

11.1.4 TROPICAL CYCLONE ILSA – IMPACTS AND RECOVERY

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Proposed Meeting Date: 28 April 2023

Location/Address: N/A

Name of Applicant: N/A

Author Disclosure of Interest: Nil

REPORT PURPOSE

To provide a summary of the events from Tropical Cyclone Ilsa to Council along with actions taken by the Shire before, during and post-event up until the present.

BACKGROUND

On Thursday 6 April 2023 the Shire of East Pilbara was notified by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Service (DFES) that there was the likelihood of a tropical cyclone impacting the Shire of East Pilbara Local Government Area.

On Sunday, 9 April 2023 DFES convened an Operational Area Support Group (OASG) meeting which was organized to provide all relevant stakeholders with up to date information on what DFES was doing and what they required the stakeholders to do. These meeting continued each day until the 15 April 2023.

Cape Keraudren was closed at midday on Tuesday, 11 April 2023, with staff evacuated to Marble Bar early morning on Wednesday 12 April 2023.

A Yellow Alert status was issued for Pardoo, Marble Bar and Nullagine on Thursday, 13 April 2023 and evacuation centres were opened in Marble Bar, Nullagine and Newman in readiness for the WA Department of Communities to manage.

A Red Alert status was imposed for Pardoo and Marble Bar at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 13 April 2023 by which time evacuation centres in Marble Bar, Nullagine and Newman were accommodating members from Punmu, Warralong, Parrngurr and surrounding remote Aboriginal communities.

DFES convened an Incident Support Group (ISG) meeting on the 13 and 14 April 2023 to provide key stakeholders in the expected impact area with relevant information.

Tropical Cyclone Ilsa crossed the coastline at Cape Keraudren/Pardoo around 11.45 pm on Thursday, 13 April 2023. There was significant damage to Shire infrastructure at Cape Keraudren as well as damage to private stations at Pardoo, Yarrie, Muccan and Warawagine, together with Pardoo Roadhouse.

The all clear for Pardoo and Marble Bar was issued at 12.00 noon on Friday, 14 April 2023.

Early reports indicate there was significant damage to Shire roads throughout the region, which at the time of writing this report is still being assessed. One Shire grader was damaged. The Marble Bar evacuation shelter suffered minor damage to the roof while there were no reports of damage in Nullagine or Newman, and no Shire staff displaced or injured during the event.

The damage to Cape Keraudren was significant, with the majority of buildings destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Ilsa and a large amount of personal property belonging to the Shire Ranger stationed at Cape Keraudren also destroyed or missing. DFES and SES assisted Shire staff with the clean-up of the Cape area and should be recognized and thanked for their assistance.

COMMENTS/OPTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Immediately following TC Ilsa and the stand-down of Red Alert status, DFES deployed Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) units throughout the East Pilbara Local Government Area to conduct an impact assessment.

The evacuation centres were closed and the Department of Communities facilitated the relocation of evacuees either back to their homes or into more long-term temporary accommodation through commercial avenues.

A Local Recovery Group was formed on Wednesday, 19 April 2023 to coordinate the Shire recovery and to enable collaboration and sharing of resources between different stakeholders.

Shire staff have been redeployed to Cape Keraudren where clean up and detailed impact assessments have taken place. At the time of this report the impact assessment is nearing completion and Cape Keraudren is scheduled for reopening on Friday, 28 April 2023.

DFES provided its Impact Report for Tropical Cyclone Ilsa to the Shire on Monday, 24 April 2023. The next step will be for DFES to hand over the incident to the Shire to commence recovery activities.

The Shire is currently exploring financial assistance options for affected parties through the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund (LMDRF).

POLICY IMPLICATION

No known policy implications.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN

2: Social

- 2 Safe, connected and family-friendly communities where all people thrive, and have their needs met at all ages and stages of life.
- 2.3 Advocacy and partnerships for addressing issues impacting safety of communities, and improving information sharing and coordination.
- 2.4 Promote healthy and safe lifestyle choices, and uphold public health and safety.

3. Built Environment

- 3.5 Continue to invest in public spaces, amenities and heritage protection across the Shire.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Health – Medium
Service Interruption – Major
Reputation – Major
Compliance – Major
Safety - Major

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Shire is currently going through the impact assessment process to ensure maximum use of the Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements WA (DRFAWA) and insurance to reduce the impact on the Shire.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the report and will consider the financial implications in the May 2023 Budget Review.