone if staff are lockdown in separate offices)
- Call emergency services (if appropriate)
- Remain in lockdown position until all clear is given.

Fire:
- Carry out regular evacuation drills for staff members at least every three months (and on various days of the week)
- Evaluate each evacuation drill and identify any improvements required
- Ensure regular checks of 'back to base' fire alarm system (maintained by Hawkesbury City Council).
- Ensure maintenance of smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and fire blankets (maintained by Hawkesbury City Council)
- Notify any fire alarm and fire safety equipment issues to Hawkesbury City Council

Bushfires threatening staff member's homes:
- Monitor SES, RFS and livetraffic websites for current status and predicted conditions
- **HECIS CoOrdinator** to discuss with individual staff members: their needs and priorities regarding evacuation of family and animals/asset protection
- **HECIS CoOrdinator** to approve staff members leave of absence from HECIS if requested by staff member

Flood events threatening access routes to/from staff member's homes, and outreach areas where service delivery is undertaken:
- Monitor SES and livetraffic websites for current status and predicted closures
- **HECIS CoOrdinator** to discuss with individual staff members: their needs and priorities regarding evacuation of family and animals/asset protection
- **HECIS CoOrdinator** to approve staff members leave of absence from HECIS if requested by staff member

All Emergency Situations:
- Ensure an available and reliable means of communication to be used in an emergency, and in evacuation and lockdowns (HECIS CoOrdinator or Office Manager Mobile phone)
- Maintain a current list of contact numbers and emergency information for staff members on paper (Staff Contact folder)

+DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	WHS Manual
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	Staff Emergency Contact Record WHS Manual WI-Emergency Evacuation WHS Manual WI-Lockdown Procedure

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	**Person responsible**	**Approval**
Annually	HECIS Co-Ordinator	Management Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	**Date Approved**	**Approved by**	**Next Review Due**
1	14.8.17	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2018
2	3.9.18	HECIS Co-Ordinator	Aug 2019
3	20.8.19	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2020
6	15.9.20	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2021