

EPIDEMIC/PANDEMIC POLICY

Policy number	NA	Version	5
Drafted by	Karen Zirkler	Approved by Board on	15 April 2026
Responsible person	Karen Zirkler	Scheduled review date	This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years, and additionally following any declared public health emergency, pandemic, or significant change to public health guidance.

Introduction

From time-to-time infectious diseases develop into epidemics or pandemics and create increased risks for the community. These occasions require specific policies targeted at the disease in question and general efforts at preparedness.

- Southern New England Landcare Ltd wishes as far as possible to protect its clients, its staff, its volunteers, contractors, lessees, and the public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.
- Southern New England Landcare Ltd will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its clients, its staff, its volunteers, and the public.
- Southern New England Landcare Ltd will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that Southern New England Landcare Ltd intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

For this policy, **infectious diseases** mean diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.

Scope

This policy applies to:

Employees	Directors	Officers	Contractors (inc employees of)	Volunteers	Suppliers	Consultants	Lessees
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Policy

- Southern New England Landcare Ltd will as far as possible, plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic.
- Risk Management Approach - Epidemic and pandemic controls will be selected using the hierarchy of controls under work health and safety legislation, prioritising elimination, substitution, engineering controls (including ventilation), administrative controls, and personal protective equipment.
- Southern New England Landcare Ltd will assess and, where reasonably practicable, improve indoor air quality and ventilation in workplaces and meeting spaces to reduce the risk of airborne transmission of infectious diseases.
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, Southern New England Landcare Ltd will, as far as possible:
 1. Assist its clients, staff, volunteers, and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
 2. Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis.
 3. Support employees, volunteers, contractors, and clients to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
 4. Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.
- In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, Southern New England Landcare Ltd requires people covered by this Policy to take the following precautions:
 1. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
 2. Maintain at least 1.5 m distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
 3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
 4. Make sure you follow good hygiene and encourage others to do the same. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and disposing of used tissues immediately.
 5. Stay home if you feel unwell. If you are well enough to work but would like to minimise the risk of infecting others, ask your manager whether you can temporarily work from home.
 6. Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places - especially if you are more at risk.
 7. If you are or are likely to be contagious, notify your manager as soon as possible. It may be possible or necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover.

- Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority. Southern New England Landcare Ltd recognises that epidemics and pandemics may impact workers' mental health and wellbeing. The organisation will, where reasonably practicable, provide flexibility, clear communication, and access to appropriate wellbeing supports.
- Health Messaging - All epidemic or pandemic communications will be based on advice from recognised authorities (e.g. NSW Health, Australian Government Department of Health) to ensure consistent, accurate information and reduce the spread of misinformation.
- Working remotely or using alternative work arrangements where reasonably practicable shall be preferred, including hybrid arrangements.
- Any collection, use, or disclosure of health information during an epidemic or pandemic will be handled in accordance with privacy legislation and only where reasonably necessary for health and safety purposes.
- Following the conclusion of an epidemic or pandemic, Southern New England Landcare Ltd will review response measures and support an orderly transition to normal operations, incorporating lessons learned.

Leave and Flexibility

- Southern New England Landcare Ltd recognises that staff may request or require paid and unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others.
- Workers may make use of leave consistent with Southern New England Landcare's leave policy, relevant industrial instruments, and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).
- Southern New England Landcare Ltd may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely.

Notes

In carrying out the procedures listed below, Southern New England Landcare Ltd will be guided by the information and directions provided by local health authorities and the World Health Organisation, and its occupational health and safety obligations.

Above and beyond provisions

- Southern New England Landcare Ltd may at its discretion subsidise any reasonable medical expenses incurred by any workers directed by Southern New England Landcare Ltd to obtain medical clearance for the infectious disease before returning to work.

Related Documents

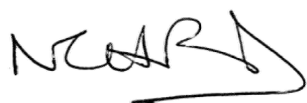
- Australian Health Management [Plan for Pandemic Influenza NSW - New South Wales](#) Note - Pandemic preparedness guidance may extend beyond influenza to other infectious respiratory diseases.
- Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) for Critical Infrastructure Resilience: [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#)

Legislation & Industrial Instruments

This policy and procedure are not intended to override any industrial instrument, contract, award or legislation.

- Biosecurity Act 2015 (Commonwealth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)

Authorisation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Reid', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Emeritus Professor Nick Reid
Chair, Southern New England Landcare Ltd.

15 April 2026

Epidemic/Pandemic Procedure

Procedure number	NA	Version	5
Drafted by	Karen Zirkler	Approved on	15 April 2026
Authorised person	Karen Zirkler	Scheduled review date	This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years, and additionally following any declared public health emergency, pandemic, or significant change to public health guidance.

1. Responsibilities

1.1 The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Nominating the Epidemic Officer. The normal expectation will be that the Workplace Health and Safety Officer shall be appointed as Epidemic Officer, but the CEO may override this if they see fit.
- Ensuring that the organisation's Leave and Workplace Health and Safety policies are consistent with the intention of the Epidemic Policy
- Assessing the organisation's vulnerabilities, in the light of the epidemic or pandemic, to:
 - Southern New England Landcare's own human resources
 - Southern New England Landcare's suppliers of goods and services
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic,
 - Giving notice to staff, volunteers, clients, and any persons likely to be affected that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect
 - Bringing into operation the epidemic or pandemic management procedures specified below
 - Instituting any administrative measures necessary to reduce the impact of the vulnerabilities detailed above

1.2 **Supervisors/managers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the epidemic procedures in effect at any time.

1.3 **Employees/volunteers** are responsible for:

- Abiding by the epidemic procedures specified below, when informed by authorised staff that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect

1.4 The **Epidemic Officer** is responsible for:

- Working with the CEO on the preparation of a comprehensive epidemic plan
- Advising the CEO on when epidemic procedures should be activated
- Familiarising staff with recommended procedures regarding epidemic avoidance

- Working with all sectors of the organisation to identify mission-critical staff and functions (see Template #3, “Identification of Mission Critical Functions” from [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#))

2. Procedures

The following procedures apply in the event of the CEO giving notice that epidemic or pandemic procedures are in effect.

2.1 Events

- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether any events involving the attendance of staff or members of the public should be changed, rescheduled or cancelled to minimise the risk of infection.

2.2 Work procedures

- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether:
 - it is necessary or appropriate for nominated staff/volunteers to work remotely or using alternative work arrangements where reasonably practicable, including hybrid arrangements.
 - staff/volunteer travel, (or other activities that may cause them to encounter other people in Australia or overseas) should be modified or terminated.
 - arrangements for staff/volunteers who work with clients or the public should be modified to minimise risks for all parties.
- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, may require any member of staff to not attend the workplace, and/or to work remotely, or, if this is not feasible or appropriate, to take *Personal Leave/ Annual Leave*.
- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, may require any member of staff to provide satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to work.
- The CEO will assess and, where reasonably practicable, improve indoor air quality and ventilation in workplaces and meeting spaces to reduce the risk of airborne transmission of infectious diseases.

2.3 Contractors and suppliers

- The CEO, with the advice of the Epidemic Officer, will consider on a continuing basis whether arrangements with existing contractors and suppliers need to be modified or supplemented to ensure uninterrupted service delivery (See Template 7, “Major suppliers to the organisation” from [Template Pandemic Emergency Management Plan](#)).

3. Health Messaging

The Epidemic Officer shall familiarise staff/volunteers and others, as relevant, with recommended procedures on epidemic avoidance guidelines (e.g. handwashing, soap, sneezing policy) as appropriate. The CEO will ensure all epidemic or pandemic communications will be based on advice from recognised authorities (e.g. NSW Health, Australian Government Department of Health) to ensure consistent, accurate information and reduce the spread of misinformation.

Note: if the Epidemic Policy has been separated from the Epidemic Procedures, copy, and paste here the information under ‘8. Related Documents’ and ‘9. Legislation & Industrial Instruments’