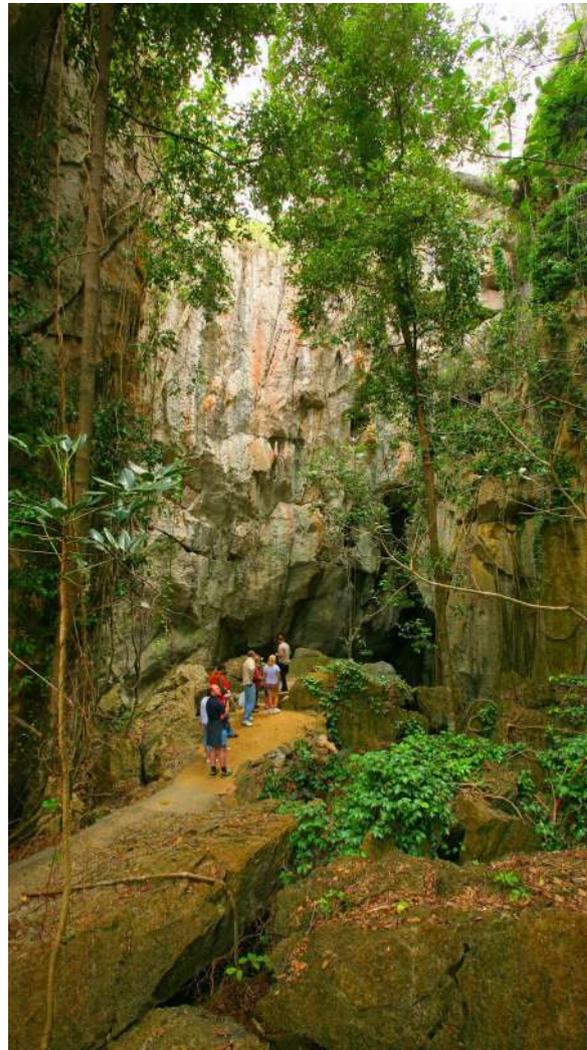


# Risky Business Case Study

## *Capricorn Caves*

---



### **RISK**

Capricorn Caves is no stranger to the impact of a crisis. Recently, the organisation has experienced a category 5 cyclone, bushfires and on a more personal level, the death of the owner, manager and for many, a family member.

Through the EarthCheck CrisisReady Workshops, Capricorn Caves had categorised bushfires as a high risk for the organisation. Whilst no-one wants to expect a crisis impacting their organisation, by considering a likely crisis, planning can take place to minimise the impact on the business.

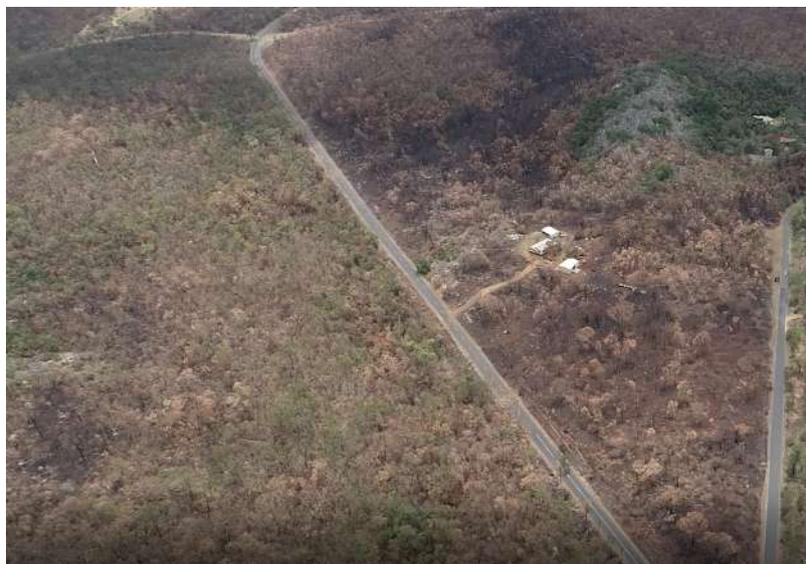
Conversely, cyclones were not on the radar of the Capricorn Caves team. Sitting outside the typical cyclone path, the likelihood of the region being hit was incredibly low.

Rather they are more likely to feel the impact from rain rather than the cyclone itself. However, as we are all too aware, sometimes the unexpected occurs. Sure enough, a cyclone swept through Capricorn Caves leaving a path of destruction in its wake.

Another unexpected event was the passing of the business owner. In small businesses, this has a significant impact. Often those heading the operations hold the knowledge, information, access to files and so much more. Whether through death, injury or other regions, the loss of a critical staff member can have a huge impact on an organisation and one that is often overlooked.

## PLANNING/PREPAREDNESS

Management from Capricorn Caves attended a CrisisReady workshop to gain a deeper understanding of what risks are likely, the impact and severity of the risk and where priorities for a response should sit. Based on the identification of the risk, management prepared a bushfire go-kit. This kit includes hard copies of insurance and bank details, a copy of staff contact information and cash. It is not only the organisation Go-Kit that was prepared though...on-site, Capricorn Caves also have lizards in the family. A dedicated go-kit for the lizards was also prepared. These go-kits mean that in the event of a crisis the business can continue trading and the lizard can continue eating! Staff can just grab and go! Staff at Capricorn Caves are also trained on a biannual basis in bushfire response. This training is designed to ensure all staff are aware of the roles, responsibilities and processes involved in responding to a bushfire. The training is conducted in partnership with the Rural Fire Brigade to ensure a coordinated and efficient response. Whilst there was no preparation or planning for the cyclone, the go-kit was prepared which assisted in the team responding to the threat. With staff understanding the evacuation requirements and the roles and responsibilities of the team, they were able to apply their knowledge to the context of the cyclone. Once again, the cash in the go-kit and the access to the hard copies of the insurance and bank details made a significant difference in the team's recovery post-disaster.



## IMPACT

Post-fire, Capricorn Caves were not operational for four days. Luckily, the media did not pick-up on the impact on the caves or the evacuation of the site. Post-cyclone, the impact was more devastating. There was no trading for ten days and the site was without power for the duration of this. The region lacked mobile service for 48 hours and communication with staff was limited. A massive clean-up was required to get the site functioning again. Over these ten days, staff were on-site to assist with the clean-up, however their hours (and consequently wages) were limited. This impact has flow-on effects to the community through the reduced wages. During this period, management assisted staff in finding financial assistance to supplement their reduced incomes.



## Response

---

During the fires, thanks to the preparedness, staff were able to evacuate the entire site – staff, animals and guests, in under five minutes. Staff knew what role they had, where they needed to be and how to make the evacuation as effective as possible. There was no anxiety or stress, just action and intent. Without the training, there is no way that they would have achieved this if there was no prior preparation. The go-pack was ready and the risks were calculated. A communications plan was also in place. As soon as the media picked up on the story Capricorn Caves were ready to make a statement and work with their RTO for positive messaging. As it transpired, the media didn't pick up on the impact the fires had on the operations and so the Caves managed to stay out of the limelight. If only the same could be said about the cyclone. But, in consultation with their Regional Tourism Organisation, Capricorn Caves were able to release positive, strategic messaging post-disaster and when they were trading again.

The go-kit once again turned out to be the saviour with cash enabling the team to purchase fuel and food when other payment mechanisms were down.

Their planning and preparedness for other crisis' turned out to be incredibly positive in responding to the unexpected. After the death of Ann, the media were seeking comment on the day of her passing. Ann was a public figure and concerns in the community regarding continuity of business were raised. It was again, the partnership with the RTO that assisted this business in releasing a public statement on a story incredibly close to home. Having considered risks associated with operating in a fairly remote area, management of Capricorn Caves were able to respond effectively to the unexpected. Tourism relies on its network and this was proven in Capricorn Caves strategic and partnered response to the challenges they've faced.

## TAKE -AWAYS



# 01

### **WORKSHOPS ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Attend and take them seriously.

# 02

### **LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS AND UNDERSTAND YOUR RISKS**

Whether natural, death or other, find out where your vulnerabilities are and make a plan.

# 03

### **WORK WITH YOUR RTOS THROUGH YOUR CRISIS**

Your RTO has a "bigger picture" regional understanding of the plan and disaster. Keep RTO updated about what the impact is and how you are going. Reach out and let them know what you need.

# 04

### **BONUS**

Make sure you have a Go-kit ready, prepacked with insurance and banking information, staff contact details, cash and anything else your business needs to continue trading.