

## State Recovery Controller Communique # 9

Leading the collaboration of the whole-of-government recovery response is a role I am privileged to hold. The work being undertaken and coordinated by the State agencies and partner organisations is being driven by one single purpose – to support the people of the Mid-West get back on their feet.

It has been an early priority and key focus to establish coordinated welfare and outreach support for the impacted communities following Cyclone Seroja. The Department of Communities are administering and coordinating this body of work as the agency responsible for emergency welfare support under our State's emergency management arrangements. A tailored package designed specifically for Cyclone Seroja has seen dedicated resources placed into the four recovery hubs working alongside our community recovery officers in Northampton, Kalbarri, Morawa and Geraldton, as well as the pop-up hubs in Perenjori, Mullewa, Yuna and Nabawa. There has been a focus on connecting local providers for mental health and welfare services. The coordinated case management approach by the State Recovery Team is proving to be a valuable service to impacted residents requiring personalised support and assistance with their recovery journey.

It has been pleasing to see that Local Recovery Coordination Groups (LRCG) are now being established with the Shire of Chapman Valley and Shire of Northampton holding their inaugural meeting this week on the 16<sup>th</sup> Nov. The Shire's of Mingenew and Morawa have each held three LRCG meetings to date. These groups are chaired by Local Governments to ensure their communities have a voice in expressing their needs and suggestions as they head into the medium and long-term phases of this recovery.

The State Recovery Coordination Group met on Thursday 18 November and the District Recovery Coordination Group is scheduled for Thursday 25 November. Here is a snapshot of the work currently being undertaken.

- ❖ **Small Business Recovery Support** – The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is administering the Small Business Recovery Grant\*. The SBDC is engaging directly with potential applicants advising them about the grant program and providing a case management approach to support applicants through the grant process. SBDC advisers will be visiting the Mid-West from 22 to 26 November to assist businesses with their applications. Applications can be made via [smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/seroja](https://smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/seroja)
- ❖ **Clean-up and Resilience Building Assistance for Insured Residents** – The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) is administering the Recovery and Resilience Grants Program\* for insured homeowners. There has been a focus on promoting the grants program to the region. The Grants Team are in the Mid-West region next week conducting information and assistance sessions for individuals seeking to apply. Applications can be made via [dfes.wa.gov.au/recoveryandresiliencegrants](https://dfes.wa.gov.au/recoveryandresiliencegrants)
- ❖ **Clean-up Assistance for Uninsured Residents\*** – Expressions of interest remain open for uninsured residents who would like assistance with clean-up of disaster related debris on their property. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services are progressing with a tailored solution to help those who have indicated they require help with clean-up. Expressions of interest can be lodged at <https://dfes.smartygrants.com.au/STCSerojaCUA>

- ❖ **Heritage and Cultural Asset Clean-up and Restoration Support** – The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) is administering the Heritage and Cultural Assets Clean-up and Repair Grant Program\*. The grants program opened for applications on 25 October 2021. The program supports the clean-up and repair of eligible local and State heritage places including any identified Aboriginal Heritage place. Applications for the grant can be made here <https://dfes.smartygrants.com.au/DPLHCR>
- ❖ **Primary Producer Recovery Support** – The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) continues to administer the two types of financial assistance programs available to primary producers. One being the Primary Producer Recovery Grant\*, and the other being the Measures to Assist Primary Producers\*. Applications are being received and funding is being disbursed. With harvest activities currently underway, agencies are mindful of primary producer priorities at this time of year. The recovery grants will remain open for all of 2022 to give potential applicants time to assess their needs and submit an application.
- ❖ **Welfare Support\*** – The State Recovery Team and mental health providers are on-the-ground providing an invaluable service to cyclone impacted residents. The Department of Communities (DoC) welfare team are taking a case management approach to community recovery and have recently engaged 'Centacare' to provide family counselling support services and 'Desert Blue Connect' to provide mental health supports and pathways across the region. Each Recovery Hub now has a representative from DFES, Red Cross, and the DoC to help navigate supports service for affected residents. DoC continues to administer and disburse funds for eligible applicants of the Category 3 and 4 Financial Assistance.
- ❖ **Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund** – The City of Perth closed applications for the Cyclone Seroja Appeal on the 8 November 2021. Donations to the appeal raised more than \$7.6 million with more than 510 applicants receiving funds.
- ❖ **Temporary Worker's Accommodation\*** – The proposal for a possible solution to the issue of temporary worker's accommodation shortage in the region is currently in progress between the State and Commonwealth Government. In-principle support from the Commonwealth and State was announced in July for temporary worker's accommodation under the \$104.5M Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements package.
- ❖ **Public Information** – There has been a focus on the promotion of the four grant programs funded through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Three Commonwealth/State joint media statements were released announcing the official opening of the grant programs. The statements were supplemented with media interviews, paid advertising, flyers and social media. The DFES Cyclone Seroja Facebook Group continues to grow in membership. The recent State Recovery Controller update has reached over 2500 people and a post about the Recovery and Resilience Grants team regional visit has reached over 3500 people. For all the latest State Recovery information please visit [emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery](https://emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery).

Melissa Pexton – DFES Cyclone Seroja State Recovery Controller

\* Funded by the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.