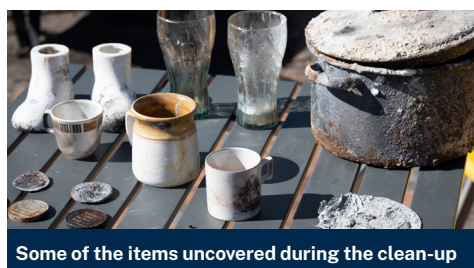


# WOOROLOO BUSHFIRE RECOVERY NEWSLETTER **AUGUST 2021**

## CLEAN-UP PROGRESS

The Wooroloo Bushfire Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program is close to completion with 98 per cent, or 132 of the 135 registered properties, now cleared.

Priority is being given to recycling waste from property clean-ups where possible, with a large proportion being recycled for use, including 8,398 cubic metres of rubble and 108 tonnes of steel.



Some of the items uncovered during the clean-up

Nearly 3,300 tonnes of asbestos (with soil) has also been removed.

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (DWER) Director Operations, Compliance and Enforcement Shaun Hodges said the Department was pleased with the efficiency and diligence shown by demolition specialists in progressing the clean-up schedule.

"Despite the challenges of asbestos removal and the winter weather the program is close to complete in just over four months, ensuring the safe removal of bushfire damaged waste to enable community members to rebuild," Shaun said.

"We have also received positive feedback regarding the care and consideration that the clean-up contractors are showing during the process."

Once all works are finished on a property, including any relevant environmental clearances, a site completion report is provided to the landowner for review. Once this has been agreed on then they receive a property completion certificate, marking completion of their clean-up process.

Anyone seeking more information about their clean-up schedule can call 1800 328 997.

The program is overseen by DWER, in collaboration with the City of Swan, the Shire of Mundaring, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Department of Communities.

Any enquiries regarding the rebuilding process can be directed to the relevant local government. The Department of Communities continues to offer welfare support throughout the clean-up and recovery process. Email [recovery@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:recovery@communities.wa.gov.au) to access support or for urgent matters call the Disaster Response Hotline on 1800 032 965.

*The Wooroloo Bushfires Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program is jointly funded through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.*

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**>> If you have any feedback or content ideas please contact [wooroloo@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:wooroloo@dfes.wa.gov.au)**





# WOOROLOO BUSHFIRE STATE RECOVERY PLAN

The State Recovery Plan for the Wooroloo bushfire has been developed to provide a high-level overview of the economic, environmental and social impact of the devastating bushfire, as well as a framework for the coordinated steps to recovery, informed by the needs of the community.

**Recovery from the bushfire is led by the Shire of Mundaring and the City of Swan, as the impacted local governments, and the intention of this plan is to work in partnership with their local recovery plans.**

State Recovery Coordinator Graham Swift said the plan was an important strategic document and essential for guiding the recovery effort. "It provides an assessment of the resources needed at the State level to support recovery and outlines

the specific roles of the government agencies and other parties involved in the recovery effort," he said. "It also details the funding sources available to the communities, businesses and individuals who have been impacted."

The preparation of the State Recovery Plan was guided by the National Principles for Disaster Recovery and the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the plan will be subject to regular monitoring by the State Recovery Controller and the State Recovery Coordinator, through the State Recovery Coordination Group.

The plan will be made available online in the near future via [dfes.wa.gov.au/emergencywa/recovery.html](https://dfes.wa.gov.au/emergencywa/recovery.html).

## MESSAGE FROM THE STATE RECOVERY CONTROLLER, DR RON EDWARDS

More than six months have now passed since the Wooroloo bushfire and many people continue to endure disruption to their lives due to the destruction wrought by the bushfire on their homes and properties, and in some cases, their livelihoods.

However, it is reassuring to look at the positives that have arisen in response to this disaster. The devastating impact of the bushfire has been matched by the scale of the response by governments at all levels, and the agencies and non-profit organisations who have been on the ground in the affected communities in the subsequent days, weeks and months.

**The physical recovery is progressing at a good pace, across the residential clean-up program and the volunteer efforts of amazing organisations such as BlazeAid and Disaster Relief Australia. It is also heartening to hear of all the community led activities, and to see new mailboxes going in and wildflowers starting to flourish again.**

The two local governments, the Shire of Mundaring and the City of Swan, have been at the forefront in representing and supporting their communities. They have ensured the recovery effort has been focused on locally driven initiatives and processes, which is vital when it comes to delivering support where it is needed most.

This backing, combined with fortitude and resilience of the local people affected makes the recovery a truly admirable and community driven effort.

## DONORS DIG DEEP

Western Australians turned on a great display of generosity in the wake of the Wooroloo bushfire, with an amazing \$16.7 million raised through the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund for the Wooroloo and Hills Bushfire Appeal.

**More than 80 per cent of the money raised has already been distributed to people whose property was destroyed or damaged.**

All up, 268 property owners have so far received payments from the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund, and the fund board continues to work with the City of Swan, Shire of Mundaring and the State Government to ensure money is provided directly to people who need it.

The fund was activated on 3 February and closed on 31 March, with large donations received from the corporate sector Australia-wide, as well as individuals wanting to do their bit to help their fellow Western Australians.

"The Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund is unique in that every dollar donated goes directly to the people and communities that need it most," Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas said.

"While I understand these payments cannot replace everything that people



The faces behind the calls and emails for the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund – Wooroloo and Hills Bushfire Appeal, the City of Perth's Customer Experience Team

have lost, I hope it has eased some of the financial burden for those who were affected.

"Tireless work from our City of Perth dedicated team meant that the first rapid response grants of \$25,000 were sent to people within 22 days of the appeal being activated.

"I would like to personally thank everyone who donated so generously to the Wooroloo and Hills Bushfire Appeal."

**The fund closes for grant applications on 31 August 2021.**



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION AT THE HEART OF RECOVERY

Recovery for people affected by the Wooroloo bushfire is being driven at a local level, with the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring leading the community effort.

At the centre of this work have been local recovery staff – Adrian Dyson, Karen White and Karen Dore at the Shire of Mundaring and Heath Stenton, Ian Robinson and Telia Reilly at the City of Swan. Georgia Marshall has recently joined the Swan team, while Telia has now returned to her substantive position. These teams have provided familiar and trusted points of contact for those impacted by the fire, bringing people and services together and providing links to financial assistance, emergency housing, emotional support and more.

The community recovery effort swung into action even while the fire was still at its height. Evacuation centres were quickly set up in both local government areas and within a week a community recovery centre was established at the Gidgegannup Recreation Centre. The centre brought together 25 agencies offering services, information, advice and emergency help. It was also a base for community groups and charities to coordinate donations. In Wooroloo, the General Store sourced and managed donations and connected displaced community members with information.

Several working groups have been formed within the City of Swan, focusing on key areas of recovery

in conjunction with other agencies and not for profits and, importantly, people affected by the fire. “This has been an invaluable way for us, as a barometer of the community, to get feedback and identify gaps in what is being provided,” Swan Local Recovery Officer Ian Robinson said.

One such gap was the provision of portable shower and toilet facilities at Tilden Park. Paper copies of recovery updates were also made available there, providing information for residents who had no electricity or internet connection.

Local Recovery Coordinator Heath Stenton described the recovery journey for affected residents as a long haul and said it was important that support structures were maintained. “After the adrenaline of the first weeks wore off, people began to realise this is a long process with a lot of difficult decisions and complex issues ahead,” he said. “We’ve dealt with a lot of the practical stuff, but we will begin to see a stronger focus on the mental health needs of people in the community.”

In the neighbouring Shire of Mundaring, experience with large-scale bushfires meant that staff knew the importance of focusing on the community and starting community recovery as soon as possible. Staff were drawn from various roles across the Shire to assist and a community and environment sub-committee was also established, comprising community members, Shire staff and community support organisations.

In April, Karen Dore, an experienced local government community development officer and a volunteer firefighter in her hometown, was

recruited to the position of Project Officer – Community Recovery for two years.

Karen acknowledges that the recovery process can take a long time and is different for everyone.

“It is recognised that 10 years after the Black Saturday fires in Victoria, work was still needed and people were still requiring support. It’s a long, gradual and very individual process,” she said.

“Our approach has been very community led and will continue to be.”



**Kare Dore from the Shire of Mundaring**

The Wooroloo Hall has become an important community hub during the recovery effort, hosting Wooroloo Connect, which is an initiative focused on fostering community connection. Karen has also expanded community activities to include a calendar of events to bring people together, encourage them to support each other and strengthen resilience. The hall is open Tuesdays and alternate Thursdays for people to connect with Karen, representatives from the Department of Communities, Australian Red Cross Emergency Services, and each other.

Both the Swan and Mundaring recovery teams have helped organise countless community gatherings and events including regular morning teas and community dinners, with the support of other agencies and community groups, such as CWA, Parky Care, Rotary, Lions and the Gidgegannup Recreation Club.

The local recovery project officer positions are jointly funded through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements as part of the Community Recovery and Outreach Program.



**The City of Swan’s Heath Stenton and Ian Robinson**



## FORUM HELPS PLANT THE SEEDS FOR RECOVERY

Members of the local community came together on Saturday 31 July for the bushfire prone landscaping and environmental planning forum.

Hosted by the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring, the forum brought together a range of subject matter experts to provide information to local residents on sustainable gardening, firewise properties, bushfire property standards and fire ecology, including bushland management and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

If you couldn't attend or would like more information to help with future planning and rebuilding, the speaker presentations are available at [dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirecoe/#resources](https://dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirecoe/#resources) under 'Videos'.

The forum was held as part of the Community Recovery and Outreach Program, jointly funded through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.



Swan Local Recovery Officer Ian Robinson handing out one of 15 prize tokens for citrus trees



Local Ecologist and Science Communicator Simon Cherriman spoke about the Perth Hills ecosystems and ways to heal country



DFES' Principal Policy Officer Paul Simpson and Bushfire Technical Services Environmental Officer Ana Negreiros were on hand to provide advice to residents on bushfire property standards



Community member and Red Cross employee Claire Silveira and Mundaring Fire Hazard Inspection Officer Cameron Greaves enjoyed a chat and a coffee at the forum



(L-R) ABC Gardening Australia's Josh Byrne, DFES' A/Director Land Use Planning Craig Scott and Principal Policy Officer Paul Simpson, keynote speaker Simon Cherriman, DPLH's A/ Manager Indigenous Land Use Agreements & Aboriginal Heritage Glenn Shaw, and Director of the Forever Project Chris Ferreira



**For information about more community recovery activities and events, please visit the [City of Swan](#) and the [Shire of Mundaring](#).**

