



SHIRE OF EXMOUTH

LOCAL OPERATIONAL RECOVERY PLAN TROPICAL CYCLONE NARELLE



RECOVERY NARRATIVE

About this Plan

This Plan outlines the Shire of Exmouth strategy to effectively coordinate recovery activities following STC Narelle. Recovery activities span across social, economic, natural, and built environments, and aim to restore the assets, systems, and activities which the community values, and were disrupted by TC Narelle.

This plan is a working document and will change over time to reflect the changing needs of the community as recovery progresses.

About our community

The Shire of Exmouth is located approximately 1,270 kilometres north of Perth on the tip of the Northwest Cape in Western Australia, covering an area of 6,261 square kilometres.

The town of Exmouth was established in the 1960s to support the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station, a joint US-Australian military facility that continues to operate today. Tower Zero, the station's centrepiece antenna at 387 metres, was the tallest man-made structure in the Southern Hemisphere at the time of its construction.

Exmouth has a permanent resident population of approximately 2,800, however this swells dramatically to between 10,000 and 20,000 during peak tourism season, a defining characteristic that places significant demand on the Shire's infrastructure and services.

Exmouth sits at the intersection of two World Heritage listed areas: the Ningaloo Coast and Cape Range National Park. Ningaloo Reef, stretching approximately 260 kilometres along the western edge of the Cape, is Australia's largest fringing coral reef and is accessible directly from the shore. Together with Cape Range National Park's rugged limestone gorges and arid-zone wildlife, the Shire offers a rare "Range to Reef" experience that attracts over 134,000 overnight visitors annually, making tourism the dominant industry in the region.

The traditional custodians of the North West Cape are the Yinikutira and Baiyungu peoples of the Yamatji nation.

The Shire is serviced by Learmonth Airport, 35 kilometres south of town, with daily flights to Perth. Key community services include a hospital, medical and dental facilities, a district high school, library, and a range of emergency services. The local economy is supported by tourism, hospitality, fishing, and the Harold E. Holt defence facility, with the Shire actively pursuing opportunities for long-term resilience.

STC Narelle

Severe Tropical Cyclone Narelle redeveloped off the Kimberley coast on 22 March 2026 and intensified to a Category 4 system. The cyclone tracked offshore before making landfall at Warroora Station in the Midwest–Gascoyne, generating destructive winds along the Pilbara coastline and causing widespread impacts across the region. Significant damage has been sustained in Exmouth, including impacts to critical infrastructure and residential areas, alongside extensive flooding throughout the townsite.

Local Recovery Coordination

On 14 April 2026, the Shire of Exmouth held its first Local Recovery Coordination Group (LRCG) meeting.

The LRCG is chaired by the Shire of Exmouth's Shire President Matthew Niikkula and the Local Recovery Coordinator Tracey Cooper and includes representatives from the below groups:

- Shire of Exmouth
- Department of Communities (DoCs)
- Department of Biodiversity and Conservation (DBCA)
- Department of Defence
- Western Australian Police Force (WAPOL)
- Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure (DTMI)
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
- State Emergency Services (SES)
- Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC)
- Exmouth Chamber of Commerce (ECCI)
- Main Roads
- Centacare
- Raytheon HEH Fire & Rescue Service/Red cross
- Red Cross
- Horizon Power
- Water Corporation
- Exmouth Hospital
- Exmouth District High School
- RAC Caravan Park
- Ningaloo Caravan Park
- Exmouth Holidays
- Exmouth IGA

The LRCG has formed two additional subcommittees to assist, the Tourism and Economic Working Group and the Community Working Group.

The Tourism and Economic Working Group is chaired by the Shire of Exmouth Councillor Jackie Brooks and held its first meeting on 17 April 2026. The Tourism and Economic Working Group includes representatives from the below parties:

- Shire of Exmouth
- Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC)
- IGA
- Yardie Creek Boat Tours
- Glass Bottom Boat
- Ocean Eco Adventures
- On Strike
- Exmouth Bus Charters
- Live Ningaloo
- Tackle and Camping
- Bamboo
- Exmouth Chamber of Commerce (ECCI)
- Exmouth Wholesalers
- Repco
- Evolution Fishing Charters
- DLR Builder

The Community Working Group is chaired by the Shire of Exmouth Councillor Matthew Thorburn and held its first meeting on 20 April 2026. The Community Working Group includes representatives from:

- Shire of Exmouth
- Department of Communities (DoCs)
- Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC)
- Seniors Women
- Seniors Mens
- Daycare
- Early years
- Youth Centre
- Carer
- Community
- EEFC
- Touch Football
- Cape Conservation Group
- Community Pantry
- Community members

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Authority and Endorsement

The *Emergency Management Act (2005) WA* section 36(b) states that one of the functions of Local Government is “to manage recovery following an emergency affecting the community in its district”.

This plan was first presented to the LRCG on the 23rd of April 2026. The current version of this plan was presented to the LRCG on 11 May 2026 and endorsed with updates to the social, natural, built and economic environments based on feedback provided by LRCG members, reflecting the changing recovery needs of the community.

RECOVERY TIMEFRAMES



Short Term	0-6 Months
Medium Term	6 Months to 2 Years
Long Term	2 Years+

Domain	Recovery Objective	Timeframe
S O C I A L	S4 Improve the process for donations and financial support to get where it is needed	S
	S5 Improve the knowledge of the local community around police assistance	S
	S1 Reduce the impact on the community by providing alternate spaces and reinstating sporting infrastructure as soon as practicable.	M
	S2 Reduce the cancelations of events if practicable and increase events where the community can connect and heal.	M
	S3 Ensure the community is supported through the recovery process	L

Domain	Recovery Objective	Timeframe
E N V I R O N M E N T	N1 Ensure the removal of marine strandings from beaches to avoid public health issues	S
	N2 Reduce the financial impact to the community of disposal of building, hazardous, green and general waste	S
	N3 Reduce the environmental impacts of waste and litter in the marina and canals	S
	N4 Ensure the safety signage is re-instated as soon as practicable	S
	N5 Reduce the impact of mosquito breeding to the community	M

Domain	Recovery Objective	Timeframe
B U I L T	B2 Temporary tourism accommodation solutions to address reduced capacity from providers due to damage sustained	S
	B6 Repair and Restoration of the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce enabling businesses to operate out of the facility.	S
	B7 Ensure Learmonth Airport is restored to full operational capacity to support both community recovery logistics and tourism resumption	S
	B3 Sporting and recreation public infrastructure reopened for use by the community	M
	B8 Restore Exmouth Marina to full operational capacity to support the fishing industry, tourism charter operators and recreational users	M
	B1 Restore Town Beach to usable area while longer term resilience measures, planning and construction are completed	L
	B4 Improve the resilience of the power infrastructure for future natural disasters	L
	B5 Improve the resilience of water infrastructure for future natural disasters	L

Domain	Recovery Objective	Timeframe
E C O N O M I C	E1 Ensure businesses are supported to navigate funding and insurance	S
	E4 Impacted small businesses and micro tourism operators have increased opportunities to access support to recover and rebuild.	S
	E2 Increase the use of local businesses with a shop local campaign	M
	E3 Improve the resilience of local food businesses to recover and minimize perishable losses.	M
	E5 Residents are supported to navigate residential insurance claims and address coverage gaps to maintain financial stability during recover	M

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SOCIAL				
KEY DAMAGE AND IMPACTS	RECOVERY OUTCOME	RECOVERY TASK/ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME & MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Community Connection and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancellation of community events • Damage to Federation Park and Town Beach events spaces <p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Displaced residents due to damage to residential property <p>Sport and Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to sporting infrastructure preventing people from normal sport activities • Damage to recreational spaces <p>Community Safety and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in need for police assistance 	S1 Reduce the impact on the community by providing alternate spaces and reinstating sporting infrastructure as soon as practicable.	<p>S1.1 Provide alternate venue to Seniors Group for meetings and Monthly activities.</p> <p>S1.2 Support the Exmouth Game Fishing Club to explore alternate or co-located facility options</p>	<p>Shire of Exmouth</p> <p>Exmouth Seniors Group</p> <p>Exmouth Game Fishing Club</p>	<p>Short to Medium Term</p> <p>As required until Community Centre repairs are complete and EGFC have a suitable facility</p> <p>Remediation of Exmouth Community Centre completed by 15 May 2026</p>
		<p>S1.2 New goal posts installed</p> <p>S1.3 Repair oval fencing</p> <p>S1.4 scoreboard removed</p> <p>S1.5 New scoreboard approved for installation</p> <p>S1.6 Oval lights repaired</p> <p>S1.7 Shire to work with clubs to assist with any issues accessing insurance or contractors to complete works</p>	<p>EEFC</p> <p>Exmouth Touch</p> <p>Exmouth Tennis Club</p> <p>Exmouth Bowling Club</p> <p>Exmouth Golf Club</p> <p>Exmouth District High School</p>	<p>Short to Medium Term</p> <p>Sport being played by 2 May 2026</p> <p>Exmouth Touch Football NW Championships success on 30/5-1/6/2026</p>
	S2 Reduce the cancellations of events if practicable and increase events where the community can connect and heal.	<p>S2.1 Wholesalers Day at Golf Club going ahead on 2 May</p> <p>S2.2 Our Exmouth Event 9 May (canceled Welcome to Town event rebranded)</p> <p>S2.3 Monthly seniors' activities to continue</p> <p>S2.4 Repair damage to electrical infrastructure at Federation Park to allow for events to continue</p> <p>S2.5 Town Beach reinstatement</p>	<p>Exmouth Community</p> <p>Shire of Exmouth</p>	<p>Short to Medium Term</p> <p>4 Community events held prior to August 2026</p>
S3 Ensure the community is supported through the recovery process	<p>S3.1 Advocate for increase in available mental health support</p> <p>S3.2 Fund Centacare Exmouth to offer increased wellbeing and financial counselling</p> <p>S3.3 Increase access to Services Australia</p> <p>S3.4 Ensure displaced residents have access to safe and appropriate temporary accommodation for the duration of their displacement.</p> <p>S3.5 Continue to provide regular recovery updates to the community through a dedicated Recovery Communications Plan, utilising the Shire's website as the central recovery information hub, supported by social media and other available channels.</p>	<p>Shire of Exmouth</p> <p>Department of Communities</p> <p>Centacare</p> <p>Services Australia</p>	<p>Immediate to Long Term</p> <p>Identified support services are funded, resourced and accessible to the Exmouth community</p> <p>Reduction in reports of unmet needs</p> <p>All displaced residents were accommodated appropriately in temporary housing</p> <p>Community reports of improvements in wellbeing</p> <p>Recovery Communications Plan developed and enacted.</p>	

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	<p>S4 Improve the process for donations and financial support to get where it is needed</p>	<p>S4.1 Givit procured by Department of Communities to assist with donations coming in and out S4.2 Improve the connection with the Exmouth Community Support Group and the wider community S4.3 Exmouth Community Pantry is in need of space to operate.</p>	<p>GIVIT Department of Communities Exmouth Community Support Group Shire of Exmouth</p>	<p>Immediate to Short Term</p>
	<p>S5 Improve the knowledge of the local community around police assistance</p>	<p>S5.1 Advise the community to stay on the line and talk to Karratha WAPOL as local WAPOL is on call for emergencies and if required will attend outside of station hours</p>	<p>WAPOL Shire of Exmouth</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

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ENVIRONMENT				
KEY DAMAGE AND IMPACTS	RECOVERY OUTCOME	RECOVERY TASK/ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME & MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Coastal Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine strandings Storm surge pushed waste and litter into end of canal fingers, marina and dunes Damage to safety signage on beaches and parks <p>Debris Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation widespread damage and green waste disposal <p>Flood Impacts and Public Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High rainfall and storm surge caused flooding, mosquito breeding expected Damage private dwellings containing asbestos 	N1 Ensure the removal of marine strandings from beaches to avoid public health issues	<p>N1.1 Marine strandings were promptly removed from affected beaches to mitigate public health risks, prevent environmental degradation, and restore safe public access.</p> <p>N1.2 Clean-up activities were undertaken in coordination with relevant agencies, with sites monitored to ensure ongoing community safety.</p>	<p>Lead: DBCA Shire of Exmouth</p>	Immediate to Short Term
	N2 Reduce the financial impact to the community of disposal of building, hazardous, green and general waste	<p>N2. 1 Shire of Exmouth actioned free waste disposal at the waste site and general kerbside collection until 18 April 2026.</p> <p>N2. 2 Greenwaste kerbside collection and a localized drop off point has been established in town for greenwaste disposal, greenwaste will be mulched and made available for free community collection.</p> <p>N2.3 Disposal equipment for small amounts of asbestos and free disposal is available to residents.</p>	<p>Lead: Shire of Exmouth Residents</p>	<p>Short Term Completed by 30 May 2026</p>
	N3 Reduce the environmental impacts of waste and litter in the marina and canals	N3. 1 Community clean-up day to be organised	<p>Shire of Exmouth Sea Shepherd Cape Conservation</p>	<p>Short Term Two community clean up days to be held by 31 July 2026</p>
	N4 Ensure the safety signage is re-instated as soon as practicable	<p>N4. 1 Sign audits to be completed N4. 2 Signs to be ordered and installed</p>	<p>Shire of Exmouth Main Roads DBCA</p>	Short Term
	N5 Reduce the impact of mosquito breeding to the community	<p>N5. 1 Increase the frequency of testing in the sentinel chicken program</p> <p>N5.2 Department of Health engaged to trap and identify potential harmful mosquito types</p> <p>N5.3 Continuing treatments of stagnant water with larvae disrupting briquettes</p> <p>N5.4 Pest control on standby for fogging if disease is detected in testing programs</p>	<p>Shire of Exmouth Department of Health</p>	Short to Medium Term

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BUILT				
KEY DAMAGE AND IMPACTS	RECOVERY OUTCOME	RECOVERY TASK/ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME & MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Sporting and Recreation Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowling Club Infrastructure Golf Club Infrastructure Sporting infrastructure Town Beach Infrastructure Public Spaces electrical infrastructure Other public infrastructure damaged <p>Essential Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power supply infrastructure damaged Water supply infrastructure damaged <p>Tourism Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campsites in National Park damaged RAC Caravan Park damaged Ningaloo Caravan Park damaged Manta rays resort damaged <p>Residential Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private residences damaged and residents displaced Damage to residential housing, displaced residents-displaced residents in rooms that could be used for tourism <p>Business Infrastructure and Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exmouth Chamber of Commerce damaged and businesses not able to operate out of the hub. 	B1 Restore Town Beach to usable area while longer term resilience measures, planning and construction are completed	<p>B1.1 Make safe Town Beach area for short term use.</p> <p>B1.2 Create a plan that meets the needs of the community and rebuilds the area with resilience measures to ensure it can withstand future impacts</p>	Shire of Exmouth	<p>Short Term of 30 May</p> <p>Long Term 2 years+</p>
	B2 Temporary tourism accommodation solutions to address reduced capacity from providers due to damage sustained	<p>B2.1 Activation of camping overflow sites</p> <p>B2.2 Work collaboratively with DBCA and caravan parks on staged reopening of campsites and chalets</p>	Shire of Exmouth/ State Government DBCA Exmouth Accommodation Providers	Short Term - Medium Term
	B3 Sporting and recreation public infrastructure reopened for use by the community	<p>B3.1 Support the clubs to navigate insurance claims and project management of repairs</p> <p>B3.2 Restore football infrastructure to ovals and recreation precinct</p> <p>B3.3 Support the Exmouth Eagles Football Club to restore scoreboard</p> <p>B3.4 Complete initial works and maintenance and ensure that Touch Football Country Championships can be held at the end of May 2026</p> <p>B3.5 Replace the electrical infrastructure to community facilities and ensure future resilience</p>	Shire of Exmouth EEFC Exmouth Touch Exmouth Tennis Club Exmouth Bowling Club Exmouth Golf Club Exmouth District High School	Short to Medium Term
	B4 Improve the resilience of the power infrastructure for future natural disasters	B4.1 Advocate for Horizon Power to prioritise resilience and fund underground power supply to critical infrastructure to support recovery for future impacts	State Government Horizon Power	Long Term
	B5 Improve the resilience of water infrastructure for future natural disasters	<p>B5.1 Power infrastructure to the bore fields to be underground</p> <p>B5.2 Above ground water infrastructure to be made more resilient to fire and cyclone damage.</p>	State Government Water Corporation	Long Term
	B6 Repair and Restoration of the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce enabling businesses to operate out of the facility.	B6.1 Repair and restore the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce power supply.	Horizon Power	Short Term

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	B7 Ensure Learmonth Airport is restored to full operational capacity to support both community recovery logistics and tourism resumption	B7.1 Monitor terminal repair progress and flight schedule continuity, advocate for stable and reliable air services into Exmouth, and include airport operational status as a standing LRCG agenda item until full services are confirmed.	Shire of Exmouth Defence WA	<p>Immediate to Short Term</p> <p>All pre-cyclone flight services reinstated and confirmed by Defence WA</p>
	B8 Restore Exmouth Marina to full operational capacity to support the fishing industry, tourism charter operators and recreational users	B8.1 Monitor DTMI repair and restoration works and advocate for prioritisation given economic significance to fishing and charter industries	DTMI	<p>Short Term to Medium Term</p>

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ECONOMIC				
KEY DAMAGE AND IMPACTS	RECOVERY OUTCOME	RECOVERY TASK/ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME & MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Financial pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash flow for businesses operating at reduced levels due to lack of tourism. Most small businesses and micro-tourism affected by loss of income from low visitation, no relief support packages have been released for businesses outside of accredited tourism. Loss of food for businesses and community <p>Workforce and Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff retention, low tour numbers are having impact on retention of key staff Seasonal workers on visas have no support <p>Support and Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses struggling to navigate funding streams and insurance claims Residential insurance cover insufficient for duration of repairs Risk of permanent departure from Exmouth due to unresolved financial pressure <p>Infrastructure affecting trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to electrical infrastructure in public trading places, food trucks unable to operate 	E1 Ensure businesses are supported to navigate funding and insurance	<p>E1.1 Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI)/SBDC funded to engage services to support businesses accessing funding programs and insurance claims.</p> <p>E1.2 Support ECCI and SBDC to deliver small business recovery and resilience activities for businesses affected by Cyclone Narelle, including access to advisory services, business continuity guidance, and available funding streams.</p>	ECCI SBDC Shire of Exmouth	<p>Short Term by 1 July 2026</p> <p>15 businesses support to apply for funding</p> <p>10 business supported to navigate insurance claims</p> <p>Small business resilience support accessible to cyclone-affected businesses in Exmouth</p>
	E2 Increase the use of local businesses with a shop local campaign	E2.1 Shop local campaign delivered by ECCI	ECCI	<p>Short to Medium Term</p> <p>Campaign reach and conversion compared to previous campaigns.</p>
	E3 Improve the resilience of local food businesses to recover and minimize perishable losses.	E3.1 Ensure that through the Exmouth LEMC businesses are aware for future resilience purposes that the wholesalers have storage capacity	Shire of Exmouth	<p>Short to Medium Term</p>
	E4 Impacted small businesses and micro tourism operators have increased opportunities to access support to recover and rebuild.	<p>E4.1 Advocate for support packages to be available for small businesses affected and micro tourism businesses.</p> <p>E4.2 Advocate for workforce retention support for tourism and hospitality businesses</p> <p>E4.3 Support Australia's Coral Coast and Tourism WA to deliver recovery-focused destination messaging</p>	ECCI Shire of Exmouth GDC ACC Tourism WA Tourism Operators	<p>Short Term to Medium Term</p>
	E5 Residents are supported to navigate residential insurance claims and address coverage gaps to maintain financial stability during recovery	<p>E5.1 Facilitate access to insurance navigation support including financial counselling and legal advice for residents with complex or disputed claims</p> <p>E5.2 Support Department of Communities to identify housing options for families where insurance cover is insufficient for the duration of repairs</p>	Shire of Exmouth Legal Aid Department of Communities	<p>Short to Long Term</p>

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