
MEDIA RELEASE

FREE WORKSHOPS TO HELP SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES PLAN FOR BUSINESS DISRUPTIONS

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) no longer have to trust their luck when it comes to surviving disasters and other disruptions, thanks to a series of free workshops that will help them tailor continuity tools used by big business to their own enterprise.

2011 was a particularly bad year for natural disasters and in terms of global economic impact it was the costliest on record.

While large-scale natural disasters tend to capture headlines, however, statistically the most common causes of disruption to business are manmade, with the prolonged loss of power (either electricity or gas), failure of a key supplier, or equipment breakdown, are the main causes, according to a survey conducted by the Business Continuity Institute (BCI) Australasian Chapter.

The BCI Australasian Chapter will be conducting 13 free **Business Continuity for SMEs Planning Workshops** during February and March 2012 around Australia. Supported by funding from Enterprise Connect, the workshops are aimed at introducing Australian SMEs to the benefits and practices of business continuity. Not only will they help SMEs plan for disruptions large and small – they may also improve their business bottom line at the same time.

“SMEs are more vulnerable to business disruptions than large organisations for many reasons,” says Mr Tim Janes, the Australasian Chapter President, and one of the organisers of the Business Continuity for SMEs Planning Workshops.

“This is because they are often single site operations where the loss of the site means the business is closed, or they may concentrate on small markets or areas that can be wiped out by a wide-scale natural disaster,” he adds.

“They have smaller financial reserves to tide them over through periods of disruption, and with 90 percent of Australian businesses employing less than 20 people, there are fewer staff to support the business when homes, schools and local communities are affected.”

Business continuity planning’s benefits are not limited to hedging your bets against a one-off natural disaster, says Mr Janes.

“Other bottom line benefits to the business include reduced reliance on insurance cover and improved insurance terms,” he continues, adding that better staff retention, increased customer confidence in service reliability, better understanding of the organisation, its operations and the risks it faces, and meeting compliance expectations of regulators, boards and business associates also flow from better continuity planning.

“The workshop will help organisations to anticipate and plan for disruptive events,” he says. “They will demonstrate how SMEs can adapt established business continuity methods to suit the characteristics of their own organisation.”

The interactive half-day workshops will be delivered by a local business continuity expert and will provide practical information and real-world examples on;

- good practice business continuity principles and methods;
- how to apply principles and practices in your organisation;
- how business continuity can reduce disruption and deliver value.

“Workshop participants will leave with practical business continuity concepts and tools that will help to build resilience in their workplace,” says Mr Janes. “As well as the knowledge that they don’t have to leave their fate to luck, participants will also get a year’s free Affiliate membership of the Business Continuity Institute which will give them access to extensive ongoing benefits.”

Workshop Details

Locations	Dates - February 2012	Locations	Dates – March 2012
Townsville City Centre	13 February 2012	Brisbane City Centre	5 March 2012
Perth City Centre	14 February 2012	Sydney, North Ryde	6 March 2012
Penrith City Centre	14 February 2012	Canberra City Centre	6 March 2012
Newcastle City Centre	15 February 2012	Gold Coast City Centre	12 March 2012
Adelaide City Centre	21 February 2012	Hobart City Centre	13 March 2012
Melbourne City Centre	28 February 2012	Wodonga City Centre	13 March 2012
Geelong City Centre	29 February 2012		

A brochure for the event can be [downloaded](#) from the [BCI Australasian Chapter website](#), (www.thebci.org.au) where participants may also register to attend their local event.

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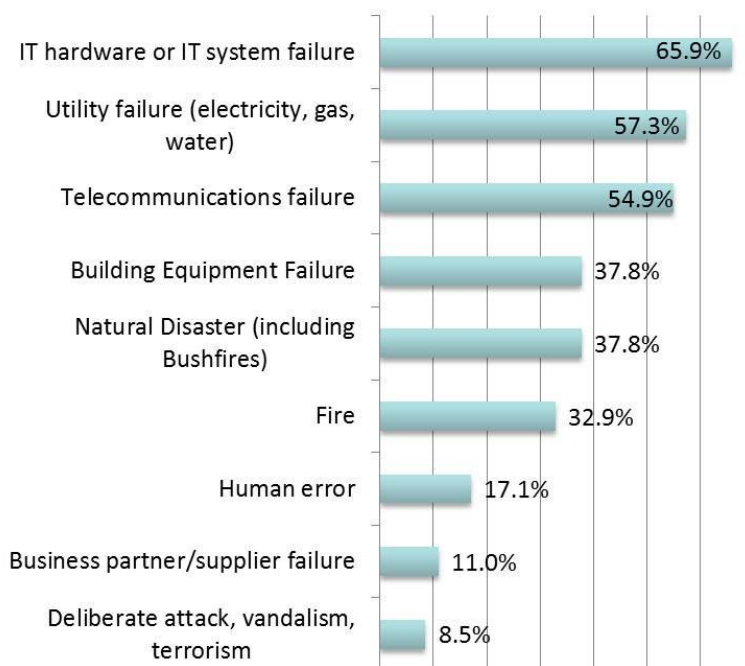
Additional Background Information

1. Results of the 2009 Business Continuity Survey, undertaken by the Business Continuity Institute Australasian Chapter of businesses in Australia and New Zealand demonstrated that man-made events were the most common causes of business disruptions in the preceding two years. (See *graphic on page 3, and attached JPG file*).
2. Research by the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry just after the 2011 floods found that:
 - One in five businesses in Queensland were affected as a result of the floods due to full or partial water inundation, loss of power or being cut off from their business.
 - The average number of days business were forced to close was eight days.
 - The average number of days before their business returns to normal operations was 31 days.
3. While experts debate whether the frequency of natural events is increasing overall, several other factors influence the frequency or impact of disruptive events. They include:
 - An increasing dependency on technology and IT to support business operations causes greater potential for disruption when the technology fails
 - Increasing expectation of rapid service delivery, and the expansion of ‘Just in Time’ production has led to less tolerance of disruption in supply chains (as shown by the Japan earthquake in 2011)

- More people are moving into areas prone to natural disasters. In Australia, the sea/tree change trend puts more people closer to areas vulnerable to bushfires, cyclones or flooding. Internationally, many low lying coastal areas subject to storms and flooding have been developed as economies and cities expand.
 - Greater media awareness of disruptive events and real time reporting, increasing public perceptions that disruptive events happen more often.
4. In response to the natural disasters of 2011 and 2010, a significant focus of the recent APEC meeting in Hawaii was on improving resilience to disaster across Asia Pacific through risk reduction and private sector preparedness.

Measures agreed by Ministers attending the event included encouraging SMEs to develop Business Continuity Plans and developing and strengthening Public-Private Partnerships that support business and community resilience to disasters.

The Business Continuity for SMEs Planning Workshops are being funded by Enterprise Connect, part of the Federal Department of Innovation, Industry, Science & Research as part of Australia's commitment towards the APEC objective.



Australian Organisations Experiencing Major Disruption. 2007 to 2009

Source. *Business Continuity Benchmarking Survey 2009*

About the Business Continuity Institute

The Business Continuity Institute (BCI) provides guidance and support to business continuity practitioners. The BCI currently has over 5000 members in 90+ countries. The BCI provides internationally recognised certification of members' competence to carry out business continuity management (BCM) to a consistent high standard. The BCI Australasian Chapter promotes awareness and

About Enterprise Connect

Enterprise Connect is a \$50 million a year Australian Government initiative that provides support to eligible Australian small and medium sized businesses. Core services include a Business Review for eligible businesses at no charge to firms and grant assistance to implement recommendations flowing from the Business

understanding of business continuity in Australia and New Zealand. The BCI Australasian Chapter organises regular forums and events in Australia and New Zealand. Visit <http://www.thebci.org.au> for more information.

Review. For more information visit www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au or call the Hotline on 131 791.