

MINGENEW COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES

20 April 2021

KEY ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- DFES:
 - There are 30 DFES staff and volunteers working in the area
 - By Thursday 22 April, DFES will deploy 3-4 teams back into the town of Mingenew
 - Residents should contact 132 500 if there is any damage to their property
 - DFES is still in the early stages of clean-up operations
 - DFES and the Commissioner are committed to stay as long as required in Mingenew to complete operations
 - DFES will take all direction from the State Government and administration on operations
 - Services Australia is a Commonwealth Government body – their available resources for Mingenew will be available at the Community Resource Centre in town for all residents
- Western Power (WP):
 - WP's focus is to clear all hazards present in Mingenew
 - The power in Mingenew has now been turned back on
 - Three Springs sub-station supplies Mingenew with its power
 - All hazards have been cleared, poles are being put in and power returned to the town
 - There are three WP teams working in Mingenew area
 - WP has helicopters in the air to look at powerlines
 - There are five lines that are still affected – WP are making progress on this issue
 - There is a strong focus on coming to properties and making sure that it's safe before turning the power back on
 - Electrical inspectors are present in the mid-west to ensure processes are in place for reconnection of power
 - WP have placed orange tags on meter boxes on affected properties, which reflects electrical installations that need remedial work. Residents should contact electrical contractors to complete this
 - Costs are being covered by insurance companies if electrical contractor is needed. Residents should ring 131 531 if their property has been tagged
 - Extended outage payment scheme available. Compensation is being doubled by WP to \$180. Residents should speak to the WP representative at the meeting to commence the process
 - There are many issues currently for farmers and seeding due to poles and lines being on the ground. Residents are asked to be patient and accommodating to WP workers
- Department of Communities (DOC)
 - DOC are providing two main support avenues:
 - Financial assistance is being provided in the form of a monetary payment, depending on how many people have been affected in residents' households
 - Emotional support can be provided if required, through the help of Red Cross and other agencies.
 - Residents can speak to DOC staff to help complete the form for assistance.

- Grants are based on \$200 per person to replace food and other items. If a family consists of two adults and two children, every individual is entitled. DOC just needs evidence as to who lives at the property
- EFTPOS cards are available instead of cash. One-page form is to be completed
- Emotional assistance – Australian Red Cross is available to provide phone numbers to assist residents
- There are Red Cross centres in Geraldton and Kalbarri
- Centrelink are providing \$1000 per person - 16-year-olds are classed as an adult
- Residents should ring DOC if they become aware of anyone who is struggling emotionally. It is anonymous and DOC will be able to assist
- DOC are currently located at QEII but may be re-locating to the Catholic Church. Residents can contact them through the DOC facebook page
- Insurance Council Australia (ICA):
 - Have declared the situation as a “catastrophe” due to the scale of damage Seroja has caused
 - Insurance companies will be prioritising all claims associated with Seroja
 - Insurance assessors are currently out on the ground assessing damage and properties, with a team dedicated to this
 - Residents are to ring through to escalate their claim if they haven’t already - 1800 734 621
 - Residents should contact their insurance company to get an assessor on site ASAP
 - Insurance companies won’t apply excess fees to “food spoilage” – residents can claim this without excess
- DPIRD:
 - Farming areas have been impacted the most
 - DPIRD have dispersed teams and are moving across all impacted areas
 - Welfare around livestock, water and feed is being assessed
 - Commonwealth and State have the responsibility for disaster relief funding assistance for primary producers (farmers)
 - Assessment of scale of impact currently being undertaken
 - Residents will be categorised for disaster relief funding, which will determine what residents are entitled to
 - DPIRD are receiving clear feedback that recovery will take a while: 8-12 months

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

- **If teams come into town for clean-up, is there assistance for private rural properties?**
 - It is dependent on what type of damage has occurred to property. Yes, assistance is available to make the house safe so occupants can reside in it. If there is widespread vegetation damage around property, that hasn’t directly affected the property, then this is the responsibility of the owner.
- **What happens with asbestos issues on the property?**
 - Contractors are being brought in to stabilise and spray the asbestos. Information sheets are also available at meeting today provided by DFES.
- **Are the SES securing farming sheds?**
 - If damage to the shed is creating a safety issue SES will assist, however if not, it will not be classified as high priority.

- **If you have asbestos to be removed, what is the best number to call?**
 - Asbestos is being moved, sprayed and then removed by private contractors. Information is available through the local government. Residents should let the Shire of Mingenew know if they have asbestos issues on their properties.
- **Can farmers lift poles that have been identified as not having any power running through them, so that seeding can occur?**
 - Poles are not to be touched as they are property of Western Power and are a safety hazard if touched.
- **What is a ball park time for completion of work on powerlines impacting farmland?**
 - Completion is weeks away, with assessment teams being constantly dispatched. 8m safety distance needs to be kept from powerlines.
- **Can farmers identify power poles that need to be prioritised to be fixed over others?**
 - This will be discussed at the emergency management meeting tomorrow (21 April) for a response. Response will be fed back through the local Shire. Western Power believes all poles in Mingenew will be fixed within 7 days so that seeding can commence.
- **Is power pole stock low? Or are they coming from South Australia?**
 - This is not true. Western power has enough stock in WA.
- **Do you have a full understanding of what powerlines are down? Who can the community contact about down poles/powerlines?**
 - Three helicopters have been up in the air assessing. Western Power are confident they have completed assessment of the area. Residents should ring 131 351 if they haven't reported already.
- **How do you work out whose power comes back on first? Who has to sit it out longer?**
 - Properties are prioritised based on damage sustained.
- **Are you aware that the west side of Oliver Street still needs a pole put up?**
 - WP are aware of this issue.
- **Question to the DOC – What can people do in the local community who haven't been badly affected? What can they do to assist others?**
 - The local Shire is using social media to provide a list of people who need assistance.
 - You can donate to the Lord Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund. This is run through the City of Perth. There is an application process that needs to be undertaken. 100% of funds will be returned to people who have been affected.
- **ICA – Will it change the insurance company's assessment of the property if a resident has already cleaned up their property?**
 - As long as residents have taken photos or have some kind of evidence of damage, it will be okay. They understand that farmers especially need to get back to work and people want to make their properties liveable and safe.

*Chris - Mavis
31004 24/9/21*

- **ICA – Will worker’s accommodation (building) be covered under the insurance? Without this shelter, farms can’t house workers and therefore can’t run their farms.**
 - Not sure of this. Will take back and raise with the insurance companies for a response.

- **What is being done about clearing damaged trees on the roads? Also, a potential fire hazard?**
 - The Shire has contacted contractors who have been notified to clear roads.

- **How can residents get rid of any scrap metal on their properties?**
 - The Shire will utilise companies from the local community to deal with this issue.

- **Will winter sports start back as proposed in Mingenew?**
 - Yes, winter sport will start back on 1 May. All damage to surrounding area in sports complex will be rectified.