



FOR A SAFER STATE

# Wooroloo Bushfire State Recovery Plan

September 2021

[dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirerecovery](https://dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirerecovery)  
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*Disclaimer: Although funding for programs referenced in this Plan has been provided by both the Australian and Western Australian Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.*

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Image: DFES Incident Photographer Evan Collis

# Message from the State Recovery Controller



The Wooroloo bushfire caused widespread damage within the City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring in February 2021. Over 10,000 hectares were burnt and 86 properties were destroyed, with many more badly damaged by the fire.

In the wake of this disaster, government agencies at all levels, not-for-profit groups and local volunteers have all come together for the sake of the community. The key role of State Recovery and of this Plan is to ensure that the assistance provided is coordinated, timely and directed where it is most needed, in order to best support the affected local governments and their people.

To this end, the State Recovery Plan has been developed to provide a high-level overview of the economic, environmental and social impact of the bushfire and to offer a framework for the steps to recovery, as informed by community needs. It outlines the resources that are needed

at a State-level to support recovery and the specific roles of various government agencies and other parties involved in the recovery.

The City of Swan and the Shire of Mundaring have their own local recovery plans and are working to ensure the recovery effort is focused on locally driven initiatives and processes. The intention of this plan is to work in partnership with them.

Members of the local community have borne much hardship and disruption to their lives, both in the heat of the emergency and in the months since, but their strength, resilience and community spirit will see them endure along the long road to recovery.

As State Recovery Controller, I am committed to ensuring a cooperative, whole-of-government response, to ease the burden on those impacted by the bushfire.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr R Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dr Ron Edwards**

# Wooroloo bushfire in numbers

Commenced 12:02 pm Monday 1 February 2021



**86**

residential properties destroyed



**3**

evacuation centres established; up to 900 in attendance



**2**

local governments impacted



Estimated 1,750 volunteers and 600 staff involved in operational response

Level 3 incident



**\$18.1 million**

Community Recovery Fund approved 25 February 2021 under joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements



More than 1,100 lost power

**89**

volunteer veterinary professionals



**756**

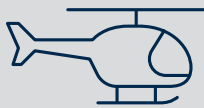
animals initially assessed

**10,900**

hectares; 156km circumference

**\$16.7 million**

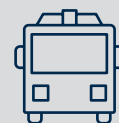
raised in Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund



Multiple aircraft deployed to support firefighting efforts

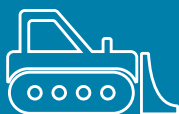
**\$4,000 & \$2,000**

Premier's Grants



**350+**

fire appliances and support vehicles active during response



**135**

properties registered for Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program



**30+**

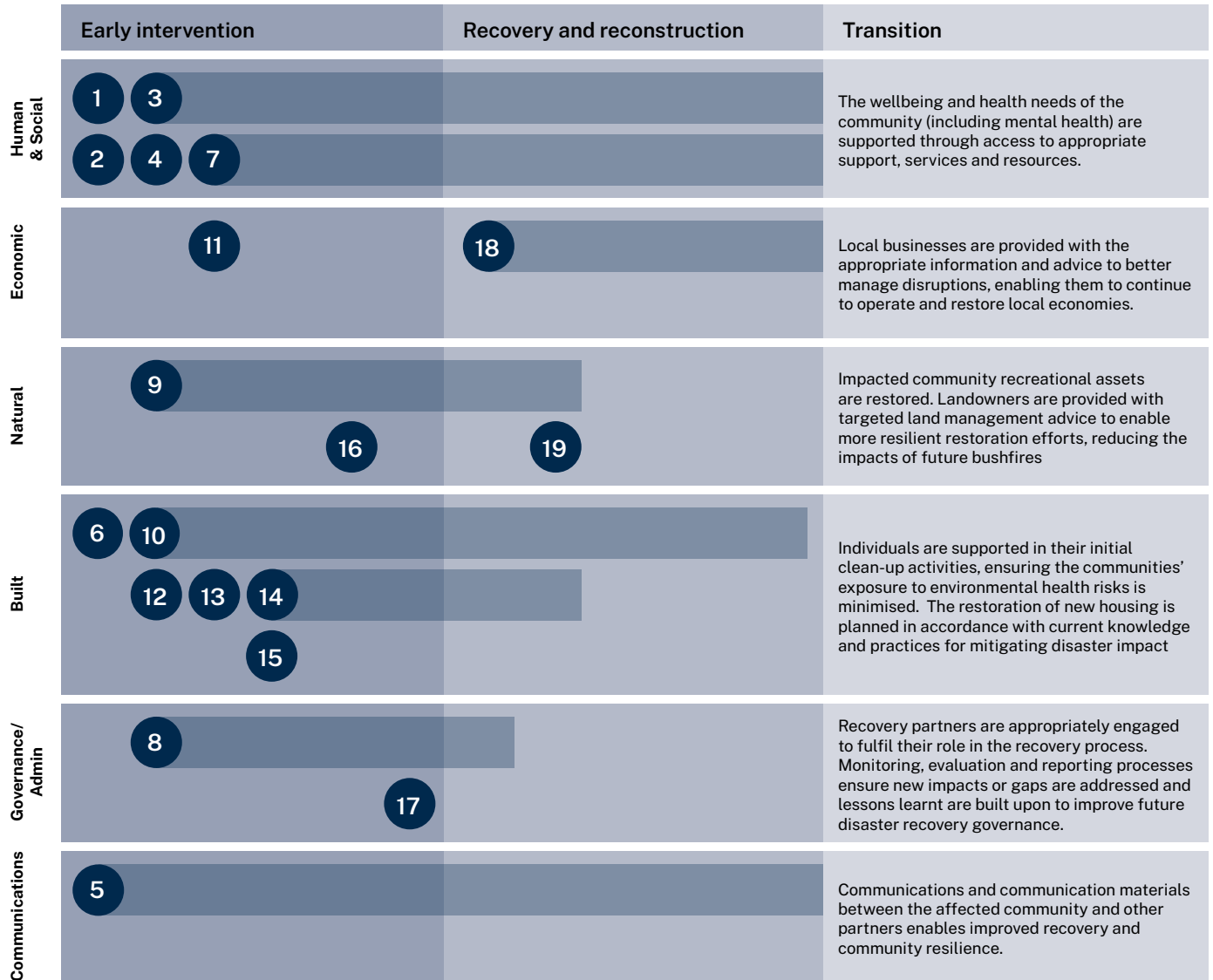
residential properties identified to contain asbestos contamination



**>10**

local roads closed; 3 State Roads

# State Recovery Plan overview



Above is a graphical representation of some core activities proposed under the State Recovery Plan. The different stages of recovery are not to scale. Early intervention represents activities that commence immediately post event, whilst recovery and reconstruction includes mid-longer term recovery efforts.

- 1 Emergency accommodation and housing support
- 2 Commence facilitation of financial hardship payments
- 3 Social, emotional and psychological support services/activities and events
- 4 Donations management
- 5 Strategic communications
- 6 Water supply and contamination advice
- 7 Schools - education
- 8 Data management
- 9 Community and Recreational Asset Restoration Program
- 10 On site temporary housing
- 11 Stakeholder liaison with Insurance Council of Australia
- 12 Authority to Act process
- 13 Clean-up site planning meetings
- 14 Demolition and waste disposal
- 15 Strategic bushfire risk management advice
- 16 Land management advice
- 17 Incident debriefings
- 18 Small business assistance
- 19 Community landscaping forum



# 1 Introduction

The Wooroloo bushfire commenced at 12:02pm on Monday 1 February 2021 and caused extensive damage within the Shire of Mundaring and the City of Swan.

The State Government is committed to supporting the community to rebuild and recover from this event. The key intent of this State Recovery Plan is to establish priorities and effective cooperation at the State level. This will be done under the guidance of the State Recovery Coordination Group, to support local efforts to strengthen community resilience, capabilities and capacity for recovery.

A primary focus of this State Recovery Plan is to develop recovery programs and

initiatives that are outcome-based and fit-for-purpose. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs defines outcomes as “changes in the knowledge, behaviour, skills, status, and level of functioning, of a group or set of individuals; or changes to an institution such as its context and organisational capacity.”

To this end, this State Recovery Plan provides for an analysis of the impacts and the development and implementation of appropriate activities to meet desired outcomes across the four different recovery domains: social, built, economic and natural environments (explained in more detail in Appendix 1).

## Successful recovery relies on the following six principles:

1. Understand the **context**: understanding that each community has its own context of history, values and dynamics.
2. Recognise **complexity**: successful recovery is responsive to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.
3. Use **community-led** approaches: empowering the community to develop its own recovery initiatives and programs helps speed recovery.
4. **Co-ordinate** all activities: recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies.
5. **Communicate** effectively: successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.
6. Recognise and build **capacity**: successful recovery recognises and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.

*Source: National Principles for Disaster Recovery*

Section 6.5 of the State Emergency Management Plan (v2.6) provides for the preparation of this State-level Recovery Plan. The State Emergency Management Plan was prepared by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) in accordance with section 18 of the *Emergency Management*

*Act 2005* (EM Act). Section 3(d) of the EM Act defines recovery as “the support of emergency affected communities in the reconstruction and restoration of physical infrastructure, the environment and community, psychosocial and economic wellbeing”.



Image: DFES Incident Photographer Morten Boe

Aligned with the outcomes identified throughout this State Recovery Plan, this Plan's key objectives are to ensure:

- Communication is coordinated across delivery and support agencies.
- Community members have the knowledge, skills and resources for dealing with their issues (including mental and psychosocial health) related to the disaster experience.
- Community members have social networks to support each other.
- Affected properties are cleaned up safely and promptly, ensuring unavoidable delays are appropriately managed.

- Recreational assets of importance are restored, in a way that provides value to the community.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure all information captured in this State Recovery Plan is current and accurate, it is acknowledged that recovery is a complex process. There is a need for this Plan to be agile and adaptable to the changing needs of the community. Updates to this Plan will be made, as necessary to capture future emerging issues.

# 2 Locational context

## 2.1 Shire of Mundaring

The Shire of Mundaring (the Shire) is located on the eastern fringe of the Perth metropolitan area, approximately 35 kilometres from the Central Business District. It is 64,409 hectares with an estimated residential population of 39,100 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019). The land use is mainly rural or rural-residential, with most of the population living within the Shire's townships. Almost half of the Shire consists of National Park, State Forest or water catchment areas.

Over 95 per cent of the Shire is mapped as bush fire prone in the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas (Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)). The Shire has previously experienced significant bushfire events, including the 2014 Perth Hills bushfire that destroyed 57 houses and impacted residents in Stoneville, Parkerville and Mount Helena.

The directly-impacted community of Wooroloo has a population of approximately 50 people (Figure 1). The Socio-Economic Index decile score for this area is 7, meaning minimal residents demonstrate significant social disadvantage (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

## 2.2 City of Swan

The City of Swan (the City) is the largest local government by area in the Perth Metropolitan region. It is 104,356 hectares in size, and approximately 10 to 50 kilometres north-east of the Perth Central Business District. It has an estimated residential population of 147,353 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019). Land use in the City is varied, and includes residential, commercial, industrial and rural. There are also two large National Parks and numerous reserves.

Approximately 80 per cent of the City is mapped as bush fire prone in the Map of Bush Fire Prone Areas (DFES). Whilst bushfires are an inevitable consequence of the landscape, the Wooroloo bushfire is the largest scale bushfire to impact the City in recent history.

The area directly impacted by the fire has a population of approximately 520 people (Figure 1). The Socio-Economic Index decile score for this area ranges between 6 and 9, meaning minimal residents demonstrate significant social disadvantage (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

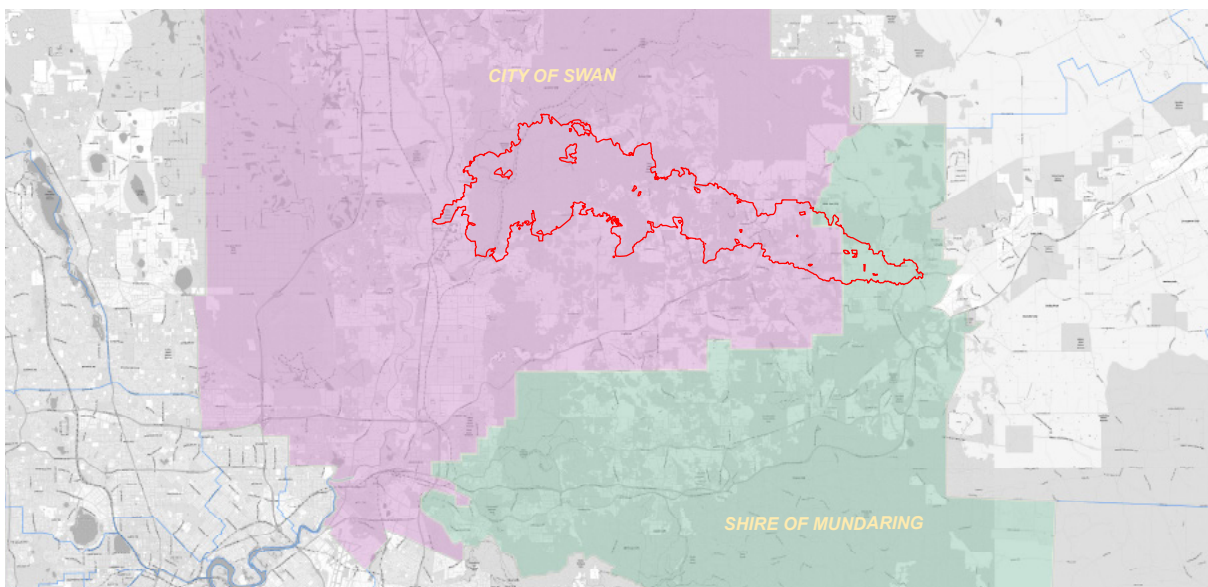


Figure 1: Location map for the February 2021 Wooroloo bushfire

# 3 Emergency response

The Wooroloo bushfire was first reported at 12:02 pm on Monday 1 February 2021. The weather conditions on this day were hot and windy, with nearby RAAF Pearce Airbase recording a maximum temperature of 37 degrees Celsius and wind gusts up to 72 kilometres per hour. At the time the fire began, the fire danger rating for RAAF Pearce Airbase was very high, increasing to severe for much of the afternoon.

Fire Danger Rating	Fire Danger Index Range
Low-Moderate	0 - 11
High	12 - 31
Very High	32 - 49
Severe	50 – 74
Extreme	75 - 99
Catastrophic	100 and greater

The fire was initially reported as a structure fire. Initial responding crews observed a fast-moving grass and scrub fire, impacting properties within the Wooroloo area. Crews immediately shifted to asset protection within the Rural Urban Interface.

The fire spread rapidly to the west and north-west with erratic fire behaviour and easterly winds driving the fire towards the City of Swan. Wind changes to the east-south-east resulted in the fire burning through Noble Falls Reserve, Tilden Park and rural parts of Gidgegannup before finally spreading into the Walylunga National Park. Persistent winds from the east with both northern and southerly influences threatened Shady Hills subdivision in Bullsbrook, Upper Swan, Aveley, The Vines and Ellenbrook.

The erratic behaviour and intensity of the bushfire, combined with the persistent easterly winds hampered the successful suppression of the bushfire, constraining operational resources and protracting impact assessment.

During the response, DFES Operational Information Services estimates over 1,750 volunteers and 600 staff attended the incident. A total of 25 different aircraft were used to support firefighting efforts, and more than 5.2 million litres of foam water and retardant was delivered by Large Aircraft Tankers, fixed wing water bombers, helitaks and the Eriksson Skycrane. Over 350 vehicles, with approximately 70 per cent of these attributed to volunteer fire brigades, were also deployed during the incident. Note – the above figures are still being validated by DFES.

The timing of the incident coincided with a metropolitan lockdown in response to a potential COVID-19 outbreak. The lockdown restrictions impacted on the establishment of evacuation centres, with more people being at home during the time of the fire.

There are triggers within the Emergency Management Framework to recognise that recovery planning and activities must start during the response phase of a disaster. Identifying and addressing recovery needs early is crucial for good community recovery outcomes. Plans for community recovery from this event commenced during the early stages of the response phase.



Image: DFES Incident Photographer Evan Collis

# 4 Assessment of recovery requirements

The Wooroloo bushfire burnt 10,750 hectares of land. The fire scar had a perimeter of 156 kilometres.

## 4.1 Social impacts

Lives were threatened, and thousands of people evacuated from their homes and businesses.

Bushfire Emergency warnings were in place for multiple days over many populated areas, including the Shady Hills subdivision in Bullsbrook, Upper Swan, Aveley, The Vines and Ellenbrook. At the peak of the threat, Bushfire Watch and Act warnings extended west to cover significant populated portions of the north east and north west metropolitan area. The impact of evacuations on pets and livestock is considered under natural environment impacts.

Three evacuation centres were set up by Department of Communities with up to 900 people in attendance. The decision to open three evacuation centres was based on the number and geographical location of impacted residents, as well as COVID-19 considerations including social distancing requirements.

Those who evacuated and did not attend an evacuation centre stayed with family, friends or took another form of refuge. In total, there were 1,128 voluntary registrations completed in person at evacuation centres or online using Red Cross' Register.Find.Reunite website.

Immediate temporary accommodation needs and welfare support for impacted persons was provided by Department of Communities and local governments.

Evacuation challenges were heightened as a result of lockdown measures. These were put in place by the Western Australian Government in response to a potential COVID-19 outbreak and meant more people were at home during the incident. The fire also resulted in the closure of two COVID-19 vehicle check points that were in place to manage the lockdown travel restrictions.

Many challenges also arose as a result of the frustration and anxiety caused by the extended restricted access to the fire zone. This included the isolation of residents who remained in the exclusion zone, including the distribution of supplies to these residents and the inability for residents to return immediately following the event.

There was little disruption to schooling during the incident as schools were closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown. However, students and staff may have encountered difficulties associated with transport and/or off-site learning upon their return to school.

EVACUATION CENTRE LOCATION	PEAK OVERNIGHT ATTENDANCE
Brown Park, Swan View (Shire of Mundaring)	110
Swan Active Midland (City of Swan)	80
Swan Active Beechboro (City of Swan)	40

## 4.2 Built environment impacts

### 4.2.1 Rapid damage assessment

A total of 86 residential properties were initially identified as destroyed (six within the Shire of Mundaring and 80 within the City of Swan). The initial survey, known as a rapid damage assessment, completed by DFES during the active fire, estimated a total of 162 properties were impacted. Refer to Appendix 2 for a full breakdown of impacted properties.

### 4.2.2 Utilities

Most of the properties in the area are supplied by bottled gas, including smaller gas bottles for barbecues. These have an increased risk of explosion; both during the fire and during the subsequent clean up stage.

More than 1,100 Western Power customers were impacted by power outages as a result of the bushfire. Western Power estimated over 600 damaged assets, including over 575 poles, 28 transformers and 41 kilometres of powerline conductor required replacement, leaving 390 properties without power for an extended period of time.

Most of the properties impacted relied on on-site water tanks for water supply. Only four properties were connected to Water Corporation's water network.

### 4.2.3 Road and rail

More than 10 local roads and three State-controlled main roads were closed as a result of the fire. Damage to road pavement and infrastructure, such as guard rails and traffic signs, was noted. The fire also closed two rail lines operated by ARC Infrastructure, impacting on the passenger and freight rail line servicing the Prospector service to Kalgoorlie and Indian Pacific to the eastern states and another freight route.

### 4.2.4 Local recreational assets

The City of Swan has reported damage to walking trails, picnic furniture, bridle trails, footpaths, ablution blocks and septic systems and other community

assets across the local government area, including, Noble Falls, Bells Rapids, Tilden Park Bridle Trail and FR Berry Reserve.

## 4.3 Natural environment impacts

### 4.3.1 Animal impacts

Both local governments activated their Animal Emergency Welfare Plans on the 1 February 2021. The State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies was activated by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) on 3 February 2021.

As part of the State Support Plan, 756 animals were assessed by veterinary professionals, including 89 volunteers over five days. Sheep, cattle, alpacas and horses were the most commonly assessed animals. Others assessed included more common domesticated animals and wildlife. Most of the animals assessed were found alive and well, with only about a third with minor injuries or requiring treatment. Only minimal losses were recorded.

Also as part of the State Support Plan – Animal Welfare in Emergencies, three animal feed distribution locations were established at Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Chidlow for feed donations and truckloads of hay. Responsibility for the continued operation of the feed distribution centres was managed primarily by a group of committed volunteers.



Image: City of Swan

### 4.3.2 Impacts on reserves and national parks

The Ellen Brook Nature Reserve, Reen Road Nature Reserve and Walyunga National Park, managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), were impacted by the fire. The fire also impacted on numerous reserves and trails managed by local government, including commonly used community recreational locations, such as Bells Rapids.

Considering the scale and size of the fire, no significant impacts on native wildlife have been reported by DBCA. The Western Swamp Tortoise species within the Ellen Brook Nature Reserve is of significant importance and listed as endangered under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and critically endangered under the State *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. No immediate impacts on the species were recorded, however longer-term impacts are not yet known.

### 4.3.3 Cultural and historic heritage

There are 18 sites registered under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* that were impacted by the bushfire (Figure 2). A further six sites have registrations lodged. The registrations relate to a range of different types, the most common being mythological or ceremonial associations or the presence of artefacts or scatter (material remains). There are no scar trees recorded on the register across the impacted

area. The presence of these sites is not expected to impact recovery activities.

In addition to sites registered under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*, there are four sites listed on the State Heritage Register. These sites may be subject to requirements under the *Heritage Act 2018*:

- P18987 Swan & Canning Rivers
- P26086 Forrest Avon Survey Cairns
- P26283 King Jarrah, Sawmills and Sawpit
- P24386 Byfield's Saw Mill

### 4.3.4 Hazardous material

At least 30 residential properties across the impacted area have been assessed to contain asbestos. Additional sites may also be identified during the clean-up process. Other likely hazardous and/or dangerous materials include copper chrome arsenic (CCA) treated timber, batteries, firearms, pesticides and other chemicals. The stabilisation of fire-damaged asbestos and clearance of properties containing excessive hazardous materials is the first priority of the Wooroloo Bushfire Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program.

There has also been potential contamination of rain water tanks from ash, fire debris or fire retardant. Fire retardants currently used in Australia are primarily fertiliser-based and are of low toxicity but may affect the appearance and taste of rainwater.

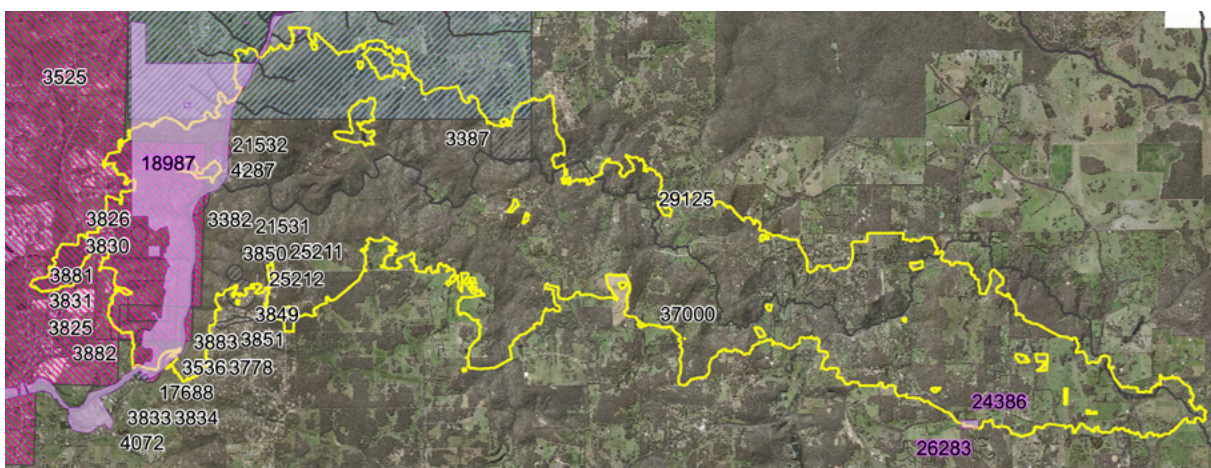


Figure 2: Map of sites registered under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and *Heritage Act 2018* (supplied by Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage)



Image: DFES Incident Photographer Evan Collis

### 4.4 Economic impacts

The economic impact of the Wooroloo bushfire should not be considered in isolation, given the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on businesses, tourism, jobs and the economy in general.

#### 4.4.1 Commerce and industry

Road and rail closures disrupted transport supply chains, which impacted commercial and industrial businesses.

According to the Australian Exposure Information Platform (AEIP) there are 185 businesses registered within the bushfire area in the City of Swan.

There may be some local businesses that may not be able to operate where their properties have been damaged or lost. The means to earn an income may have been impacted for some of the people who lost business equipment and records within the structure fires.

Based on aerial photographic analysis and brand registrations, it is estimated that 389

lifestyle properties (generally under 100 hectares) and 23 agricultural properties (more than 10 hectares, generally operating as a farm business) were burnt, either in whole or part. These properties account for nearly 20 per cent of the total area burnt and include an estimated 383 kilometres of external boundaries/property fences. 180 kilometres of this likely to be used to contain livestock.

There were no significant losses of vineyards or fruit industry infrastructure.

#### 4.4.2 Tourism

The effect on the amenity of riding and walking trails may impact on tourism in the area.

#### 4.4.3 Insurance

It is estimated that at least 13 properties were uninsured, with many more potentially underinsured, further adding to the financial stresses to residents. Note the data regarding the status of insurance is based on limited, available information and acknowledged to be largely incomplete.

# 5 Governance - roles and responsibilities

Recovery from the Wooroloo bushfire is led by the Shire of Mundaring and City of Swan, as the impacted local governments. This aligns with section 36(b) of the EM Act and section 6.3 of the State Emergency Management Policy which states that: it is a function of local government to manage recovery following an emergency affecting the community in its district.

State recovery arrangements have been triggered in line with the declaration of the Wooroloo bushfire as a Level 3 incident and section 6.7 of the State Emergency Management Plan. This includes the activation of the State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG) under the direction of the State Recovery Coordinator. In addition to standard arrangements, a State Recovery Controller has also been appointed.

A key goal of State recovery is to make sure that any State Government involvement occurs in full consultation with the local government.

The higher-level coordination provided by the State Recovery Coordinator and State Recovery Controller is there to make sure that the impacted community has equal and appropriate access to the available resources. Under this arrangement, the DFES State Recovery Team oversees the operational aspects of this State Recovery Plan and provides support to the impacted local governments, City of Swan and Shire of Mundaring. It is acknowledged that local governments are already operating at capacity and under strain in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

The governance structure for this recovery effort is included in Figure 3.

Appendix 3 establishes a timeline which governs some of the organisational aspects of recovery.

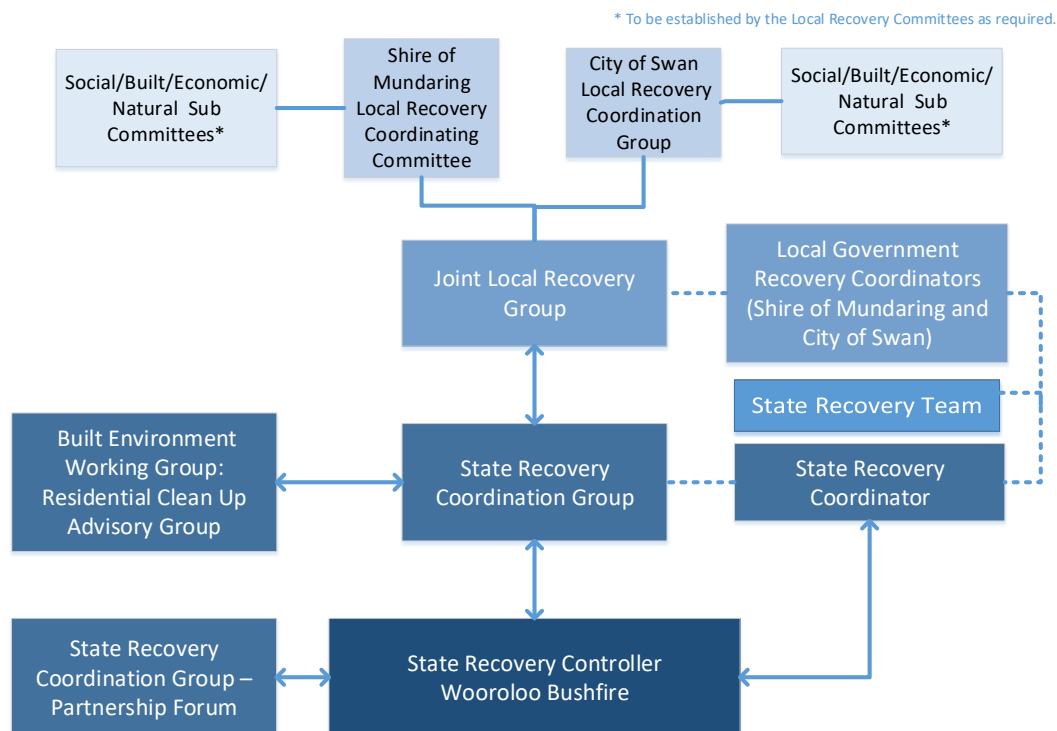


Figure 3: Wooroloo bushfire governance structure

## 5.1 State Recovery Controller – Wooroloo Bushfire

In recognition of the scale and nature of the impacts, and the complexity of recovery efforts, on 5 February 2021, the Premier appointed Dr Ron Edwards as the State Recovery Controller for the Wooroloo bushfire incident. The role of the State Recovery Controller is to ensure the provision of coordinated recovery support to emergency affected communities through the direction and coordination of resources made available by public authorities and other persons. This appointment was made pursuant to section 6.4 of the State Emergency Management Policy and in accordance with State Emergency Management Procedure 5. An Executive Officer has also been appointed to assist with managing the State Recovery Controller's duties.

## 5.2 State Recovery Coordinator

The role of the State Recovery Coordinator is to support a whole-of-government approach. The State Recovery Coordinator coordinates the maintenance of State recovery arrangements and plans through the SEMC, in partnership with the State Recovery Team. The State Recovery Coordinator also supports the operation of State-level recovery coordination through the SRCG.

The Deputy State Recovery Coordinator supports the State Recovery Coordinator's roles and responsibilities. As per the State Emergency Management Plan, the State Recovery Coordinator is the primary point of contact for all Level 3 incidents.

## 5.3 State Recovery Coordination Group

The State Emergency Management Recovery Procedure 3 outlines the roles and functions of the SRCG, which include "develop a State-Level Recovery Plan specifically for the emergency and coordinate the most effective use of government and non-government resources

to implement that plan." These recovery arrangements have been approved by the SEMC under sections 17 and 18 of the EM Act.

The SRCG is committed to ensuring a whole-of-government approach is used to implement a localised and personalised response for impacted residents and the local area. The SRCG is comprised of:

- State Government representatives
- Local Government representatives
- Not-for-profits

A list of core membership agencies is included in Appendix 4.

The SRCG met for the first time on 5 February 2021 and discussed the need to coordinate immediate recovery activities such as the clean-up and damage assessment and access, as well as the longer-term impact of the fires. The SRCG recognises that this will be a long road to recovery and is committed to ensuring residents have the appropriate support.

As of 8 September, the SRCG had met 10 times, including three times in the first fortnight and every four weeks thereafter. Moving forward, the SRCG will meet as required, the timing of which will be largely driven by ongoing community health and wellbeing indicators and the need for State government coordination.

### 5.3.1 Built Environment Working Group – Residential Clean-up Advisory Group

A Residential Clean-up Advisory Group has also been established as a sub-committee of the SRCG. This group, chaired by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and comprising representatives from both local governments, Department of Communities, Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and Department of Fire and Emergency Services, will meet as required to ensure a coordinated approach to the Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program (refer to section 8.1). Where appropriate, small, targeted sub-groups will be convened to deal with specific issues.

## 5.4 State Recovery Coordination Group – Partnership Forum

The SRCG – Partnership Forum was activated under the oversight of the State Recovery Controller - Wooroloo Bushfire, Dr Ron Edwards, and includes the contributions of additional representatives involved in supporting recovery, beyond the core SRCG membership group.

Since the 1 February 2021, a total of 11 SRCG Partnership Forum meetings have been held, inclusive of three combined SRCGs. The final Partnership Forum was held on 8 September 2021.

The Partnership Forum meetings provided a platform to keep all stakeholders updated and to also table emerging issues, challenges and possible solutions.

The SRCG Partnership Forum included representation from the following bodies:

- Australian Defence Force
- City of Perth (as the agency responsible for administering the Lord Mayor’s Distress Relief Fund)
- Australian Red Cross

- Minderoo Foundation Fire and Flood Resilience Initiative
- Disaster Relief Australia
- Business Council of Australia
- Australian Capital Equity
- Australian Defence Force
- Insurance Council of Australia
- Salvation Army
- West Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS)

## 5.5 Local Recovery Coordination Groups

The Shire of Mundaring and City of Swan have established Local Recovery Coordination Groups, as well as a Joint Local Recovery Coordination Group. DFES State Recovery is represented on each of these groups to ensure alignment between State and Local Government is maintained.

The Local Recovery Coordination Groups are responsible for developing Local Recovery Plans. Each local government also has various sub-committees with specific focus on individual elements of recovery.



Image: DFES

# 6 Administrative and financial arrangements

## 6.1 State Recovery resources

### 6.1.1 DFES State Recovery Team

The DFES State Recovery Team contributes to the development and implementation of recovery-related emergency management policies across all levels of government. This Team is led by the Deputy State Recovery Coordinator, under the oversight of the State Recovery Coordinator. The team consists of policy managers and project officers; including staff that administer the disaster recovery funding processes (refer to section 6.2.1 and 6.2.2).

Current priority 'business as usual' tasks for the DFES State Recovery Team include the development of a WA Recovery Training Framework and a toolbox of resources for recovery program evaluations, which complement the implementation of Recovery Plans.

### 6.1.2 DFES State Recovery Operational Team (Wooroloo bushfire)

A DFES State Recovery Operational Team for the Wooroloo bushfire has been established in Midland to specifically support the two local governments and their communities.

The Operational Team engages with other State agencies, local governments and other groups to respond to identified recovery impacts. The Operational Team consists of:

- Operations Manager
- Strategic Communications Coordinator
- Project Coordinator
- Finance/Claims Officer to assist with the processing of funding claims eligible under agreed funding arrangements (as outlined below)
- additional ad hoc support, as required, including administrative assistance, digital communications and graphic design.

## 6.2 Financial Arrangements

### 6.2.1 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements – Category A and B funding

The Wooroloo bushfire was proclaimed an eligible disaster under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFAWA) on 5 February 2021. The State Government will provide financial assistance to those people who have been affected through joint State and Commonwealth disaster relief and recovery arrangements. This assistance will be facilitated by DFES as the administrator of the DRFAWA. The following DRFAWA Category A and B assistance measures are available:

- For individuals and families – Personal Hardship and Distress Grants which are administered by the Department of Communities (Child Protection and Family Support Section). Potential measures include emergency food, accommodation, clothing, temporary living expenses, replacement of essential household contents and housing repairs to return housing to a habitable, safe and secure condition. Note – some of these measures are subject to income and/or assets testing. Refer below for more details.
- For small businesses – interest rate subsidies on 'new' loans approved by authorised deposit-taking institutions (financial institutions).
- For primary producers – assistance may be available toward freight costs, materials for boundary fences (only where it is demonstrated that public safety is at risk), professional advice grants and interest rate subsidies on 'new' loans approved by authorised deposit-taking institutions. These eligible measures are administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Agriculture and Food (Rural Business and Development Group).

- For Local Governments and State Government agencies – clean-up costs, counter disaster operations and the restoration or replacement of essential public assets including local road damage. State road restoration is through Main Roads Western Australia. Only costs incurred that are ‘additional’ costs, and are directly related to the event, will be eligible for reimbursement.

As part of the Category A funding, Department of Communities will provide the following to eligible people through Personal Hardship and Distress Grants:

- **Category 1. Emergency assistance (non-means tested).**  
Food, essential clothing, other personal items including medical and non-pharmaceutical items, access to communications, essential transport, and document replacement costs (e.g. birth certificate). Maximum payment \$200 per person or \$800 per family.
- **Category 2. Temporary living expenses (non-means tested).**  
Temporary short to medium term accommodation, for up to three weeks.
- **Category 3. Replacement of essential household contents (means tested and other eligibility applies).**  
To provide immediate assistance to those people unable to return to a functioning capacity within their own resources by providing assistance to repair or replace essential household items which sustain people in need either in their own or alternative accommodation. This assistance will only available to people whose primary residence has been affected. Maximum payment available is \$10,500.
- **Category 4. Housing repairs (means tested and other eligibility applies).**  
To assist people without capacity to repair owner-occupied/principal residences to enable them to return housing to a habitable, safe and secure condition. Residences that have been damaged beyond repair are ineligible. Maximum payment available is \$10,000.

## 6.2.2 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements – Category C funding

In addition to Category A and B funding, a joint Commonwealth and State Government-funded Category C Community Recovery Fund worth \$18.1 million (Phase 1 package) was approved on 25 February 2021 to support impacted individuals and communities in the recovery from the Wooroloo Bushfire. The approval of this Phase 1 Category C DRFA package recognises that impacted communities face a difficult and prolonged recovery, and that additional recovery support is required beyond the standard DRFA Categories A and B.

This Community Recovery Fund will deliver the following programs (outlined in Section 8 of this State Recovery Plan):

- the Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program
- the Community Recovery and Outreach Program
- the Community and Recreational Asset Restoration Program

DFES, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Department of Communities and both local governments will work together to deliver these programs. Additional funding is included in the Community Recovery Fund for DFES to facilitate detailed monitoring and evaluation of the total Category C funding package. This is a requirement of all approved Community Recovery Funds. Collectively, these programs are funded for a total of two years.

With prior approval from the Commonwealth, there is flexibility within the funding arrangements for reallocation of funding between the approved initiatives, on the basis that there are no additional financial implications for government beyond the level of assistance already approved.

Implementation of the Community Recovery Fund will be strictly monitored in accordance with the requirements of the DRFA. Should ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives identify longer-term recovery needs,

a subsequent request for Phase 2 funding will be considered. Additional proposed initiatives of such an application could include recovery grants for impacted primary producers and small businesses, a Mental Health Program and an Economic Recovery and Community Resilience Grants Program, among others.

### 6.2.3 In kind agency contribution costs (including costs ineligible under DRFA)

The resourcing and delivery of some State-recovery programs and initiatives mentioned in this State Recovery Plan are not covered by DRFA funding. There are also costs involved with the delivery and administration of DRFA funded activities that are ineligible

for reimbursement. This includes:

- preparing, reporting and acquitting DRFA applications and projects;
- ongoing administrative operational or maintenance costs; and
- legal costs.

State Government agencies and local government are responsible for funding all ineligible costs and in-kind contributions associated with the implementation of this State Recovery Plan from within their agency budget.



#### 6.2.4 Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund

The Wooroloo and Hills Bushfire Appeal 2021 was activated by the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund on 3 February 2021 and has raised a significant amount of money for the impacted community. The primary aim of the Fund is to provide financial assistance to individuals to alleviate distress, suffering and personal hardship brought about by a declared disaster or emergency.

The first priority for the Fund was the distribution of a \$25,000 rapid response grant payment to residents who have lost their primary homes. A second payment of \$25,000

for all owner occupiers was announced on 18 March, meaning people who suffered a complete loss of a property they owned and resided received \$50,000 within a relatively short amount of time. Whilst the allocation of this additional funding was not restricted in any way, the intent behind the additional payment was to cover temporary accommodation costs.

Further payments, including those based on other categories of impact have been progressively assessed and paid to eligible residents accordingly. A summary of all known payments allocated up to 30 June 2021 is provided below.

GRANT/SUBSIDIES CATEGORIES	TOTAL GRANT \$
<b>Owner/Occupiers</b>	
Level One A - the place of residence and contents have been totally destroyed	Up to \$130,000
Level One B - the place of residence (converted shed/caravan/transportable) and contents have been totally destroyed	Up to \$80,000
Level Two - the place of residence has sustained structural damage and contents have been damaged	Up to \$65,000
Level Three A - other property damage / loss with loss >\$100,000	\$30,000
Level Three B - other property damage / loss with loss <\$100,000	Up to \$20,000
<b>Owners</b>	
Level One A - the place of residence and contents have been totally destroyed	Up to \$105,000
Level One B - the place of residence (converted shed/caravan/transportable) and contents have been totally destroyed	Up to \$80,000
Level Two - the place of residence has sustained structural damage and contents have been damaged	Up to \$65,000
Level Three A - other property damage / loss with loss >\$100,000	\$30,000
Level Three B - other property damage / loss with loss <\$100,000	Up to \$20,000
<b>Occupiers (those renting)</b>	
Level Four - the house contents have been totally destroyed as a consequence of the house being totally destroyed.	Up to \$50,000
Level Five A - partial damage/loss of house contents loss >\$100,000	\$20,000
Level Five B - partial damage/loss of house contents with loss <\$100,000	Up to \$10,000

The appeal was officially closed on 31 March 2021, raising a total of \$16.7 million (although fundraisers continued to be carried out up to 30 June). This included a \$2 million contribution by the State Government. Applications for all categories closed on 31 August 2021. As of 6 September 2021, a total of \$14.6 million (or 87 per cent) had been disbursed.

The Lord Mayor’s Distress Relief Fund Board, who administer the Fund, will review proposals for further assistance to determine expenditure of the remainder of the fund. In doing so, there is a need to manage community and stakeholder expectations to ensure

equity across the impacted community and include consideration of long-term needs.

**6.2.5 State Government Bushfire Relief Payment**

The State Government provided emergency funding of \$4,000 to those who have lost their home and \$2,000 to those whose home has been damaged by the Woorloo bushfire. This funding was administered by the local governments on behalf of the State Government. Applications closed on 23 July 2021. The final status of disbursements for this payment is summarised in the table below.

STATE GOVERNMENT BUSHFIRE RELIEF PAYMENT	CITY OF SWAN	SHIRE OF MUNDARING	TOTAL
Number of applications approved for \$2,000 grant	108	16	124
Number of applications approved for \$4,000 grant	71	7	78
Total amount paid (\$)	\$500,000	\$60,000	\$560,00

# 7 Strategic communications

Responsible agency: DFES

OUTCOMES	
Overarching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All levels of government, private sector, not-for-profit organisations are engaged in the management of recovery</li> <li>The community is aware of the disaster recovery processes</li> </ul>

Communication plays a vital role in disaster recovery, ensuring impacted communities have the information they need to recover, and the tools and support needed to manage their own recovery.

In active recovery, timely, clear and relevant information means that people who need support after a disaster know where to get help. Communication can literally

bring people together (e.g. through public meetings) and help affected individuals, or a community, get back on their feet more quickly. A primary benefit of having a central State strategic communications coordination role is to provide a single source of truth and a consistent approach to public messaging across DFES, state and local government and the not-for-profit sector.

A Communications Plan has been developed by DFES to support the State Recovery Plan. The Communications Plan includes overarching objectives and identifies key stakeholders, their role and the range of communication tool proposed to be utilised. External communication tools include:

- DFES Facebook Page and DFES Wooroloo Bushfire Recovery Facebook Group;
- DFES, Emergency WA and wa.gov.au websites;
- cross promotion of local government recovery communications;
- media releases and press conferences;
- development of Fact Sheets and newsletters;
- delivery of presentations and development of videos, as required; and
- graphic design to develop a consistent 'brand', including the use of pull up banners and templates for presentations.

The success of recovery communications will be measured by the following:

- number of media articles (print, online, television) generated;
- number of radio interviews conducted;
- reach of audience;
- results/analytics on metrics tracked on the following websites:
  - Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Clean-up page
  - Emergency WA – Bushfire Recovery page
  - Department of Fire and Emergency Service – Recovery page; and
- Facebook group:
  - number of followers
  - number of posts
  - engagement via posts, shares and comments
  - number of views of videos.

## 8 State recovery programs and initiatives

The following State-level programs and initiatives are proposed to assist recovery.

### 8.1 Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program

Delivery agency: Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

OUTCOMES	
Built / Economic / Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals are supported in their initial clean-up activities to enable them to take the necessary steps to progress the restoration of housing</li> </ul>
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community's exposure to environmental health risks and public health risks is minimised.</li> </ul>

Funded through a Community Recovery Fund established under the joint Commonwealth and State DRFA (Category C), the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) will undertake clean-up activities for eligible residents on behalf of the State Government. This includes the removal of residential bushfire related waste (buildings and vehicles). Based on extensive bushfire recovery experience, a coordinated and efficient clean-up is considered critical. The program will provide better outcomes for affected residents by reducing risk of cross-site asbestos contamination as well as reducing confusion and duplication of effort.

To oversee and guide the rollout of the program, a Clean-up Advisory Group, chaired by DWER, has been established as a sub-committee of the SRCG. The Advisory Group will meet as required.

Eligible activities as part of this program include:

- removal of bushfire related waste and debris;
- contract management;
- waste management;
- environmental monitoring and sampling; and
- monitoring and evaluation activities.

A flowchart of the proposed process is provided at Appendix 5.

As at 14 September 2021, demolition and waste removal activities on all 135 properties registered for the program had been completed. As part of the program, at least 8,829 cubic metres of rubble and 108 tonnes of metal have been recycled. An additional 3,401 tonnes of general waste and 3,288 tonnes of asbestos removed (including soil) have been removed. A priority of waste disposal is diverting it from landfill. A significant portion of waste is being recycled and reused.

Key milestones (and target completion dates) for this program include:

- finalisation of the registration process for eligible residents via an Authority to Act form (19 March 2021);
- site works service contracts awarded (30 March 2021);
- completion of individual site plans (30 April 2021);
- demolition and waste disposal for each site (30 August 2021); and
- final validation of the completion of site works for each site (20 October 2021).

This program builds upon work undertaken by DWER as the Chair of SEMC's Waste Management Working Group. The working group was established in response to recommendations arising from the evaluation of recovery efforts following the 2016 Waroona Bushfire. The State-led clean-up program for the Waroona Fire (199 impacted properties) formed part of the State Government response. The program faced many challenges arising from asbestos contamination, including pre-existing, buried asbestos from historic demolished buildings.



Image: DFES

## 8.2 Community Recovery and Outreach Program

Delivery agencies: Department of Communities, Shire of Mundaring and City of Swan

OUTCOMES	
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members can access appropriate services to deal with their needs (including mental health)</li> <li>Community members are able to respond to their own needs and to support the needs of other members of the community.</li> <li>The community is not experiencing excessive stress or hardship arising from the disaster</li> <li>The community has opportunities for creative expression that help the community recover from disaster</li> </ul>
Overarching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members are aware of the risks of future disasters</li> </ul>

Funded through a Community Recovery Fund established under the joint Commonwealth and State DRFA (Category C), the Department of Communities, Shire of Mundaring, City of Swan and the Australian Red Cross, as a service provider, will embed dedicated Community Recovery Officers to provide support to impacted communities. Additional funding is also available for community activities and events to support long-term recovery. The Community Recovery Officers are identified as critical resources to provide long-term, consistent support for community members and to assist them to access the necessary services to support their ongoing rebuild and recovery, including:

- advice with respect to available financial hardship payments (including those detailed in section 6 of this Plan);
- advice regarding emergency accommodation and housing support;
- social, emotional and psychological support services;
- partner agency referrals; and
- two-way communication to empower the community and ensure a community led recovery.

Delivery agencies will work with service providers, including Red Cross and other providers, to deliver the following eligible activities:

- Services associated with the provision of information, psychosocial and practical supports to support individuals and communities, including individual case management coordinated by the Department of Communities.
- Community driven recovery projects, events, workshops and other activities specific to addressing the needs of individuals and families impacted by the bushfire.
- Engagement and outreach with the community to ensure projects are responsive to different and evolving community needs.
- Communication materials to support psychosocial recovery and community resilience.
- Local capacity building activities and planning activities to support the long-term recovery of the community.



Image: City of Swan

## 8.3 Community and Recreational Asset Restoration Program

Delivery agency: City of Swan

OUTCOMES	
Social/Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational assets of importance are restored in a way that provides value to the community</li> </ul>

Joint Commonwealth and State Government funding (DRFA Category C) has been made available for the City of Swan to undertake a dedicated program to clean-up and repair of community and recreational assets within their local government area. Community assets impacted include walking trails, picnic furniture, bridle trails, footpaths, ablution block and septic systems.

Eligible activities include clean-up and disposal of debris, removal of fire damaged trees or trees posing a threat and the purchase and

installation of materials or goods associated with restoration. These activities will contribute to the restoration of social and community networks, accelerate community recovery and alleviate distress following the disaster event.

This program will complement works being undertaken by DBCA to restore visitor infrastructure and undertake erosion prevention works in impacted areas within Walyunga National Park.

## 8.4 Other initiatives - State strategic coordination and advice

Responsible agencies: Various (refer to individual initiatives listed below)

OUTCOMES	
Built	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New residences are planned in accord with current knowledge and practices for mitigating disaster impact</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses have information they need to continue recovering from the disaster</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members have access to appropriate and affordable temporary housing in a timely manner</li> <li>Community members can access appropriate services to deal with their needs (including mental health)</li> </ul>

**\*Note:** Some of the initiatives outlined below may also contribute to outcomes previously listed under other programs.

#### 8.4.1 Offers of philanthropic assistance and donations

**Responsible agency:** Department of Communities, local government and DFES

The need to assess and coordinate offers of assistance from third parties was identified early in the Wooroloo bushfire recovery. This includes the development of a framework by local government, to match available resources with needs and ensure equity of access to donations. In setting up a local donation's management framework, there is also a need to manage impacts and unintended consequences of charitable donations. For example, the generous amounts of donated animal feed, and the subsequent establishment of animal feed distribution centres, has caused further hardship on already stressed local suppliers. There is also a need for support the ongoing administration of the framework, once developed.

The Department of Communities plays a role in the direction of businesses and agencies with offers of assistance and donations to West Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS) and individuals are asked to nominate with Volunteering WA. When the Department of Communities has a need or needs identified from affected community members, they are linked with the suitable and appropriate provision of assistance through WACOSS or Volunteering WA.

DFES State Recovery is also able to provide a central communications role to promote and disseminate information.

To complement the framework being developed and applied by local government, in line with their ongoing responsibility, DFES State Recovery will contribute towards the development of a national and State response in relation to this issue, including consideration of the current capability and capacity gaps at the state and local government level. Lessons learned in the establishment of the framework will be valuable in informing this response.

To date, significant assistance for the recovery effort has been provided by the following organisations: Australian Red Cross, BlazeAid, Disaster Relief Australia, Minderoo Foundation Fire and Flood Resilience Initiative, Australian Capital Equity, Coates Hire, Rotary Club of Australia, Business Council of Australia, Country Women's Association, Salvation Army and Parkerville Community Care.

The SRCG Partnership Forum has been instrumental in leveraging philanthropic support to contribute to the recovery efforts, in collaboration with local government. Where required, State Government coordination has been provided through the Department of Communities and Department of Premier and Cabinet where policy decisions have been required.

#### 8.4.2 On-site temporary housing

**Responsible agencies:** Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Complementary to the above, in the wake of the bushfire, offers of philanthropic assistance were made by organisations with capacity to provide on-site temporary accommodation. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has led the coordination of advice and the State Government's policy response in relation to these accommodation options.

In addition to this, as the agency responsible for administering the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995*, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries will provide advice and support in relation to approval pathways for any on-site temporary housing, including private arrangements. This approval is closely linked to effluent disposal requirements under the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911*. Ministerial consideration of extended camping permits on private property is required for up to 12 months at a time under the current legislative framework.

The importance of resolving this issue is compounded by the concurrent impacts of COVID-19. As a result of various economic stimulation packages that form part of the State and Federal governments' COVID-19 recovery plan, concerns have been raised in regards to the current shortage of construction workers, increased costs for infrastructure and high demand for rental accommodation. In response to this issue, the State Government will engage with industry groups on behalf of the local governments and impacted community to provide advocacy with the aim of ensuring the impacts of this increased demand is managed and minimised to the greatest extent possible.

#### 8.4.3 Wellbeing and mental health

**Responsible agencies:** Department of Communities, Mental Health Commission and Department of Education

The Department of Communities provides welfare support to community residents impacted by an emergency or disaster. Financial assistance and other practical assistance, emotional support, information, referral, advocacy, counselling and psychological services are available.

At a State level, the Mental Health Commission coordinates with other agencies through the State Recovery Coordination Group, on behalf of the mental health, alcohol and other drug sector. This includes monitoring demand for mental health services during the recovery.

#### 8.4.4 Impact on schools

**Responsible agency:** Department of Education

Support through Youth Care Chaplaincy services and local youth programs will be facilitated by the Department of Education to address the short, medium and long term needs of impacted students.

In response to the Wooroloo bushfire, significant resources were developed and provided to school psychologists and lead school psychologists for use within schools. These plans and resources were

developed using evidence-based material provided by the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Department of Education and Training. Ongoing liaison between the Department of Education's Chief Psychologist and Lead School Psychologists has been established to ensure appropriate levels of support can be maintained. The wellbeing of staff is also being monitored.


The provision of these services will be coordinated in close liaison with the delivery of the Community Recovery and Outreach Program to ensure recovery efforts are not duplicated and relevant outcomes are evaluated.



#### 8.4.5 Water supply and contamination

**Responsible agency:** Water Corporation, DFES, Department of Health

The Water Corporation has provided a support package to the four impacted customers connected to the Water Corporation reticulated network. Water Corporation has also extended a 20 kilolitre water allowance for all customers that were located within the emergency warning area (red zone). The Water Corporation has provided further assistance by facilitating water cartage and provision of bottled water at the Local Recovery Centre. This assistance was available until 9 April 2021.



Fact sheets, a methodology for water sampling and supporting communications were developed quickly in response to concerns raised by residents regarding water quality and likely water tank contamination from retardant, ash and fire debris. DFES provided information on the use of retardant and A-class foams during bushfire operations and the Department of Health also provided information in relation to water supply contamination. The risks associated with refilling water tanks are now understood (safe access, tank structural integrity and water quality) and communicated.

DFES Operations will continue to be engaged with the recovery operations to further strengthen its communications strategy in relation to the use of retardant and its impacts for future events. Further issues will be worked through over time, as they arise.

#### 8.4.6 Strategic bushfire risk management advice

**Responsible agency:** DFES and Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

In consultation with the two affected local governments, DFES Rural Fire Division has prepared a streamlined process for Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessments, known as a BAL Contour Map, to assist affected residents who have lost properties in the Wooroloo Bushfire. A BAL Contour Map shows the varying BALs on a site. BAL assessments are a mandatory requirement for people building or developing in a bushfire prone area and form the basis for establishing the requirements for construction to improve protection of buildings from attack by bushfire.

The BAL Contour Map provides an indicative BAL, using some baseline assumptions, and will also be able to strategically inform appropriate building locations on a property. It has been provided to the local governments for their use in advising residents of further planning and building assessment needs. A site-specific BAL assessment and bushfire management plan may still be required in some instances. Provision has been made by the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief

Fund to contribute towards this additional landowner cost (refer to section 6.2.4).

In addition to the above, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage has prepared an information sheet for the Shire of Mundaring and City of Swan outlining the State bushfire planning requirements for rebuilding in a bushfire prone area. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage has also completed a review of the impacts of the Wooroloo bushfire on properties established after the introduction of State Planning Policy 3.7 Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas. The outcomes of this analysis have been confidentially shared with local governments.

#### 8.4.7 Data management

**Responsible agency:** DFES

The critical importance of access to accurate and reliable data to adequately plan for successful recovery has been highlighted during the development of this State Recovery Plan. The Rapid Damage Assessment data compiled by DFES during the active fire provides a valuable baseline for decisions to be made, however as recovery plans progress, there is a need for more comprehensive, accurate and refined data. This is especially important for estimating costs for recovery programs such as the Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program.

In response to this need, DFES Risk Capability and Analysis has developed a methodology for verifying multiple data sources, including the Rapid Damage Assessment data and local government data sets, using desktop analysis of aerial imagery. This has been done in consultation with local governments, however the need to undertake this process resulted in delays to early decision making. Opportunities also exist to consolidate this data with that sourced by external entities, including comprehensive drone-sourced data, forming a pictorial set for every impacted property, captured by Disaster Relief Australia.

A review of this work will be conducted as part of the lessons management and evaluation



Image: DFES

process to refine and improve the methodology for data collection and management to ensure data captured for future incidents is optimised, efficient and fit-for-purpose.

#### 8.4.8 Community debriefings

**Responsible agency:** DFES

In consultation with the Local Recovery Coordination Groups, DFES will participate in targeted debriefings to the community impacted by the fire to facilitate the process of recovery. The intent of the debriefings will be to unpack what happened during the operational response, address any concerns as to how/why the response was undertaken and facilitate better access to recovery resources. Separate sessions with targeted advice for Bullsbrook and Gidgegannup have already taken place. This allowed for more detailed consideration of the contextual risks associated with each individual location. Additional sessions will be scheduled, as needed. Ongoing education and awareness in relation to preparedness can also be provided, as needed.

#### 8.4.9 Land management

**Responsible agency:** Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)

DPIRD provides information and advice to rural property owners following a bushfire

to help reduce the risk of wind and water erosion. Specifically, DPIRD can provide targeted advice to property owners about wind and water erosion management, protection of water resources, property planning to replace lost infrastructure, livestock health and welfare and pasture and vegetation recovery. DPIRD collaborates with Regional Natural Resource Management bodies and local government to deliver these services.

#### 8.4.10 Financial and legal counselling for individuals

**Responsible agency:** DFES, as sponsor of a program coordinated by Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia (FCAWA).

The FCAWA provides information, support and advocacy advice for financial recovery. FCAWA financial counsellors have been funded through the DFES AWARE (All West Australian's Reducing Emergencies) Program to provide information, support and advocacy for impacted community members experiencing financial difficulty or financial stress. Financial counsellors can provide options for people with insurance issues, accessing funding and grants and options for loans, debts and leases. Legal advice is also being provided by Midlas, a not-for-profit community legal centre based in Midland.

#### 8.4.11 Small business assistance

**Responsible agency:** Small Business Development Corporation

In addition to the full or partial loss of capital assets arising from structural damage, the loss of power and transport disruptions will impact home-based and other businesses operating in the area. The full extent of these impacts will only become evident once clean-up and immediate residential issues have been progressed. Underinsurance, in particular, has been identified as a potential issue if a business lost tools and equipment within vehicles that were located on home premises as typical business policies do not cover these circumstances. The Small Business Development Corporation is able to provide on the ground, one-on-one assistance as and when the need arises. Where required, these services will be delivered in close liaison with the local government recovery co-ordination groups and/or local government Enterprise Development Officers.

The Small Business Development Corporation will also liaise with the Business Council of Australia in relation to their BizRebuild program and its rollout to local and small businesses impacted by the Woorloo Bushfire. This program is specifically designed to help businesses recover to create jobs, rebuild stronger communities and restore thriving local economies. It provides vouchers to eligible businesses for up to \$2,000 to replace tools and equipment and \$500 for legal and accounting advice.

#### 8.4.12 Stakeholder liaison with Insurance Council of Australia

**Responsible agency:** DFES

The intent of the Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program is to maximise benefits for residents, whether they are insured or not. Consequently, the development of this program has required close liaison and collaboration with the Insurance Council of Australia, as the representative body for all insurance companies. The SRCG Partnership Forum and State Recovery Coordinator, with

the support of the DFES State Recovery Team, has led this process and will continue to share information and address issues as they arise, including the formalisation of a universal position on insurance payouts for individuals who participate in the state clean-up and a process for dispute resolution.

#### 8.4.13 Community environmental initiatives

**Responsible agency:** State Recovery Controller, DFES and local government

As the recovery focus shifts towards rebuilding and the future, on 31 July 2021, the State Government assisted local government to host a community bushfire prone environmental planning landscaping forum. Advice from lead personalities and local community leaders focussed on establishing sustainable properties, fire wise gardens and fauna and habitat restoration, while State government experts provided practical advice in relation to best-practice siting and design, asset protection and hazard management zones, access requirements, property plans and aboriginal heritage matters. This Forum was funded by the joint Commonwealth-State Category C Community Recovery and Outreach Program, and will complement other initiatives established under this program.



Image: DFES

#### 8.4.14 Lessons management

**Responsible agency:** all (DFES lead)

Adequate monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of any recovery program. Processes will be put in place to capture lessons identified and develop recommendations with a focus on streamlining and improving current policies and procedures for future events.

In addition to the issues discussed as part of broader recovery initiatives above, to date, the following issues have been suggested to be captured as part of the lessons learned review:

- The need to review and streamline administrative processes and eligibility criteria relating to the payment of grants and the clean-up registration process.
- The design and intent of Impact Statements and data capture process.
- The traffic management and emergency access permit system\*.
- The damage caused by suppression works during the fire on private property\*.
- The need to streamline funding approval processes.

- Emergency procurement processes.
- An improved response and recovery process to address companion and wild animals impacted by the bushfire.
- An improved integration with the Australian Defence Force in the recovery process.
- The early engagement of the Traditional Owners in the recovery effort.

*\*These issues arise from the operations and response phase, however will be noted as part of this process to acknowledge their impact on impeding or delaying recovery.*

This aspect of the State Recovery Plan will be led by DFES, but with a shared responsibility for all SRCG agencies to contribute. For more detail, refer to section 9 Monitoring and Evaluation.

## 9 Monitoring and evaluation

**Responsible agency:** DFES

The preparation of this State Recovery Plan has been informed by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Disaster Recovery Programs. In accordance with this Framework, the effectiveness of this State Recovery Plan will be subject to regular monitoring by the State Recovery Controller and the State Recovery Coordinator, through the SRCG. A State Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has also been developed.

To streamline the monitoring and evaluation process, a dashboard reporting system has been established with key delivery agencies to capture regular snapshots data of progress in key implementation areas, such as the Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program, financial payments and community recovery and outreach.

Regular, planned, ongoing update reports are also provided through the SRCG. In addition to the SRCG agency reports, key stakeholders will be invited to participate in interim debriefs with a view to providing an assessment of how the recovery is progressing and include

identification of any new impacts or gaps.

In addition to the above, through the SRCG Partnership Forum, the Business Council of Australia is planning to arrange an assurance audit on local economic and community wellbeing, in consultation with both local governments. This audit will be able to contribute directly to the monitoring and evaluation of recovery programs and initiatives at both the local and state level, as well as identify possible opportunities for future initiatives.

A final evaluation report will also be prepared at the conclusion of the State-level recovery coordination arrangements. The evaluation report will be provided to the State Recovery Coordinator and SEMC for review. Documentation of lessons learned and a summary of opportunities and/or recommendations arising from this evaluation will inform future recovery efforts, policy and resources. The aim of all recovery programs following a disaster should be to build upon learnings from previous events and strive for improvement.

# 10 Conclusion

The State Recovery Coordinator is responsible for determining when the State-level recovery coordination arrangements cease, following consultation with the affected local governments/Joint Local Recovery Coordination Group, to ensure there are no gaps in service delivery or non-completion of tasks. The withdrawal of formal State-led recovery assistance will require a handover of the activities to agencies and local government that usually have responsibility for those activities, under normal circumstances.

The State Recovery Controller's role is scheduled to cease on 15 October 2021. A report by the State Recovery Controller outlining the completion of recovery objectives will be submitted to the Premier or Minister for Emergency Services.

Regardless of the status of the State-level recovery coordination arrangements, any programs administered under the DRFA Category C funding will operate for a maximum of 24 months. In the event the SRCG is disbanded prior to the cessation of any recovery programs outlined in this State Recovery Plan, the State Recovery Controller's and/or SRCG's responsibilities fall to the State Recovery Coordinator.

The road to recovery from the devastating 2021 Wooroloo Bushfires is not expected to be easy or quick. However, through the implementation of programs and initiatives identified in this State Recovery Plan, the State Government will demonstrate its commitment to support the community's ongoing recovery.



Image: DFES

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[abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa](https://abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa)

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# Appendix 1 - Key recovery domains

## Key domains and stakeholders

(adapted from South Australia Recovery Coordination Framework, September 2020)

DOMAIN	STAKEHOLDERS
Social	
<p>The Social domain considers the impact an event may have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.</p> <p>This domain is primarily concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Shelter</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Psychological wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relief services, including individual and household financial support</li> <li>• Health and medical assistance</li> <li>• Psychological support</li> <li>• School support</li> <li>• Community development</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsible SRCG members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Communities</li> <li>• Department of Health</li> <li>• Department of Education</li> <li>• Mental Health Commission</li> <li>• WA Police</li> <li>• Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries</li> <li>• Local Government</li> </ul>
Economic	
<p>The Economic domain considers the direct and indirect impacts that an event may have on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business</li> <li>• Primary production</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Broader economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism providers</li> <li>• Agriculture associations</li> <li>• Peak industry bodies</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsible SRCG members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Business Development Corporation</li> <li>• Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>• Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation</li> <li>• Local Government</li> </ul>

DOMAIN	STAKEHOLDERS
<b>Built</b>	
<p>The Built or Infrastructure domain considers the impact on essential infrastructure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential services</li> <li>• Commercial and industrial facilities</li> <li>• Public buildings and assets e.g. road networks</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners and operators of ICT &amp; telecommunications</li> <li>• Water and waste water services</li> <li>• Transport services</li> <li>• Gas, electricity, fuel services</li> <li>• Buildings and private infrastructure</li> <li>• Ports and wharf bodies</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsible SRCG members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Portfolio</li> <li>• Energy Policy WA</li> <li>• Water Corporation</li> <li>• Department of Communities</li> <li>• Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety</li> <li>• Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage</li> <li>• Local Government</li> </ul>
<b>Natural</b>	
<p>The Natural domain considers the impact that an event may have on a healthy functioning environment, which underpins the economy and society.</p> <p>Components of the natural environment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air and water quality</li> <li>• Land degradation and contamination</li> <li>• Plant and wildlife damage/loss</li> <li>• National parks</li> <li>• Cultural and heritage sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural environment, public land and waterways</li> <li>• Environmental hazard advice</li> <li>• Coordinated waste management, including fences, trees, houses, debris, green waste</li> <li>• Advice and information to the community</li> </ul> <p><b>SRCG members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions</li> <li>• Department of Water and Environmental Regulation</li> <li>• Department of Health</li> <li>• RSPCA</li> <li>• Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>• Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage</li> <li>• Local Government</li> </ul>

**Note:** The following SRCG agencies play an overarching or enabling role in recovery:

- Department of Fire and Emergency Services
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Treasury
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Refer to Appendix 4 for a full list of SRCG membership.

# Appendix 2 - Consolidated dataset of damaged and destroyed properties

A rapid damage assessment was conducted by DFES during the active fire and this assessment provided an estimate of 162 impacted properties.

## DFES rapid damage assessment data – preliminary breakdown

DAMAGE SEVERITY	RESIDENTIAL	NON-RESIDENTIAL	URBAN	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
Total damage / destroyed	86	13	0	13	112
Severe damage	1	2	0	0	3
Moderate damage	0	0	0	0	0
Slight damage	9	5	1	0	15
No damage / unaffected	24	3	0	1	28
Damage not stated / inadequately described	0	3	0	1	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>162</b>

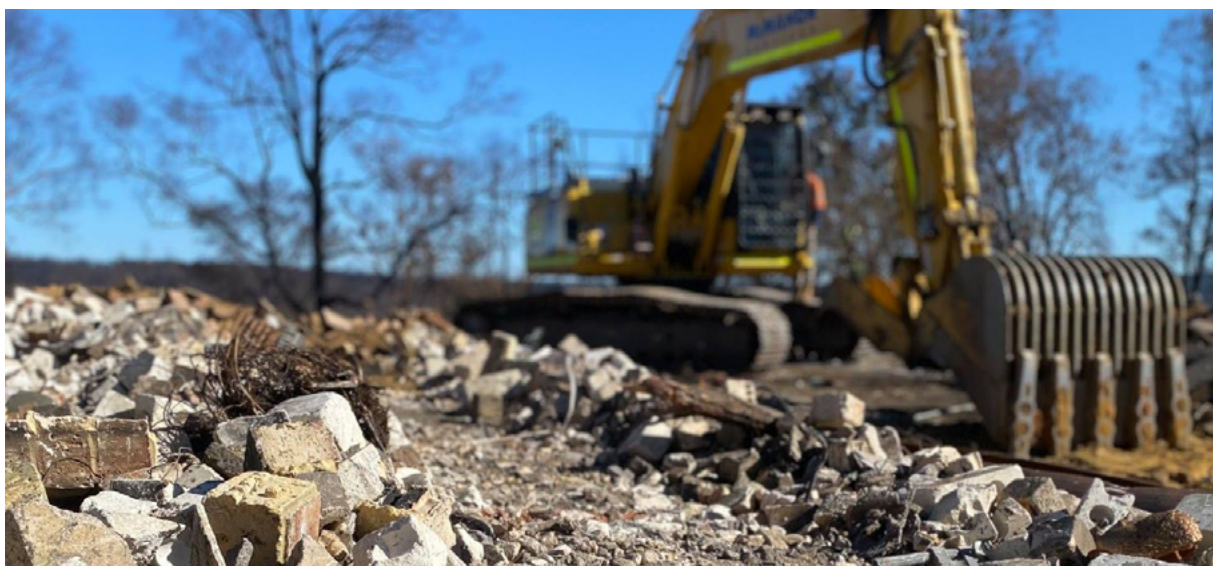


Image: DFES

## Appendix 3 - Governance timeline

DATE	TIME	DETAILS
Monday 1 Feb 2021	12:02	Fire commenced (Incident number 512758)
	12:45	Emergency Warning alert issued
	13:57	DFES take control of the incident from the Shire of Mundaring
	14:00	The appointment of an authorised person to take control (s 13 <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i> )
	16:30	Fire declared a Level 3 Incident, resulting in the State Recovery Coordinator being the primary point of contact for recovery matters
Tuesday 2 Feb 2021	15:00	Emergency Situation declared for the incident (s50 <i>Emergency Management Act</i> )*
Wednesday 3 Feb 2021		The Australian Government via Services Australia activated the Australian Government Disaster Relief Fund
		The City of Perth activated the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund
Thursday 4 Feb 2021		The Western Australian Government activated the Bushfire Emergency Relief Payment
Friday 5 Feb 2021		Dr Ron Edwards appointed as the State Recovery Controller
		The incident was declared eligible for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (AGRN950)
		Emergency Situation declaration extended for seven days
Saturday 6 Feb 2021	10:04	Alert downgraded to a Watch and Act
	18:14	Alert downgraded to an Advice
Sunday 7 Feb 2021	07:00	Fire downgraded to a Level 2 Incident
Monday 8 Feb 2021	06:00	Fire contained
		Both LGAs commence distribution of funds for the WA Government Bushfire Emergency Relief Payments
	19:00	Fire downgraded to a Level 1 incident
Friday 12 Feb 2021		Emergency Situation declaration extended for 6 months (expires 12 Aug 2021) for purposes of ongoing recovery efforts (restricted to powers described in s69 and 72)
Thursday 25 Feb 2021		Joint Commonwealth-State \$18.1 million Community Recovery Fund package announced (Category C DRFA)
Wednesday 3 Mar 2021	16:17	Alert downgraded to an All Clear

\*Note: This declaration was concurrent with the existing State of Emergency and Public Health State of Emergency declarations previously in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

# Appendix 4 - State Recovery Coordination Group core membership

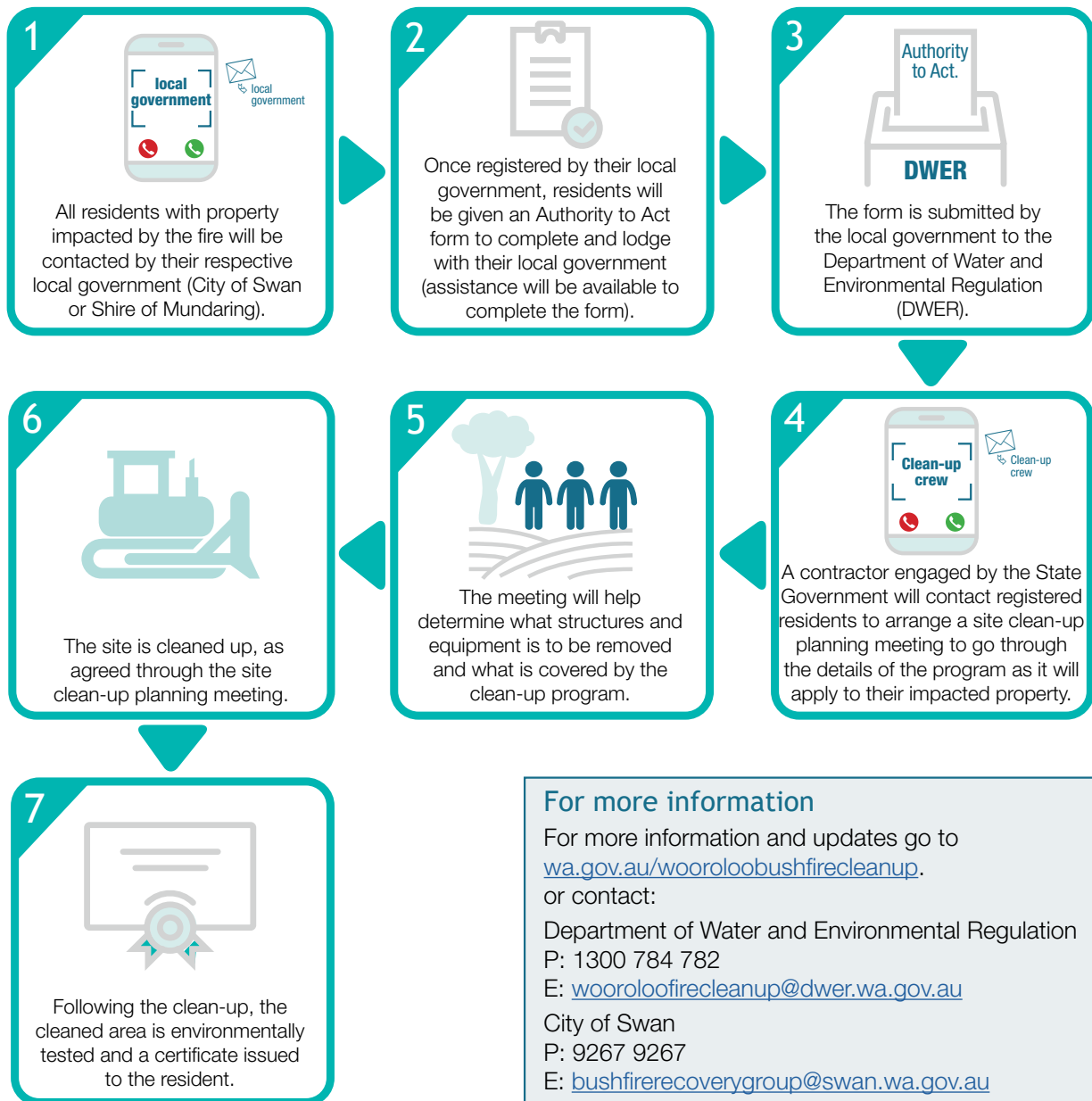
NAME OF DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY	NOMINEE	PROXY
State Recovery Controller (Chair of SRCG Partnership Forum)	State Recovery Controller	
Department of Fire and Emergency Services (Chair)	State Recovery Coordinator	Deputy State Recovery Coordinator
Department of Communities	Chief Risk Officer, Office of the Director General	Assistant Director General Service Delivery Regional & Remote Communities
Department of Health	Director, Office of the Chief Health Officer	Assistant Director, Disaster Preparedness and Management Unit
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	Executive Director Corporate Services	Director Business Operations Corporate Services
Mental Health Commission	Director Corporate Services	Chief Information Officer
Department of Education	Manager Incident Support	Director Capital Works and Maintenance
RSPCA	Chief Inspector	Deputy Chief Inspector
Department of Treasury	Director, Resourcing	Executive Director, Infrastructure and Finance
Transport Portfolio (Main Roads, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority)	Executive Director Metro and Southern Regions for Main Roads	Director Metropolitan Operations for Main Roads
Energy Policy WA (formerly Public Utilities Office)	Manager, Energy Management	Senior Policy Analyst
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage	Assistant Director General, Business and Corporate Services	Assistant Director General, Land Use Management
Department of Mines, Industry Regulations and Safety	Manager, Dangerous Goods	Team Leader Dangerous Goods
Department of Water Environmental Regulation	Executive Director, Compliance and Enforcement	Director Operations, Compliance and Enforcement
Water Corporation	General Manager Operations	Head of Operations Centre
Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation	Senior Project Manager Infrastructure, Planning and Economic Development Resources and Project Facilitation	

NAME OF DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY	NOMINEE	PROXY
Department of Premier and Cabinet	Deputy Director General Police and Coordination	Principal Policy Officer, Office of State Security and Emergency Coordination
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Manager Emergency Management	Development Officer
Small Business Development Corporations	Executive Director, Small Business Services	Manager, Business Advisory Services
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Assistant Director, Regional Fire and Management Services Division	Divisional Leader, Regional and Fire Management Services Division
WA Police	Commander	Inspector

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES	
Shire of Mundaring	Chief Executive Officer and Local Recovery Coordinator
City of Swan	Chief Executive Officer and Local Recovery Coordinator

# Appendix 5 - Coordinated Residential Clean-up Program Process flowchart

## Information for residents



**For more information**

For more information and updates go to [wa.gov.au/woorloobushfirecleanup](http://wa.gov.au/woorloobushfirecleanup).  
or contact:

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation  
P: 1300 784 782  
E: [woorloofirecleanup@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:woorloofirecleanup@dwer.wa.gov.au)

City of Swan  
P: 9267 9267  
E: [bushfirerecoverygroup@swan.wa.gov.au](mailto:bushfirerecoverygroup@swan.wa.gov.au)

Shire of Mundaring  
P: 9290 6743  
E: [firecleanup@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:firecleanup@mundaring.wa.gov.au)

Source: Department of Water and Environmental Regulation



Image: Rebecca Devries



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