



State Recovery Coordination Group Partnership Forum Communiqué - 11 August 2021

The latest meeting of the State Recovery Coordination Group Partnership Forum was held on Wednesday 11 August, bringing together representatives from across a range of government agencies, local government, industry bodies and non-profit organisations, and enabling a continued collaborative effort towards the Wooroloo Bushfire recovery.

Steady progress has continued on the ground, with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation reporting that, at the time of the meeting, 125 properties had been cleared as part of the residential clean-up program. The program remains on track for the completion of demolition works in the near future. Meanwhile, Disaster Relief Australia have returned to Wooroloo and Gidgegannup to continue their great work in providing assistance to property owners including clearing debris and damaged fences, and felling burnt trees.

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) advised that around 65 per cent of claims related to the bushfire have now been closed. The ICA also reported that there have been issues identified around skills shortages, with the closing of borders due to COVID meaning the national workforce is unable to move between States to meet demand for professions such as insurance assessors, builders and tradespeople. They are working with the Master Builders and other associations to address this issue at the next National Cabinet meeting, calling for a nationally consistent border exemption or movement process.

In terms of community support, the Department of Communities (DoC) is continuing their vital work, including case management of individuals requiring additional support. The local DoC Recovery Officers are in regular contact with community members through morning teas and other events, however some people need help of a more practical nature and the officers have been able to connect them with local community organisations who are providing volunteer assistance such as planting trees. The wellbeing and mental health of residents is a long-term recovery focus, supported by DoC, Red Cross and local governments, as well as local community groups and other relevant organisations.

Bushfire affected residents were invited to attend the Bushfire Prone Landscaping and Environmental Planning Forum held on Saturday 31 July. The event brought together a range of subject matter experts to help community members better understand Bushfire Property Standards, fire ecology including bushland management, firewise properties and sustainable gardens, and Aboriginal cultural heritage. Approximately 110 people attended the forum, which was hosted by Swan and Mundaring, and jointly funded under the Commonwealth - State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Focusing more on the economic side of recovery, a Community Economic Recovery and Wellbeing Review is being undertaken by Perth Hills locals Liz Dare and Carole Winfield on behalf of the Business Council of Australia's BizRebuild initiative. The Review is supported by Dr Margaret Moreton, an experienced practitioner in community resilience and recovery and will enable affected businesses to identify their ongoing recovery needs. A report is due at the end of September and a key outcome will be recommendations for a community economic and well-being recovery plan to assist with rebuilding businesses and enhancing community resilience.

The next meeting of the State Recovery Coordination Group Partnership Forum will be held on Wednesday 8 September.