

## State Recovery Controller Communique # 10

The year 2021 has seen lots of firsts for Western Australia in the recovery space. The first time a cyclone of this magnitude has hit coastal and inland communities of the Mid-West. The first time we have seen the scale of damage over such an extensive area. The first time a Commonwealth-State jointly funded recovery package of over \$104 million was developed and announced, and the list goes on.

Through all these firsts I have witnessed as Cyclone Seroja State Recovery Controller, an incredible amount of work has been done by State and local government agencies and key recovery partners. They have responded to the crisis and supported impacted communities to get back on their feet. I am proud of the collaborative effort to get where we are today. Of course, there is still much to do, but I am comfortable we are in a good place to continue our work into 2022.

The State Recovery Coordination Group met on Thursday 16 December and here is a snapshot of some of the work undertaken in the past four weeks.

- ❖ **Local Governments** – A recent visit to the Mid-West was an opportunity for the State Recovery Controller to meet with local government representatives and chat about their Local Government Recovery Coordination Groups and the development of their local operational recovery plans. This marks an important milestone for the local governments in their recovery journey and provides a framework for their communities to move forward. The State Recovery Team will continue to work with the local governments and provide a wrap-around service to all those impacted through the regional recovery hubs and dedicated recovery staff.
- ❖ **Rebuild Community Forums** – Last week a series of rebuild community forums were held in Northampton and Kalbarri. Representatives from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services; Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety; Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage; Shire of Northampton; Legal Aid; and the Master Builders Association WA were on hand to address community queries about rebuilding. The open dialogue enabled the public to ask questions to a panel of experts about issues they were experiencing, such as demolition permits, asbestos management and building approvals.
- ❖ **Grants Regional Information Sessions** – The State Recovery Team were recently in the Mid-West region conducting grants information sessions. The face-to-face sessions were conducted in Northampton, Mullewa, Chapman Valley, Kalbarri, Mingenew, Morawa and Perenjori. Cyclone-impacted community members had an opportunity to find out about the Recovery and Resilience Grants\* and Small Business Recovery Grants\*, which resulted in a significant increase of applications that are now being processed.

- ❖ **Snapshot Assessment of Reconstruction Process** – Over the past two weeks members of the State Recovery Team have been travelling through Geraldton, Northampton, Kalbarri, Chapman Valley, Morawa, Mingenew and Perenjori to collect information about the reconstruction progress of damaged homes. The information collected is essential for State Recovery to understand what reconstruction progress has been made and assist decision making about long-term recovery initiatives.
- ❖ **Preparing while Recovering Cyclone Campaign** – On Wednesday 8 December DFES launched its Cyclone Preparedness Campaign. It includes a series of online videos, created specifically for the Mid-West region and acknowledges the challenges families and businesses face preparing properties for potential storms, flooding and cyclones while recovering from Cyclone Seroja. They feature a local State Emergency Services volunteer, DFES District Officer, Department of Communities Recovery Officer and a primary producer and will be seen online and via DFES social channels.
- ❖ **Public Information** – The past four weeks has seen some significant media activity with the State Recovery Controller speaking with numerous regional media outlets to promote State Recovery community forums, as well as provide updates on recovery activities and services available. Heading into the festive season, and the end of harvest activities for some, there is now a focus on communicating the welfare support available through the holiday period and what people can do to look after themselves if they are finding it tough.

For all the latest State Recovery information please visit [emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery](https://emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery) or join the **DFES Cyclone Seroja Recovery Facebook Group**.

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