

## State Recovery Controller Communique # 5

There are a lot of great examples of community led recovery happening in the Mid-West region. Just this week the community group Northampton Cyclone Response Committee held a forum for primary producers affected by the cyclone to hear about the support available to them. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and Red Cross had representatives in attendance to provide first-hand the relevant information. The organisers and participants were very appreciative of the agencies providing face-to-face information and answering their specific questions.

Next week I will welcome four Community Recovery Officers who are commencing their new roles in each of the four hubs located in Geraldton, Northampton, Kalbarri and Morawa. Working alongside other recovery personnel in the hubs, the Community Recovery Officers will be an on-the-ground presence for community and local government. They will be assisting and supporting the region's long-term recovery by identifying community needs and conducting community development and engagement activities. Their roles are imperative in recovery and I look forward to seeing their work making a difference for community members.

The District Recovery Coordination Group met on Thursday 19 August and the State Recovery Coordination Group met on Thursday 26 August. Below is a snapshot of the current and emerging recovery matters, coordination of recovery efforts and progress updates.

- ❖ **Primary Producer Recovery Support** – Applications are open for the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Primary Producer Recovery Grant\*. DPIRD is promoting the grant through its channels and networks. Expressions of interest for the grant are currently being accepted via the DPIRD website. DPIRD is working with the Grower Group Alliance and Regional Development Commissions to identify issues that have emerged from the impacts of TC Seroja on agribusinesses and primary industries.
- ❖ **Small Business Clean-up Support** – The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) continues to provide remote business support to affected small businesses. Details of the Small Business Recovery Grant\* are close to being finalised. SBDC are currently accepting expression of interests for the grant via their website.
- ❖ **Residential Clean-up Support\*** – A clean-up program for uninsured residential property owners is currently being scoped by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. A specialist resource has been contracted to undertake this work. Insured residential property owners are also eligible for assistance with their property clean-up through the Recovery and Resilience Recovery Grant Program. Details of the grant program are currently being worked through by the DFES recovery team. Expressions of interest are currently open for uninsured and insured residents requesting assistance with clean-up via the DFES website.
- ❖ **Insurance matters** – A virtual meeting was held last week with the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA), insurance company representatives, local government CEOs and DFES recovery personnel. The forum allowed for discussion around the number of claims related to Cyclone Seroja, progress of repair work and issues affected insurance processes.

The ICA advised they are planning on-the-ground information sessions in various locations in the Mid-West. Representatives from ICA and some insurance companies will be in attendance and these sessions are an opportunity for people to discuss their individual insurance matters with an insurance representative.

- ❖ **Welfare Support** – The Department of Communities is currently advertising positions as part of the Community Welfare and Outreach Program\*. There are plans for further positions within Red Cross and WA Country Health to be advertised shortly. A Department of Communities Aboriginal Liaison Officer is commencing in the Mid-West region next week, which will provide an invaluable role to the recovery efforts.

The Department of Communities and Red Cross continues to provide welfare support in the regions through the hubs in Northampton, Kalbarri and Morawa as well as the mobile outreach. The welfare team are also located in Mingenew on Mondays at the Community Recreation Centre. Additionally, Department of Communities continue to administer Cat 3 and Cat 4 Financial Assistance for eligible applicants.

A reminder that community members experiencing personal hardship or distress as a direct result of the cyclone can phone the Department of Communities' Disaster Response Hotline on **1800 032 965**.

- ❖ **Tourism** – The State Government announced the [Experience Kalbarri at Half Price](#) promotion on 18 August. The initiative supports tours, experiences and hire businesses in their ongoing recovery from Cyclone Seroja. Uptake of the discounted tours has been fantastic with the promotion selling out quickly.
- ❖ **Recovery Training** – Australian Red Cross is delivering recovery training in Mullewa, Geraldton, Morawa and Northampton in September. An *Introduction to Recovery* workshop, relevant for anyone involved in recovery activities, will provide information on what can be expected from individuals and the community over time, the basics of Psychological First Aid, the principles of psychosocial support and a section on self-care. The *Communicating in Recovery* is relevant for people who manage information and communicate with the public after an emergency.
- ❖ **Public Information** – A State Government newspaper wraparound advertorial promoting the DRFA \$104.5M Recovery Package was published in two regional newspapers. Residents also received a letter from the Premier about the recovery package and what it means for them. It promoted [emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery](http://emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery) and stats indicated an increase in visitors to the site.

For all the latest State Recovery information, including how to express an interest for clean-up assistance and grants, please visit [emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery](http://emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery).

Melissa Pexton – DFES Cyclone Seroja State Recovery Controller

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