

CYCLONE SEROJA — IMPACTED COMMUNITIES — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

**8. Ms L. DALTON to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to ex-tropical cyclone Seroja that has significantly impacted my local community, as well as Kalbarri and surrounding areas. Can the minister update the house on the work that is underway by the state government to support those affected communities and to help the region recover?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:**

I know the member for Geraldton is passionately interested in this, and she shares that passion with the member for North West Central and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and indeed every Western Australian who saw what happened in Kalbarri. I visited the centre of Kalbarri and Northampton, Morawa and Perenjori. I know other members of cabinet have also visited throughout the area, including the Minister for Education and Training, the Minister for Police, the Minister for Community Services and the minister for power. I have probably left others out.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Energy.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Sorry, Minister for Energy. Indeed, he is a powerful minister!

It has been an extraordinary response. I remember meeting the member at Geraldton Airport on a number of occasions and at the Queen Elizabeth II Seniors and Community Centre; people who had very little and whose lives had been turned upside down walked up and got immediate assistance from the state and federal governments. We saw people from the Department of Communities in purple polo tops and people from the federal government. We saw multiple agencies represented and those people were immediately given assistance to get their lives back to some sort of normalcy in the immediate term. I know that this is a long road, as the member appreciates. The state has a big challenge with the long-term reconstruction of the midwest. As I said before, the initial response has been swift and impressive—it really has—to the extent that energy has been restored across a large area of the midwest. A couple of thousand homes are without power, but a lot of that is being supplemented with emergency generation. The utility crews and the volunteers from across government agencies, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army have done an extraordinary job. That spirit of cooperation will see us through. The long-term challenge of course, as we all know —

**The SPEAKER:** Member, can I ask you to address the chair and perhaps draw your answer to a close, because the member for Geraldton very cleverly got up an extra question that I was not anticipating.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I will let that through because I think it is an important issue for her community. Madam Speaker, I will wrap up. I just repeat my earlier comments that this has been a devastating event. Western Australia and Australia is responding to it and it will be a long journey. I look forward to the cooperation across the chamber, across the state and across Australia to return lives to normal in Kalbarri and Northampton and right across the midwest.

**The SPEAKER:** That now concludes question time.