

The Crisis Readiness Checklist

30 questions every Australian organisation should be able to answer before the phone rings. Tick what is true today — not what the plan says should be true. Score yourself on page 2.

1 Before anything happens — the plan

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- ☐ A written crisis plan exists, and the executive team knows where it is
- ☐ The plan has been reviewed in the last 12 months
- ☐ It has been tested at least once — a walkthrough or scenario, not just circulation
- ☐ It covers the crises most likely for **your** organisation, not a generic list
- ☐ Legal, insurance and regulator notification obligations are documented, with timeframes
- ☐ There is a plan for the crisis beginning after hours, on a weekend, or in the holidays

2 People — who does what

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- ☐ A crisis team is named: decision-maker, spokesperson, legal, operations, communications
- ☐ Each role has a deputy, in case the principal is unreachable or is the story
- ☐ The spokesperson has been media trained in the last two years
- ☐ After-hours contact details for the whole team are current and held in more than one place
- ☐ External advisers (legal, communications, technical) are identified **before** they are needed
- ☐ Reception and frontline staff know exactly where to route a media call

3 The first hour

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- ☐ A holding statement template exists that can be adapted and issued inside 60 minutes
- ☐ It is agreed who must approve public statements — and the list is short
- ☐ Facts are logged from the first call: what is known, what is assumed, what is unknown
- ☐ Someone is assigned to monitor media and social channels from the outset
- ☐ Staff are told before, or at least at the same time as, the public
- ☐ Nobody speaks "off the record" — the organisation's position is the only position

4 The first 24 hours

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- ☐ Stakeholders are mapped and sequenced: regulators, government, staff, clients, community, media
- ☐ Direct notifications go to those who should not learn from the news
- ☐ Statements are updated as facts firm up — corrections are made openly, never quietly
- ☐ All enquiries and responses are logged in one place
- ☐ Operational response and communications response are coordinated, not parallel
- ☐ Someone is watching for the second-day story: what will tomorrow's question be?

5 Afterwards — the part everyone skips

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- ☐ A debrief is held within a fortnight, minuted, with actions assigned
- ☐ The plan is amended with what the crisis taught you
- ☐ Stakeholder relationships strained by the event get a repair plan, not just an apology
- ☐ Media coverage and sentiment are reviewed to measure the reputational position
- ☐ Legal and insurance follow-ups are closed out
- ☐ The next test of the plan is booked

GAPS TO CLOSE FIRST

Your score

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- Under 20** Most organisations are here — and most find out during the crisis. The gaps above are your priority list.
- 20–27** The framework is there; testing and after-hours readiness are usually the weak points.
- 28+** Well prepared. The remaining items are the ones that fail under pressure.

WHEN IT HAPPENS AFTER HOURS

Whatever your score, if the phone is already ringing: calls to Ace Strategies are answered around the clock by a senior adviser — not a switchboard, not a callback form.

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