

State Recovery Controller Communique # 4

Coming together as a community is crucial to the recovery process. Yesterday I saw this first hand at the Mingenew MidWest Expo how the communities are rebounding back. I had the pleasure of meeting community and business members and hearing of their cyclone experiences. The resilience of the community was evident as I explored the expo and chatted with exhibitors.

The expo was also an opportunity for myself and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner to speak with the local media and detail what the jointly funded \$104.5 million recovery package means for the community.

This unprecedented recovery package, funded through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), was a result of extensive collaboration between the Commonwealth, State and local governments. The hard work continues post announcement and the DFRA WA team at DFES are currently finalising the details of the individual measures under the package.

The District Recovery Coordination Group (DRCG) met on Thursday 5 August and the State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG) met on Thursday 12 August. Below is a snapshot of the current and emerging recovery matters, coordination of recovery efforts and progress updates.

- **Temporary Residential Accommodation** – The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) have delivered caravans to residents requiring accommodation under a 12-month lease agreement. Recipients have been extremely thankful of their temporary home. All caravans will be delivered by mid next week and the Department of Communities are providing case management support to the residents.
- **Community Recovery Officers** – Recruitment of the four Community Recovery Officers is complete, with the successful applicants being formally notified. I look forward to welcoming the four officers join the DFES State Recovery team. They will play an invaluable role in the local recovery process liaising and supporting the affected communities.
- **Primary Producer Support** – The Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) continues to promote and administrate the assistance available to impacted primary producers through the Commonwealth-State DRFA. 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) is administrating the Small Business Recovery Grant. The grant program is funded through the Commonwealth-State DRFA. Details of the grant program are close to being finalised and applications will be opening soon.

Expressions of interests from small business owners can be submitted via their website.

- **Heritage and Cultural Asset Clean-up Support** – The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage are administering the grant program for owners of heritage and cultural assets. Expressions of interest are open for the grant. Details of the grant program are being finalised and applications will be opening soon. The grant program is funded through the Commonwealth-State DRFA.
- **Insurance matters** – The Insurance Council of Australia is conducting phone consultations with people who wish to discuss their insurance claim. This engagement is being promoted by ICA and I encourage stakeholders who are speaking with community members who are experiencing insurance issues to let them know of this phone assistance. Information about how to book a phone call is available on emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery
- **Welfare Support** – The Department of Communities and Red Cross are attending the coming MidWest agricultural shows to speak with the community members about the support available. They continue 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.

The Department of Communities has commenced advertising some of the new recovery positions that are part of the recently announced Community Welfare and Outreach Program jointly funded through the Commonwealth-State DRFA. Additionally, the 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** – Tourism WA has undertaken a series of surveys with tourism businesses in Kalbarri to understand the cyclone impact on business operations. The survey included questions on business impacts, current operating capacity, financial assistance/insurance and priorities for recovery. The results indicate businesses were significantly impacted, but now showing signs of recovery. Tourism WA has a dedicated staff member working with cyclone affected tourism operators to support and enable their businesses return to pre-cyclone business activity.
- **Public Information** – This week there has been a focus on regional media for the Mid-West to promote the DFRA Recovery Package and detail the grants available for people. I was pleased to see fantastic coverage on GWN News and had the opportunity to speak on radio with ABC Mid-West.

For State Recovery information, including financial assistance available, please visit emergency.wa.gov.au/recovery or join the **DFES Cyclone Seroja Recovery Facebook Group**.

Melissa Pexton – DFES Cyclone Seroja State Recovery Controller