

State Recovery Controller Communique # 8

Over the past four weeks we have seen a shift in recovery delivery from a broad focus on infrastructure and service to the individual's journey within their communities. An outstanding amount of work has got us to the point of being able to formally open the four grant programs funded under the \$104.5M Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. This significant shift in recovery efforts has been achieved through the collaboration and coordination of all levels of government, not-for-profits, businesses, community groups and individuals.

The recovery package including clean-up support for insured residents, primary producers, small business operators, heritage and cultural asset owners, as well as a clean-up program for community assets. State Recovery representatives have been there from the start listening and responding to community and individual needs. We will remain there until the community is built back better and is on its own two feet again.

The State Recovery Coordination Group met on Wednesday 20 October and the District Recovery Coordination Group is scheduled for Thursday 28 October. Here is a snapshot of the work currently being undertaken.

- ❖ **Primary Producer Recovery Support** – The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) continues to promote the two types of financial assistance programs available to primary producers. One being the Primary Producer Recovery Grant*, and the other being the Measures to Assist Primary Producers*. Applications are being received and funding is being disbursed. From a State Recovery perspective, it is acknowledged that respect of time to apply for assistance is required for primary producers due to many still determining their individual insurance situation whilst also undertaking farming operations.
- ❖ **Small Business Recovery Support** – The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) has announced the opening of the Small Business Recovery Grants*. The grants are designed to reimburse cyclone-related clean-up and reinstate costs and will assist small businesses to continue or recommence operations. The SBDC will be taking a case management approach to all applications to provide support through the grant process. Applications can be made via smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/seroja
- ❖ **Clean-up Assistance for Uninsured Residents***
The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) is undertaking outreach to people that have engaged with State Recovery and that are known to be uninsured to understand their needs. DFES is concurrently developing an approach to procure suitably qualified contractors for the clean-up program.
- ❖ **Clean-up and Resilience Building Assistance for Insured Residents**
The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has opened the Recovery and Resilience Grants Program* The Recovery Grant reimburses insured homeowners who incurred costs because their insurance policy did not cover the total cost of clean-up or repair works.

The Resilience Grant reimburses homeowners for building works not covered by their insurance policy that improve the resilience of their residential property against future cyclones. DFES will be taking a case management approach to applications for these grants. Applications can be made via dfes.wa.gov.au/recoveryandresiliencegrants

❖ **Heritage and Cultural Asset Clean-up and Restoration Support**

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) is administering the Heritage and Cultural Assets Clean-up and Repair Grant Program*. The grant program supports the clean-up and repair of eligible local and State heritage places including any identified Aboriginal Heritage place. There are two Heritage Co-ordinators engaged in the region providing advice to heritage building owners, operators, local government and insurers. Three structural engineers have also been engaged as part of the grant program. DPLH is currently accepting expressions of interest for the program via heritagesupport@dplh.wa.gov.au

❖ **Welfare Support** – Department of Communities (DoC) continue to administer and disburse funds for eligible applicants of the Category 3 and 4 Financial Assistance. DoC is currently coordinating with partner agencies, Centacare and the Salvation Army, to increase family support and financial advocacy services in the Mid-West. The recruitment process for DoC and Red Cross is being finalised with staff anticipated to be in place within the Mid-West over the next few weeks.

❖ **Temporary Accommodation for Workers** – The State Recovery Controller has been progressing a proposal for temporary accommodation with state and commonwealth governments. History and interstate examples have shown that when natural disasters like Seroja hit, covering such a large geographic area, multiple local government areas, and damaging urban and remote properties that there really is no single solution that will suit all community needs. This has been a challenging and complex body of work which will assist communities to accommodate workers as they head into the reconstruction phase of recovery.

❖ **Public Information** – Recovery information for the impacted community continues to be a high priority for the State Recovery team. Regular radio interviews on ABC Midwest with the State Recovery Controller are providing tailored recovery updates to the regional listeners. Emergency WA and the DFES Cyclone Seroja Facebook Group remain the two digital channels with analytics proving solid engagement. Face-to-face communication by the DFES Community Recovery Officers, either at the Community Recovery Hubs or through the pop-up hubs and community events, are providing the vital personal connection and support for impacted community members.

For all the latest State Recovery information please visit emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery.

Melissa Pexton – DFES Cyclone Seroja State Recovery Controller

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