



Business Continuity Management (BCM) – Best Practice – Case Study

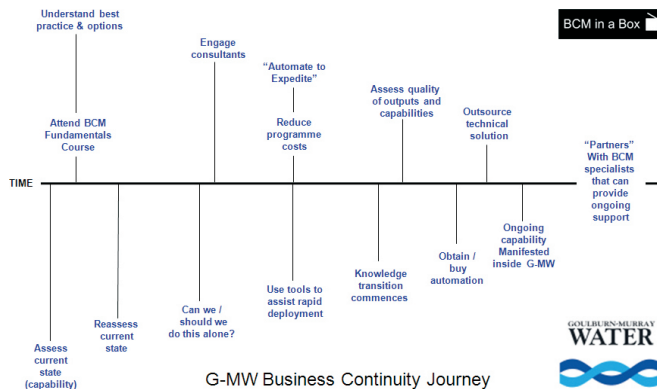
Introduction: Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) is the third largest Water Authority in Australia and manages water storage, delivery and drainage systems across the region known as ‘the food bowl of Victoria’, which depends on a reliable, affordable water supply to survive. G-MW is a Critical Infrastructure Provider. (Refer to www.tisn.gov.au for details). Since 2008, G-MW has been progressively building a business continuity capability to match the organisation’s critical role in the harvest, storage and delivery of water resources to more than 30,000 bulk water and retail customers across northern Victoria. The implementation of a best practice Business Continuity Management (BCM) framework is reshaping many aspects of G-MW operations.



applied. Consequently this declaration was also applied to G-MW as a bulk water supplier to many Urban Water Supply Authorities in Northern Victoria. This reinforced both the need and urgency for a comprehensive business continuity approach,” said Mr Massey.

G-MW’s Manager of Corporate Risk, Martin Krzywak added G-MW needed a new business continuity framework and capability for G-MW that would address its compliance obligations.

“It was clear from the outset that a business continuity approach demanded new and often different information regarding business processes, their criticality and supporting resource requirements. The quickest way to bring this understanding together and also undertake a review based on current best practices was to form a project team,” said Mr Krzywak.



Understanding the task is vital to Project Success: Early on the team realised one of the biggest obstacles to implementation was the understanding of the new approach amongst staff.

“We were introducing a fundamentally new approach to how the organisation assesses, manages and responds to risks. A Training Needs Analysis identified that an understanding of BCM would be necessary to successfully lead and communicate the project.”

“G-MW looked for a training course that would provide an understanding of how to properly approach an enterprise BCM programme implementation and provide practical advice and tools to enable us to complete the work ourselves – if necessary. We chose the BCM in a Box *BCM Fundamentals* course. On completion of the course, we had a new perspective on BCM planning. Using an all-hazards approach, we focus on resource impacts and how the unavailability of resources – regardless of the cause – affects the critical operations of the organisation,” said Mr Krzywak.

“With this knowledge and applying the approach detailed during the course, we were able to build recovery strategies that address the loss of any of the eight general supporting resource types. This requires systematically analysing the organisation’s functions to determine their criticality, recovery timeframes and identifying the key resources that support the successful operation of the functions,” said Mr Massey.

Recognising the need for additional expertise: G-MW’s BC team considered three options to progress the development of business continuity plans:

1. Use specialist consultant to lead a small G-MW project team with a software assisted approach.

Need for a new approach: G-MW has always had well developed disaster recovery planning consistent with its role in managing 17 major water storages – including 2 of Australia’s 5 largest dams, amounting to 70% of Victoria’s stored capacity and its extensive network of delivery infrastructure.

According to G-MW’s BCM Project Manager Chris Massey, rapid business and operational change along with increasing legislative requirements demanded G-MW increased its focus on continuity of business functions, as opposed to pure disaster recovery.

“The appointment of a Manager of Corporate Risk was the first critical step in shifting our approach and was followed by a reassessment of the organisation’s key corporate-based risks,” said Mr Massey.

“In March 2008, the Victorian State Government declared all sewage and water services were essential services to which Part 6 of the Terrorism (*Community Protection*) Act 2003



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2. G-MW project team lead project streams in each business area with minimal use of Consultants.
3. G-MW manages the project completely internally. Option 1 was selected for the following reasons:
 - *Time:* G-MW staff may not be able to commit the appropriate time to options 2 and 3 to develop comprehensive and accurate BCP's;
 - *Expertise:* G-MW has extensive business process knowledge but little BCM knowledge;
 - *Retention:* G-MW will retain knowledge of the BCM methodology used to build and maintain the plans within the organisation as the BCM in a Box software automatically enforces the methodology.
 - *Cost:* the overall cost of building the required capability using consultants and a small project team is less than using internal resources.
 - *Capability:* BCPs will be available sooner, thus mitigating a key organisational risk.

G-MW's Business Continuity Project Officer, Kathryn Raleigh, said taking the time to evaluate the business' ability to undertake the work while also fulfilling existing business activity was extremely important.

"Everyone agreed this is a vital project but also recognised that completing the work in-house would require significant resource commitment," said Ms Raleigh.

"However Option 1 was only possible because we had access to specialist consultants that provide a mature methodology and integrated software package. That's why we chose BCM in a Box. G-MW would have been forced to take option 2 or 3 otherwise."

Automate to Expedite: BCMIAB Directors (Bryan McAtee and Scott Lansley) said: "Our approach was to use the BCM in a Box application as a project tool in conjunction with our expertise to facilitate the BCM process at G-MW. We would not have been able to deliver the volume or quality of output demanded by G-MW in the timeframes available using the traditional spreadsheet and word document approach".

The process involved a number of steps:

- The externally hosted BCM in a Box web-based application was set up in 2 days.
- The application was configured and populated with all the key reference data used by G-MW.
- "Train the Trainer" sessions were completed.

From the start G-MW wanted to establish ownership for business continuity in the right place – with the business function owners.

To support this approach, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were identified and Business Impact Analysis (BIA) workshops conducted over a period of weeks, followed by Business Manager's review and General Manager's approval. This provided a comprehensively visible and robust baseline of

core functions and key resource dependencies.

"The workshops were like groundhog day! The consultant led the first few workshops and we gradually took over the deployment until we reached the next BCM lifecycle phase. This minimised project consulting costs while obtaining the support we needed to confidently progress activities. The workshops were monotonous but vital to the outcome of the project – good start-good finish. What made it bearable were the people involved and their sense of humour," said Ms. Raleigh.

Quality Reviews: G-MW requested BCMIAB to perform reviews to validate the data collection process and information quality. So far, G-MW has achieved extremely high quality results across all 58 functions assessed.

"One of the reports used to confirm results was a matrix that showed all business functions and the IT applications they depend on. We provided this report to IT and asked them to confirm the IT system recovery capability for critical functions. As a result, IT now has a business-driven recovery requirement that assists in determining the ultimate design of each system in terms of its availability objectives. The report is dynamically produced from the BCM in a Box database in seconds. This saves us a lot of time," said Mr. Massey.

Martin Krzywak said "This project will provide G-MW with the following benefits:

- Compliance with legislative requirements;
- Greater understanding of risks posed to the organisation's critical infrastructure;
- Ability to better target funding for capital expenditure at key asset infrastructure;
- Comprehensive and current Business Continuity Plans;
- Enhancement of G-MW's Incident Response and Recovery Framework."

Moving Forward: The next phase of the journey will involve practical testing to identify any shortcomings in the planning arrangements and familiarise staff with their plans. The software will again be used to prepare, track and report on the testing performed.

"The BCM project has a very high profile in the organisation – it has changed people's attitudes. Our relationship with BCM in a Box is like a productive alliance partnership, whom we can rely on for quality advice and support. I'm managing a successful project," said Mr. Massey.

About the Authors: Bryan McAtee and Scott Lansley are the Co-Founders/Directors of BCM in a Box and have a wealth of practical experience globally in the delivery of Business Continuity, Disaster Recovery and Crisis Management (BCM) solutions. Both Bryan and Scott are well respected and have presented on BCM topics around the world and have a rare and proven capability through successful response to real events.