

State Recovery Controller Communique # 11

The new year has brought a renewed community focus on recovery assistance. Since January there have been lines at the recovery hubs with people enquiring about the types of recovery support, in addition to seeking help with completing applications for assistance. There has also been an increase in first time hub visitors, which, at the ten-month mark, is to be expected with a disaster of this nature.

Recovery is an individual journey. There is no right or wrong way for people to go through it. We are seeing some people in the middle of the rebuilding process. Some actively seeking wellness support services. Others only just starting to seek help. This is the reason why State and partner agencies remain committed to supporting the Mid-West local governments and their communities throughout 2022 and beyond. With the tailored recovery supports and systems in place, and the trust built between community and recovery hub staff, we anticipate continued engagement and participation in recovery activities.

The Cyclone Seroja State Recovery Coordination Group reconvened for the first time in 2022 on Thursday 10 February. The group will continue to meet monthly to discuss the coordination and progress of State recovery activities and issues. This communique provides a snapshot of the current work underway by recovery stakeholders.

- ❖ **Local Governments** – The local governments continue to foster recovery decision making through the establishment of their Local Recovery Coordination Groups (LRCG). The joint Shire of Chapman and Shire of Northampton LRCG met on Thursday 10 February. The group will soon be holding a workshop with the aim to develop a formalised operational recovery plan for the two Shires. Recovery is long and complex and these local recovery groups play an invaluable role in ensuring local recovery activities and initiatives are making a difference. The local leadership will continue to grow in collaboration with the regionally based State recovery and resilience teams from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Australian Red Cross and Department of Communities.
- ❖ **Regional Recovery Assistance Tours** – A week-long series of community meetings and one-to-one appointments are commencing in the Mid-West towns of Mingenew, Morawa, Perenjori, Mullewa, Northampton and Nabawa on Monday 14 February. The tour capitalises on the renewed focus from cyclone impacted home and business owners in recovery grant packages funded through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). Representatives from the local governments, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development; Legal Aid; Red Cross; Department of Communities; Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage; Salvation Army Moneycare; Master Builders Association; Department of Mines and Industry Regulation; and Department of Fire and Emergency Services will be attending to provide specialist advice and support. We know from previously successful tours, that these events are a catalyst for people to continue or start their recovery process.

- ❖ **Temporary Accommodation for Workers Program** – On Wed 22 December 2021 funding for the provision of temporary accommodation for workers was announced through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. The demand driven program has been implemented to increase availability for non-regional based builders and labourers so they can stay in the region while undertaking work. Through this program some local governments have procured caravans for placement at their local caravan park for workers to stay in.
- ❖ **Tourism Recovery Support** – There has been significant community and stakeholder engagement in relation to the restoration of the damaged coastal areas and Kalbarri foreshore in the Shire of Northampton. Coordinated through a dedicated recovery tourism officer, this considered approach allows time to see how nature repairs itself, as well as ensure the proposed foreshore restoration is community led, and new infrastructure is resilient to withstand future cyclonic conditions.
- ❖ **Financial Assistance** – The four grant programs jointly funded through Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements continue to provide tailored financial assistance for primary producers, small business operators, insured homeowners and heritage and cultural asset owners. The Small Business Development Commission is administering the Small Business Recovery Grant of up to \$25,000, with a number of applicants receiving payments. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is administering the Recovery and Resilience Grants Program and is currently working directly with applicants to support them with the process of providing evidence of building works. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development are administering two types of assistance for primary producers. The Primary Producer Recovery Grant of up to \$25,000 and the Measures to Assist Primary Producers which has just extended its application closing date to 31 March 2023. The Department of Lands, Planning and Heritage are administering the Cultural and Heritage Asset Clean-up and Repair Grant.
- ❖ **Public Information** – A comprehensive Cyclone Seroja recovery webpage can be found at www.emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery. The page provides community members easy to find information such as who they can talk too, places they can go, available assistance and all the latest news. The recovery facebook group has over 1000 members and posts about community events and recovery hub activities are reaching up to 4000 views. The State Recovery Controller has commenced the new year speaking with local media outlets to promote the available assistance. These online and media channels work in conjunction with the face-to-face public information the recovery staff in the hubs provide daily to community members.

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

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