



Maleny Neighbourhood Centre is a NFP community resource, responding to diverse local needs. We deliver emergency relief, facilitating community networks and connections. Maleny Neighbourhood Centre fosters resilient and fair communities and a just society where diversity is celebrated and participation encouraged.

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In the Heart of Maleny ...

FINAL

MALENY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE	
2019 EMERGENCY RELIEF POLICY v3	
Emergency Relief (ER) refers to the provision of some limited resources to assist people on low incomes and/or in financial crisis.	
Authorised By: Maleny Neighbourhood Centre (MNC) Management Committee	
Responsibility for the review:	MNC Centre Coordinator / Development Worker (CCDW)
Date last review: <i>Reviewed 20/1/17 Approved 23/3/17</i> <i>Review commenced 22/1/19 Approved 28/2/19</i>	Reviewed By: <i>CCDW, Volunteer Support Worker (VSW) and MNC Management Committee</i> (Signature)
	Date of next review: <i>March 2021</i>
Review Process	This Policy will be reviewed by the MNC Coordinator, Volunteer Support Worker (VSW) and approved by the MNC Management Committee on or before the next review date.
Documentation and Communication:	Any decisions requiring policy changes will be recorded in the Minutes of MNC Management Committee and advised to CCDW for implementation and updating of the policy documents.
POLICY CONTEXT:	
Queensland Standards for Community Services:	Standard 3 - Responding to individual need
Other Standards:	Standard 1 - Governance and Management Standard 2 - Service Access Standard 4 - Safety, wellbeing and rights
Relevant Policies:	Financial Management and Delegations
Forms or other organisational documents:	ER client form Material Assistance Guidelines (see below)

	ER spreadsheet Referral spreadsheet
Legislation or other requirements:	Associations Incorporation Act, 1987
Purpose and Commitment	<p>Maleny Neighbourhood Centre (MNC) will provide Emergency Relief (ER) on an equitable basis to those who are in financial difficulty and seeking assistance. This will be done within Maleny Neighbourhood Centres' designated guidelines and subject to our capacity to respond.</p> <p>Emergency Relief refers to the provision of some limited resources to assist people who are in any of the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● on low incomes ● in financial difficulty ● homeless / living in their car ● in difficult circumstances, for example due to violence in the home or mental health issues. <p>Funds and items are donated to MNC from local businesses, community organisations, service clubs and individuals.</p> <p>ER is provided within a social justice context. Dignity, discretion and a non-judgemental approach towards recipients must be maintained at all times.</p> <p>Recipients are to be treated with respect in relation to ethical and legal rights, including their right to make their own decisions and to participate actively in any plans made on their behalf. At all times, clients are given information and support aimed at furthering their self reliance.</p> <p>MNC's role will be to represent people in crisis and provide referral and information regarding their rights and entitlements.</p> <p>Client confidentiality is to be maintained at all times. Sensitive information is not to be shared with other individuals and/or agencies other than with the express permission of the ER client.</p>
SCOPE	This policy applies to residents of the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre Catchment area (Mapleton in the north and Conondale in the west) and organisations MNC works with in the delivery of Emergency Relief.
Procedures	<p>All clients seeking ER assistance must complete an ER client assistance form. Front desk staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess client's needs through an interview process and provide assistance and / or referrals as required. All ER assistance must be entered onto the ER spreadsheet, and referrals onto the Referral Register. ● Distribute Emergency relief as outlined in the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre Material Assistance Guidelines (See below). <p>All front desk staff will be provided with training that includes how to assist people who come in to MNC for ER, including conducting interviews to assess client's needs.</p>

	<p>Front desk volunteers cannot distribute Emergency Relief to their own family members or to friends. Should a situation arise where a family member requires ER, the volunteer is to inform the CCDW or Admin Officer and decisions will be made in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy.</p> <p>Emergency Relief available at MNC includes food, vouchers (Telstra, fuel, IGA, Woolworths and coffee), cooking utensils, swags, tents, lamps, camp stoves and gas cylinders, blankets, sheets, personal items and referrals to other agencies for assistance. Cash payments are not available. ER clients are provided with sufficient food for three days.</p>
Complaint Process	If a person wishing to access Emergency Relief has a complaint they may address that complaint in the first instance to the Admin Officer. If this is not satisfactorily resolved it should be referred to the CCDW. Complaint forms can be obtained through the CCDW.
Interagency Coordination	When possible, attend interagency network meetings to actively promote the sharing of resources within local community outlets and contribute to the up skilling and education of inter-agency volunteers.

Emergency Accommodation

On occasion MNC will be approached by people in need of emergency accommodation. There are very limited funds, including those donated by CHASM Housing, available for this. Purchasing emergency accommodation is at the discretion of the CCDW with approval from the MNC Management Committee executive.

If a client requires emergency accommodation the following steps **must** be followed prior to offering this assistance to the client:

1. Ascertain the client's accommodation needs
2. Discuss the case with the CCDW
3. If the CCDW considers it to be a suitable case, they will seek authorisation from MNC Management Committee and CHASM, for the funds expenditure
4. If approved, the CCDW will contact accommodation providers to ascertain if there is any suitable accommodation available and to negotiate the terms and payment arrangements.
5. The client will be informed of the terms and conditions relating to this offer of assistance and they must agree to these for the assistance to proceed.

Maleny Transition Housing Project

MNC is running a community funded 1 year pilot project offering short term (up to two months) accommodation to women and women with children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Women can be referred for consideration for the project by local agencies or they may come in to MNC for ER assistance.

An assessment process will be undertaken by two staff of the MNC. Those women who are found to be suitable for the project will be offered up to two months accommodation at a reduced rent. During the tenancy the client will be linked with relevant agencies and government departments ie Department of

Housing, with the aim of stabilising their circumstances and assisting them to ultimately gain suitable long-term affordable accommodation.

Material Assistance Guidelines

In the main, ER assistance is in the form of food from the MNC pantry, frozen cooked meals, coffee vouchers and referrals to other agencies. However, if required, swags, tents, lamps, camp stoves, gas cylinders, cooking utensils, blankets, sheets and personal items may also be provided, depending on availability.

A limited supply of additional assistance is available including fuel and Telstra vouchers (see below). Referrals to agencies include: budgeting, counselling, legal assistance, Centrelink and the dental clinic. Clients nominate the referrals they require on the ER form and the Administration Officer will action those referrals.

The table below details the assistance and frequency of ER assistance that can be provided.

ITEM	ELIGIBILITY	QUANTITY	FREQUENCY & PROCESS
GROCERIES			
Food including pre-cooked frozen meals	Financial hardship	Sufficient for 3 days for the number of people in the household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 4 food parcels in a month. • No more than 12 in 6 months. • If requested more frequently, notify Admin Officer or CCDW to assess client’s needs for referrals such as for financial counselling
Personal items	As required	As required	As required
CAMPING / COOKING			
Tent	Homeless/living in car	1 per client/family group	Once, and ask clients to return in good order if they do not require the tent further.
Swag	Homeless/living in car	1 per client	Once
Camp stove	Homeless/living in car	1 per client/family group	Once
Gas cylinders	Homeless/living in car	2 cylinders per client/family group	Once per month at discretion of CCDW
Cooking utensils	Homeless/living in car	As required, and depending on availability	Once
Blankets, sheets	Financial hardship Homeless/living in car	As required	As required
HELP WITH COSTS			
Fuel vouchers – Watson’s Garage	To attend necessary appointments ie Centrelink, medical, job agency, job interviews &	One \$20 voucher per household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally once in 6 months • In exceptional circumstances CCDW may authorise additional vouchers • Administered by Admin Officer

	identified emergencies		NOTE: clients cannot just get a fuel voucher. These are only available as part of ER assistance
ITEM	ELIGIBILITY	QUANTITY	FREQUENCY & PROCESS
Telstra bill assistance	Financial hardship	One or two \$50 vouchers to assist with landline or mobile phone bills (ie maximum of \$100 at a time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generally once in 6 months ● In exceptional circumstances Admin Officer or CCDW may authorise additional vouchers ● Administered by Admin Officer ● If requested more frequently, Admin Officer to assess client's needs for referrals such as for financial counselling
Telstra pre-paid cards	Homeless/living in car Financial hardship	One \$30 card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once a month ● Generally once in 3 months ● In exceptional circumstances Admin Officer or CCDW may authorise additional vouchers ● Administered by Admin Officer