

# LOCAL OPERATIONAL RECOVERY PLAN

Shire of Perenjori



## RECOVERY NARRATIVE

### About our community

The Shire of Perenjori was established off the back of Agriculture which remains the dominant industry. Other local industries include mining, transportation, conservation (450,000 ha managed conservation reserve) and to a smaller extent nature-based tourism. The Shire covers 8,611km<sup>2</sup> which encompasses the transition between the agricultural zone and the pastoral zone and is at the intersection of three biodiversity regions showcasing a significant lake system and unique geology.

The Perenjori townsite houses a number of service and supply businesses, the Shire's administration offices and depot, a Primary School, childcare centre and a CBH grain receival facility. The Latham townsite also contains a small amount of community and public infrastructure. At the 2016 Census, the Shire of Perenjori had a population of 617, with a median age of 42 and the most significant age range was 30-34 years.

Key challenges for the Shire of Perenjori are declining population numbers (driven by fluctuations in mining and expanding economies of scale in agriculture) and attraction and retention of appropriately qualified and skilled workforce and contractors.

The number of community groups and not-for-profit organisations and it has active amalgamated winter sporting teams with neighboring Shire of Carnamah. The Perenjori community has a high level of social capital as observed in the recovery planning process and demonstrates effective collaboration, community spirit and an innovative and positive culture.

### About the disaster event

Severe Tropical Cyclone (STC) Seroja crossed the Western Australian coast south of Kalbarri on 11 April 2021, as a Category 3 system, bringing wind gusts of up to 170 kilometres per hour. STC Seroja is the strongest system recorded to have impacted the Midwest Gascoyne Region.

The cyclone impacted a population of almost 50,000 people and an area of more than 170,000 square kilometers and more than 16 local government areas.

The Shire of Perenjori experienced widespread damage across built and natural assets including significant impact on the townsite. The shire was without communication and power for many days and some areas experienced significant delays in power restoration.

State and nation-wide events, community priorities, and existing vulnerabilities continue to influence recovery. These include the complexity of insurance; sharing of data at local, state and federal levels; limited workforce accommodation; shortages in skilled tradespeople; COVID-19 restrictions; and seasonal weather patterns.

### Local Recovery Coordination

The role of the LRCG is to provide advice to the Council to inform regional recovery strategies as part of a community-led recovery process. In this case, the Shire of Perenjori Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) has taken on the role of an LRCG. This Local Operational Recovery Plan is the outcome of a workshop held with the LEMC, community and other stakeholders on 4 May 2022.

### Key recovery stakeholders:

- Shire of Perenjori
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services
- St John Ambulance
- Red Cross
- Rural Aid
- WAPOL
- Industry / local businesses
- Community members / groups



	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM/LONG	ONGOING
SOCIAL		Coordinate and promote external health services available to residents	
		Enhance and target wellbeing and psychological support for vulnerable groups	
		Coordinate community preparedness training and resources	
		Open day at Evacuation Centre	
ECONOMIC		Promote business investment in back-up power infrastructure	
		Regional advocacy for resilient power and comms infrastructure	
NATURAL		Funding and coordination of community replanting program	
		Environmental audit of nature-based infrastructure	
		Facilitate and implement cool burn program	
BUILT		Advocate for improved stand-alone emergency capacity for power and communications	
		Install back-up power infrastructure at 3 key community venues	
		Support cyclone damaged property owners to access funding	
		Engage with owners of derelict and damaged buildings to clean-up	

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HUMAN AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	<p><b>Groups, Institutions and Social Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to community sporting facilities and Perenjori Day Care Centre has prevented use.</li> <li>Perenjori and Latham Golf Club impacted.</li> <li>Less people at community events due to increased work, recovery, and volunteer load.</li> </ul> <p><b>Psychosocial and Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to heritage assets on private and public land, Lone Pine Tree-Binnu PS.</li> <li>Concern for others was for immediate family members and neighbours.</li> <li>People displaced from homes due to damage.</li> <li>Mental health and psychological support services are under-resourced and overcommitted.</li> <li>Difficult to break through the 'guilt and pride' barrier.</li> <li>Level of preparedness appears to have played a role in level of impact on wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Health and Medical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to St Joseph's Church and St Christopher's Church. St Joseph's is part of Monsignor Hawes Heritage trail.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cultural / Heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High levels of volunteer fatigue.</li> <li>Impact of burnout effecting community services including essential services (no ambulance).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional wellbeing connection and support</b> Maintain and improve emotional and mental wellbeing of community.</p> <p><b>Building community preparedness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased household/ individual preparedness of community members.</li> <li>Knowledge of community emergency infrastructure and how community members access it appropriately</li> </ul> <p><b>Support volunteers and community groups</b></p> <p><b>Creating vibrant communities</b></p>	<p><b>S1</b> Coordinate current external health services and promote available services in Perenjori and neighboring communities so residents have the option to utilise service locally or travel.</p>	LEMC	<p><b>S1</b> Resources to support emotional wellbeing and mental health have increased and can be sustained to June 2023 and beyond.</p>
			Advocate for locally based staff for key services, if possible: St John Ambulance, Silver Chain, Child health nurse.	Shire of Perenjori	Advocacy successful and service levels increased
			Reinstate HACC and locally contract Meals on Wheels to enable in home care for elderly members of the community.	Shire of Perenjori	Negotiations successful with HACC provider in Morawa and services recommenced to eligible members of the community
			<b>S2</b> Community Champions - a program of support for volunteer-run community groups to reduce volunteer fatigue.	Community Resource Centre	<b>S2</b> Visit statistics from service providers. No. of young people (and other vulnerable groups such as elderly and socially isolated) engaging in social activities.
			<b>S3</b> Training and or resources around individual and community emergency readiness and planning (food, water, gensets, fuel, etc). Look to other communities (Kimberley, Pilbara) for key learnings and models that the community can adopt.	LEMC	<b>S3 &amp; 4</b> Number of readiness events, resources distributed and participation. % Participants who take / intend to take action to prepare following session
			<b>S4</b> A community event at the new Evacuation Centre to promote facility and its role in emergency response.	LEMC	<b>S3</b> Open day event held in June 2023. Attendance and % who intend to take action to prepare following event.
			Consolidate community groups where appropriate and provide administrative support.	Shire of Perenjori	Community groups working collaboratively and consolidation where appropriate
			Explore options for building capacity and drive of community groups eg: Community Builders program.	Shire of Perenjori	Investigate options and support the introduction of community building programs
			Explore strategies to attract and retain younger people into the community.	Shire of Perenjori	Strategies identified and implemented
			Identify professionals in the community, the skills they have to offer and opportunities to build their leadership capacity.	Shire of Perenjori	Skills audit undertaken
			Build support for community members working from home.	Shire of Perenjori	Increased telecommunications capacity to enable members of community to work from home

*Shaded boxes highlight recovery related activities*

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ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT	<p><b>Residential and Household</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability and rising prices of trades and materials causing frustration.</li> <li>Time-frames &amp; lack of communication from insurance major issue.</li> <li>Whether people were insured or not seems to be a leading factor in the level of financial impact.</li> </ul> <p><b>Local and State Government Infrastructure /Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited LG resources and fatigue levels of LG employees.</li> <li>Use of Shire housing for displaced residents has impacted staff housing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Primary Production</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19/21 primary producers in Perenjori were impacted.</li> <li>Impact of the cyclone on stock and crop programming/rotation.</li> <li>Balancing clean-up and farming activities as competing priorities (initially and ongoing).</li> <li>Significant loss and damage to critical infrastructure (sheds, equipment, stock, rural water infrastructure).</li> </ul> <p><b>Tourism, Industry and Small Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that the Shire would experience reduced visitation due to concerns about cyclone impacts and access to services/sites. Damage to caravan park and hotel.</li> <li>Rothsay and Karara mines were closed for the duration of the cyclone.</li> <li>Difficulty obtaining goods and services (fuel, food, etc.) due to availability, impact to roads and extended power outages.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Industry revitalisation</b></p>	Encourage the development of a tree nursery to grow endemic seedlings and supply local revegetation projects.	Shire of Perenjori	Tree Nursery established
			Promote available jobs and work opportunities via different channels and to broader audiences.	Shire of Perenjori	Online notice board established for the posting of Perenjori specific employment opportunities
			Develop and promote opportunities for contract services to mining and agricultural industries.	Shire of Perenjori	Register of contract service providers developed
			Explore opportunities for housing and accommodation to attract new business to town.	Shire of Perenjori	Development of Housing in the Townsite, support for private accommodation ventures
		<p><b>Business continuity and resilience</b></p> <p>Improved access to power and telecommunications during an emergency event.</p>	<p><b>E1</b> Support businesses to access funding for installation of back- up power (gensets) and or explore alternative power supply options (e.g., renewable power).</p> <p><b>E2</b> Work with other LGA's and stakeholders to advocate for investment in power and telecommunications infrastructure and maintenance which provides reliable service and capacity.</p>	Shire of Perenjori	<b>E1</b> No of businesses installing standalone power back-up.
				Shire of Perenjori	<b>E2</b> Regional LGA working group established by June 2023 to progress a coordinated approach.
		<p><b>Tourism development</b></p>	<p>Create tourism economic development strategy, including Astro-tourism, to promote Perenjori as 'The gateway to the Karara Rangelands' and build content for 'Visit Perenjori' website.</p> <p>Foster the development of unique accommodation options (e.g., farm stays, homestays, glamping, etc).</p> <p>Create linkages to Latham and tourism offerings in surrounding areas.</p>	Shire of Perenjori MWDC / Wheatbelt DC	Tourism opportunity strategy developed
				Shire of Perenjori	Amend Town Planning Scheme to enable capacity for unique accommodation options.
				Shire of Perenjori	Include linkages to all identified tourism business and sites in publications and signage.

*Shaded boxes highlight recovery related activities*

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	<p><b>Plants and Animals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30-40% natural environment impacted.</li> <li>Damage to some trees in public spaces.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hazardous Vegetation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived and actual increase to fuel loads because of defoliation.</li> <li>Perceived and actual increase to risk of structurally compromised (uprooted/defoliated) trees and widespread debris.</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Land/Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to Orchid Ridge with fallen trees and concern for 2022 orchid season.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recovery of biodiversity</b></p>	<p><b>N1</b> Work with key stakeholders to develop and implement community replanting programs (on private and public land) in priority locations such as nesting sites, hilltops.</p>	<p>LEMC NACC DBCA Greening Australia, Yarra Yarra Catchment Council</p>	<p><b>N1</b> At least 1 x community tree planning activity at priority location by June 2023. <b>N2</b> Plan developed for revegetation and community engagement. <b>N2</b> Key sites identified for environmental audit and funding secured to progress by June 2023.</p>
			<p><b>N2</b> Conduct environmental audit on existing nature-based infrastructure (eg: John Forrest lookout).</p>		
			<p><b>N3</b> Facilitate cool burns of bush reserves and mitigate risks associated with high density melaleuca</p>		

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BUILT ENVIRONMENT	<p><b>Public and Private infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to private and public infrastructure including caravan park, hotel, shed behind tourism centre.</li> <li>Damage in town and on farms, 9 residences deemed uninhabitable.</li> <li>Some properties still tarped, possibly with uncleared cyclone debris.</li> <li>Difficulty accessing building contractors, engineers, materials and an inflation of costs associated with rebuild.</li> <li>Concern for damaged buildings being abandoned.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debris on roads and damage to road signs.</li> <li>Significant damage to utility infrastructure with ongoing supply and reliability issues to most utilities (i.e., power, water, sewerage, telecommunication).</li> </ul> <p><b>Clean up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage to buildings with asbestos containing materials on private property.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rapid Damage Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed Rapid Damage Assessments. Further assessments are ongoing to validate and identify additional needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shire owned housing is being used as temporary accommodation for cyclone impacted community members who are awaiting insurance works.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing Coordination</b></p>	Cooperation between Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) and LGA to alleviate pricing pressure and provide more appropriate (smaller) housing to match need.	Shire of Perenjori GROH	Joint partnership with the State to develop a greater selection of housing options in the Shire
		<p><b>Stable power and telecommunications supply</b></p> <p>Establish stable and reliable emergency power and telecommunications access for community.</p>	<p><b>B1</b> Upgrade key utilities to be reliable standalone systems with built-in redundancy.</p> <p><b>B2</b> Advocate for utilities providers to utilise local service providers for maintenance to ensure timely and appropriate maintenance and operation.</p> <p><b>B3</b> Installation of back-up power (gensets) at the pavilion, CRC and Caravan Park.</p>	LEMC	<p><b>B1 &amp; B2</b> Meeting with key utilities providers by Dec 2022 to progress advocacy.</p> <p><b>B3</b> Funding secured and 3 backup power systems installed by June 2023.</p>
		<p><b>Community Hub</b></p>	Create multiuse facility as an extension and to complement existing Café and other businesses. Facility to offer spaces for community and service providers.	Shire of Perenjori	Development of Community hub concept in Fowler street progressed
		<p><b>Rebuild support</b></p> <p>Increase rate of repair and rebuild to cyclone damaged housing.</p> <p>Alleviate pressure on Shire owned housing.</p>	<p><b>B4</b> Engage with cyclone impacted private property owners to extend funding opportunities and provide application support.</p> <p><b>B5</b> Source caravans to house visiting tradie and contractors engaged for rebuild.</p> <p><b>B6</b> Process to engage with owners of derelict or vacant cyclone damaged housing.</p>	LEMC DFES Department of Communities	<p><b>B4</b> No. of community members assisted in funding application process, no. of applications submitted by deadlines.</p> <p><b>B5</b> At least 2 Caravans sourced, funded and installed by Sept 2022.</p> <p><b>B6</b> No of cyclone damaged housing repaired/demolished/ rebuilt.</p>
				Shire of Perenjori	
				Shire of Perenjori	

*Recovery related activities highlighted*

This plan was developed with funding support through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and the support of the following organisations: