



State Recovery Coordination Group Partnership Forum Communiqué – 14 July 2021

The State Recovery Coordination Group Partnership Forum continues to be a successful forum for collaboration between agencies and sharing of information around helping our communities rebuild from the Wooroloo bushfire. It is gratifying to see the many parties at all levels of government, not for profits, corporate and community members come together to do the best we can to support the people affected.

At the latest meeting of the Forum on Wednesday 14 July, we had encouraging reports of progress on site clean-ups with the work led by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation progressing steadily despite wet weather and COVID lockdown disruptions. There have been heartening stories out of the clean-up with contractors uncovering lost medals and jewellery for grateful owners. It was noted that the contractors are providing great care, assisting distressed residents who are seeing their homes demolished. Website and Facebook updates on the progress of the clean-up are being sent out weekly by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and Department of Fire and Emergency Services to keep the community informed of progress.

It has been wonderful to see the community response to the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund, which had raised \$16.7 million by the time it closed at the end of March. It has been equally gratifying to see the prompt way this much-needed money has been disbursed to fire-affected communities, with \$14.1 million allocated to 259 community members in the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring by 5 July 2021.

The Forum heard from the Insurance Council of WA that the number of insurance claims lodged at the time of the meeting was 1,070 to a total value of \$91.18 million.

The Forum also had input on issues relating to the care of wildlife in the wake of the bushfire. It is apparent that there is strong cooperation between the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions and the not-for-profit wildlife rehabilitation sector, but some gaps have emerged in how to handle animal care and rescue in the weeks after the emergency when the State Support Plan has been deactivated. In response major licensed wildlife rehabilitation organisations have formed the Wildlife Emergency Response Group (WERG), consisting of representatives from WA Wildlife, Native Animal Rescue, Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre and Darling Range Wildlife Shelter. The new group believes that a united position is essential and that cooperation with government requirements is the best way to ensure timely and effective care of injured wildlife after a bushfire.

The Forum had a briefing on the success of the temporary accommodation pods provided by Minderoo Foundation. On behalf of Minderoo, Rear Admiral Lee Goddard provided an update on the program, which had installed 37 accommodation pods at the time of the meeting, with another seven to be delivered from South Australia by 19 July, bringing the total number to 44.

The Department of Communities reported that it was actively case managing 50 residents at various levels from intermittent to weekly. It has been apparent that the recent unusually wet weather and the periods of COVID-19 lockdown have had a negative effect on people who are already battling with living in temporary accommodation and facing ongoing disruption to their lives.



Government of Western Australia
State Recovery Controller – Wooroloo Bushfire
Dr Ron Edwards

The Parky Care charity is working with the Department of Communities to consider respite options for families in temporary accommodation. Bruce Watkins from Parky Care is also working with Mundaring Rotary to source additional funding to further support this initiative.

Construction Training Fund's Tiffany Allen spoke to the concerns around possible delays in rebuilding homes because of the large volume of work required and a shortage of skilled workers. This highlights the need for increased training of local community members to fill the gap. Tiffany also reported that asbestos awareness training was being rolled out across the State and was fully subsidised for all construction workers on Wooroloo bushfire and Cyclone Seroja projects.

Looking forward, there will be an environmental and landscape workshop on Saturday 31 July at the Gidgegannup Recreation Centre with doors opening from 12 noon and presentations from 1-4pm.

The next meeting of the State Recovery Coordination Group Partnership Forum will be held on Wednesday 11 August 2021.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr R Edwards".

Dr Ron Edwards

State Recovery Controller

Wooroloo Bushfire

26th July 2021