



Minister for Water visits Merredin

On Thursday, 10 February, the Minister for Water Hon. Dave Kelly MP, along with Hon. Sandra Carr MLA, met with Shire employees to discuss a number of upcoming water projects in the Shire of Merredin.

Discussions were held surrounding the Shire's Expression of Interest (EOI) for the installation of a desalination system to treat Merredin's brackish bore water through the WaterSmart Farms Project (Read more page 3), as well as potential upgrades to the Shire's irrigation network to prioritise the use of less rainfall dependent water sources.

The team visited a number of sites during their visit including the Railway Dam (pictured below), the water storage tanks located on Gabo Avenue, and the CBH Silo Art along Great Eastern Highway, before heading to the Water Corporation's 42ML water storage tank.



March Council Meeting

The next Ordinary Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 22 March at 4:00pm. This meeting will be held via Zoom video conferencing. Members of the public are welcome to tune into the live stream on the Shire of Merredin Facebook page. The Agenda will be available to view on the Shire of Merredin website. Public questions can be submitted by 2.00pm on the day of the council meeting by completing the form here: www.merredin.wa.gov.au/council-meetings/



In this Issue...

- ▶ Page 2... Pulse Oximeters Now Available
- ▶ Page 2... Every Club Workshop
- ▶ Page 2... Waterwise Council 2022
- ▶ Page 3... Update from the Engineering Dept.
 - South Ave Kerbing
 - CBD Redevelopment Project
 - Desalination Project
- ▶ Page 4... From the Rangers Desk
- ▶ Page 5... Fire Safety
- ▶ Page 5... Notice of BFAC AGM
- ▶ Page 5... Products on offer at the Visitor Centre
- ▶ Page 6... Last call for Community Grants
- ▶ Page 6... International Food Fest Cancelled
- ▶ Page 6... Swimming Pool Notice
- ▶ Page 7... Level 2 Health Measures
- ▶ Page 7... Change to Shire Services
- ▶ Page 8... What's On in Merredin

Pulse oximeter What you need to know!

- Are you non-Aboriginal and over 65?
- Are you Aboriginal and over 50?
- Are you pregnant?



If you answered YES to any of the above – collect a free pulse oximeter from your local government today!

What is a pulse oximeter?

It is a small, peg-like device that clips onto your fingertip to read your heart rate and blood oxygen level. It takes only one minute to work, is reusable and can be shared between other people in your household.



Why do I need one?

If you become COVID-19 positive, you may need to be remotely monitored through the WA COVID Care at Home program. By having a pulse oximeter already in your home, a health professional can assess you and provide health advice from the comfort of your home.

Visit [WA COVID Care at Home](#) for more information.

Where do I get one?

Visit your local government to collect a free pulse oximeter for you and your household (each eligible household can receive one pulse oximeter but supplies are limited).

Do **not** pick up a pulse oximeter if you are already COVID-19 positive. If you have already received a positive COVID-19 test result, the Department of Health will contact you and provide further information.

Visit [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](#) for more information.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

© Department of Health 2022



Waterwise Council Endorsement

The Shire of Merredin has officially been re-endorsed and recognised as a Waterwise Council for 2022.

The Waterwise Council Program is a partnership between the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Water Corporation, and was created to support councils to improve their water efficiency and water management.

“We would like to congratulate the Shire of Merredin for your achievements in sustainable water management and for demonstrating your commitment to building waterwise communities over the 2020/21 reporting year.”

- Water Corporation

Every Club Workshop

Governance

Understanding your constitution and key documents

Tuesday, 22 March 2022

6:00pm - 7:00pm

North Merredin Primary School - Room 9

Hosted by Caroline Robinson – 150 Square Solutions

One on one assistance offered to clubs following their participation in an Every Club Workshop

To RSVP, please visit bit.ly/EveryClubRegistration





ENGINEERING

South Ave Kerbing

It has been noted by the contractors completing the South Ave works that the condition and leveling of the southbound lane is far worse than that of the northbound lane.

Due to these leveling issues, Main Roads WA have requested that approximately 900m of the centre island kerbing be removed to ensure the works along the southbound lane can proceed at a high standard.

This island kerbing was completed in early 2021 as part of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) funding and was laid to match the existing levels of the road surface. If the new road was to be matched to this kerbing, it would impact drivability and storm water drainage of the road.

Main Roads WA will be funding a majority of the required works and will also be completing the removal of the existing kerbing at their own cost.

The island kerbing will be reinstalled once the Main Roads WA portion of the project has been completed at the end of March 2022.

New Electric Vehicle Chargers for the CBD

As announced by the McGowan Government in August 2021, Merredin is to become one of the key travel routes for the \$21 million electric highway in Western Australia which will see new EV fast charging stations built in the CBD.

The Shire has signed a letter of agreement with Synergy for the installation of these EV stations, which will be located adjacent to the town square.

Three new bays will be installed, to be completed concurrently with the Town Square upgrade in 2023. Installation, lighting, and all on-going maintenance for these stations will be funded by Synergy on an ongoing basis.

Tender Released for CBD Redevelopment

In an exciting step forward for the CBD Redevelopment, the Tender for the Detailed Design Services for Apex Park and the Town Square was released on February 15 via TenderLink. The Tender includes the development of tender documentation as well as specifications for the construction stage of each of the

above projects.

Contractors are encouraged to submit an application for the above Tender by close of business Monday, March 14 2022.

The Shire also advertised an expression of interest (EOI) for the construction of Pioneer Park in early February. This EOI was advertised for a period of 3 weeks, and the Shire received a good response. The purpose of the EOI being advertised prior to the Tender release was to raise awareness of the upcoming project while also allowing potential contractors more time to assess project requirements.

Construction for the first stage (Pioneer Park) is expected to commence in May / June 2022, with an estimated completion time by October / November 2022.

More information regarding the Merredin CBD Redevelopment Project will be released via the Shire of Merredin website shortly.

Desalination Project

At the February Ordinary Council Meeting, the Shire of Merredin Council moved to submit an expression of interest to enter into a partnership with the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development for the WaterSmart Farms Project which will trial desalination technology in different parts of regional WA.

This will see a desalination unit installed in Merredin and will include treating unusable saline water and feeding it back into the Shire's irrigation system and being made available to farmers.

The project will improve water security in Merredin, which is essential in managing the impacts associated with the changing climate.

The project will also enable the Shire to maintain high quality green spaces and support the local agriculture industry during times of drought.

This strongly aligns with the Shire's Strategic vision for environment and sustainability, which focusses on the Shire of Merredin observing a number of sustainable water and energy harvesting, conservation and usage practices, and reducing waste through increased recycling, re-use, and reduction education and practices.

If the EOI is successful, a report will be delivered to Council to consider the partnership and for acceptance of the project budget.

From the Rangers Desk

By Sarah Paterson, WA Contract Ranger Services

Hi there, for those that don't know me my name is Sarah and I have been the Ranger at the Shire of Merredin since August 2021. Though my time here has been relatively short, I have really enjoyed my experiences in Merredin so far and look forward to meeting new people and assisting residents with all their Ranger enquiries.

I am writing this article today to address the main issue I have come across while working in Merredin - feral cats. There is undoubtedly a massive cat problem in Merredin and not just Merredin, a lot of the Wheatbelt towns and Shires too.

In just over 6 months I have rescued, adopted, syringe fed, and taken over 70 cats and kittens to rescue groups in Northam and Shenton Park. These rescue organisations are completely volunteer run, non-government funded and rely heavily on donations and charity from the public to keep afloat. A number of these rescues are at full capacity and are currently receiving more cats and kittens than they are able to adopt out.

Being able to rescue cats in kittens is no easy feat. I have been bitten and scratched countless times by cats that are trapped and impounded. One time I even had to go to hospital to receive wound care and a round of antibiotics.

Stray cats are often being fed by someone local, and once they start feeding them, the cats then they show up with their kittens, and then I receive a call asking to come and impound them as they become a nuisance.

It is important to remember that under the Cat Act 2011, an owner is defined as the below;

Term used: owner

- (1) In this Act —
owner, in relation to a cat, means any of these persons —
 - (a) in the case of a cat that is registered, the registered owner of the cat; or
 - (b) in the case of a cat that is not registered, a person who, or an owner of a business or organisation that, ordinarily keeps and cares for the cat; or
 - (c) if a person referred to in paragraph (b) is a child under 18 years of age, that child's parent or guardian.
- (2) In the case of a cat that is not registered, but is microchipped, a person whose name is recorded as the owner of the cat in a microchip database is to be taken, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to be a person who ordinarily keeps and cares for the cat.

Based on the above definition, if you are feeding/caring for a stray cat, you are the owner, and based on responsible and legal cat ownership, you are required to ensure that all cats in your care that are over 6 months are sterilised, microchipped and registered with the local Shire.

Sterilisation is the most important thing you can do for these animals, not only to stop unwanted breeding, but to stop more stray and feral cats from roaming the streets attacking wildlife. Cats are capable of having 3 litters per year which can contain 7-8 kittens – that is a lot of cats! I have spoken to the nurses at Merredin Vet regarding the costing for sterilisation, and an owner is looking at approximately \$180 for a female cat, however further reductions can occur if you are eligible.

Allowing your cats to breed and then having the Ranger come and take them away is not a solution to the issue. It is also not fair on the adoption and volunteer organisations to take on these strays.

We as a community need to work together to ensure we are all practicing responsible pet ownership for our cats.

While there is currently no law that states a cat must be locked inside 24/7, my advice to cat owners is to make sure your cat is sterilised, microchipped, and make sure they are registered. Remember, if you are feeding a stray or feral cat, then you are deemed the owner and it is your responsibility to abide with the *Cat Act 2011*. A reminder that under the *Cat Act 2011* it is also an offence to give away kittens that are not microchipped or sterilised, with a modified penalty of up to \$200 per kitten.

What is a feral cat?

Feral behaviour includes being fearful of human contact, hissing, running at the cage, scruffy fur, ears back, aggressive in nature, and a general look of ill health. Feral cats will be destroyed if they are trapped and handed in to the Shire.

Domestic cats and community cats can still show these attributes but generally after a short period of time, they will settle and be able to be patted, scratched or hand fed. Once they settle, we are generally able to be check for a microchip and reunite the cat with its owner.

Please note, cats that do not have a microchip are advertised on the Shire's Facebook page in an attempt to locate the owner. If unsuccessful and an owner does not come forward for the cat, they are rehomed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information above, or if you would like a cat trap set at your house or property, then please give me a call on 0400 240 787.



FIRE SAFETY

Are you familiar with the Australian Bushfire Warning System?

WA has now adopted the Australian Warning System, so our state’s emergency warnings are now consistent with other states.

The icon style is slightly different to what we used to use, but the main change relates to the colours of the different warnings – the symbolism of the new colours makes a little more sense in this context.

The Bushfire warning icons:

A **yellow** “Advice” warning means a fire has started, and there is no immediate threat to lives or homes – but that could change at any time, so be sure to be aware and keep up to date on the situation.

An **orange** “Watch and Act” warning means that there is now a possible threat to lives and homes. If you haven’t left the area yet, you should be preparing to leave very soon – or get ready to defend.

A **red** “Emergency Warning” means there is a threat to lives and homes. It is possibly too late to leave by now, and you need to take immediate action to survive.

It’s important to note that these are guides only, and if you find yourself within proximity of a bushfire or other natural disaster, don’t rely solely on these or any other warnings – watch the conditions around you, use your judgment and leave sooner rather than later.

Visit www.emergency.wa.gov.au/ or follow the Department of Fire & Emergency Services Facebook page for the latest emergency information.



ADVICE

A fire has started but there is no immediate threat to lives or homes.

Be aware and keep up to date.



WATCH AND ACT

There is a possible threat to lives or homes.

You need to leave or get ready to defend – do not wait and see.



EMERGENCY WARNING

There is a threat to lives or homes.

You are in danger and need to take immediate action to survive.

Notice of Meeting – Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting

The Bush Fire Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting of the Shire of Merredin will be held on Thursday, 17 March 2022 at the Tivoli Room, commencing at 1600hrs.

Lisa Clack

Chief Executive Officer

Products on Offer at the Visitor Centre

We have a wide range of local produce in stock at the Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre including;

- Olive Oil from The Sathya Olive Company - \$15
- Honey from Mr & Mrs Cheeseman - \$11.50 500g tub, \$19 1kg tub
- Desert Salt Flakes from Mizzis, Doodlakine – Salt grinder \$12.90, Refills \$6.50
- Jams and preserves from Wheatbelt Delights, Narembeen - \$7.50
- Nougat and Gobbles nut from Santaleuca Sandalwood – Nougat \$10 (box 5) Gobbles nuts \$12.50

Pop in and browse our range!





COMMUNITY FUNDING GRANT PROGRAM

A reminder that Applications for the 2022/23 Community Funding Grants Program will be closing next week!

To be eligible your group needs to be based in the Shire of Merredin and you need to be either an incorporated body or to be auspiced by an incorporated organisation.

Applications must be received by **Monday, 14 March 2022** at 5.00pm.

For further information, please contact the Shire on (08) 9041 1611 or email dceo@merredin.wa.gov.au.

International Food Festival Cancelled

The Shire of Merredin regretfully announces the cancellation of the 2022 Merredin Twilight International Food Festival, due to be held in March this year.

After much consideration, it has been decided that the event poses too much of risk to the health of both the volunteers and the attendees.

Though we understand this is disappointing for many, it is the right decision to ensure the continued safety of our community.

We look forward to bringing you the event again in 2023.

Swimming Pool Notice

The swimming carnival that was scheduled to be held at the Merredin District Olympic Swimming on Friday, 11 March 2022, has now been cancelled.

As such, the pool will be open to the general public during normal hours, 12pm—6pm.

Tesla e-Cars at the Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre recently enjoyed many visitations from electric car owners on-route to Caiguna Roadhouse. One of ten outback roadhouses dotted along a 910km stretch of the Eyre Highway, Caiguna has become the first to embrace electric vehicles with a carbon-neutral charger.

The installation powered by vegetable oil (used to fry food like hot chips) comes more than a decade after what many motoring enthusiasts say was the first known crossing by an electric vehicle in 2011.

The \$75,000 Biofil system was crowd-funded and plugs a 720km gap between proposed fast chargers in Western Australia and South Australia.

The Biofil system was invented by retired Perth mechanical engineer Jon Edwards and means electric motorists can recharge their vehicles in less than an hour instead of needing to stay overnight. But he now believes it is only a matter of time before banks of fast chargers are installed along Australia's Highway 1.

Merredin is an important step in the chain of e-chargers on-route to or from Perth and Kalgoorlie and on to the Eyre Highway to the eastern states.

Economic Security4Women Connection Program, Western Australia: Applications Now Open

The Economic Security4Women Connection Program is a one year leadership and mentoring program for 10 women owned or led businesses based in remote or very remote WA, including Merredin.

This exciting program is offered through Femeconomy Partner economic Security4Women (eS4W), and funded by the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund.

Each female leader selected for this program will receive;

- ▶ One year of online leadership and capability mentoring
- ▶ A female leader interview on Femeconomy
- ▶ A one year Femeconomy Platinum Membership

Applications close midnight Friday, 25 March 2022.

For more information regarding the eligibility criteria please head to bit.ly/3hwDIJP.

To download an Application Form, head to bit.ly/3C4Hnmj.

WA move to Level 2 Health Measures

Based on the latest health advice, upgraded public health and social measures were introduced State-wide from 12.01am on Thursday, March 3. Level 2 measures now include:

- ▶ children in Years 3-6 added to mask wearing requirements in all public indoor settings, usual exemptions apply;
- ▶ home gatherings limited to a total of 10 people indoors and outdoors, except weddings and funerals;
- ▶ private outdoor gatherings in a public space limited to 50 people;
- ▶ two square metre rule and 150 person capacity limit indoors or outdoors for weddings and funerals, and for places of worship - no more than 10 people inside if held at a private residence;
- ▶ two square metre rule and 150 patron capacity limit for fitness venues, hospitality, entertainment venues, night-clubs, and galleries and museums, with seated service only;
- ▶ two square metre rule for hairdressers, tattoo parlours and beauty services;

- ▶ two square metre rule and 500 person capacity limit for outdoor public venues and events, with mask wearing;
- ▶ two square metre rule for public venues such as swimming pools and recreation centres;
- ▶ 50 per cent capacity limit for entertainment venues with forward facing seating such as theatres and cinemas, and for major stadia
- ▶ limit of two visitors per resident per day to aged care and disability care facilities;
- ▶ no visitors to hospitals except for spouses, parents or carers, birth partners or for compassionate reasons;
- ▶ two square metre rule and 150 person capacity limit indoors or outdoors for higher education facilities including pathway colleges and English language schools;
- ▶ indoor community sports as per venue requirement, with no spectators, except for parents or guardians. Outdoor community sports permitted with no spectators, except for parents or guardians; and
- ▶ four square metre rule and seated service only for the Crown Casino gaming floor.

Southern Cross COVID-19 vaccination clinic

Roll up for WA
COVID-19 Vaccination

Southern Cross Community Centre
25 Antares Street

10 March 11am - 5pm
11 March 8:30am - 12pm

This clinic provides child and adult COVID-19 vaccine. People aged 5 years+ are eligible.

Receive your FREE COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine 1st, 2nd or Booster dose (Boosters 16 years+).

Register at rollup.wa.gov.au

Bookings encouraged.
Walk-ins welcomed.



We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service

A Change to Shire Services

To minimise the disruption to Shire services, the Shire of Merredin team will now be working on a split shift arrangement to ensure business continuity during the latest Omicron outbreak, and the statewide Level 2 restrictions.

As such, from Thursday, 3 March 2022 onwards, patrons are requested to book an appointment for a number of services, so we can ensure the right staff member is available to assist you. These include;

- ▶ Building and Development Services
- ▶ Emergency Services
- ▶ Environmental Health (including waste, bins etc.)
- ▶ Project Management
- ▶ Engineering Services
- ▶ Rates

Bookings will also be required for appointments with the CEO and all Executive Staff. Front counter and Department of Transport services will continue as normal.

For more information, or to book an appointment, please contact the Shire Administration Office on 9041 1611.

THE CUMMINS THEATRE & WHISKEY & BOOTS PRESENTS

MAMA STITCH

STORIES ABOUT MUMS FROM THE COMMUNITY OF MERREDIN



SHOW DATES:

Friday, 18th March | Saturday, 19th March
Friday, 25th March | Saturday, 26th March
Thursday March 31st | Friday, 1st April

Doors open at 6PM for tea and toast

LOCATION:

The Cummins Theatre
31 Bates St, Merredin WA 6415

TICKETS:

\$22 Adult | \$20 Concession | \$15 Student
Please note: some tickets reserved for family members to book if their mum's story is chosen.

BOOKING INFO:

Book online www.cumminstheatre.com.au
or in person at Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre



Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries



SHIRE OF MERREDIN
INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT



WHISKEY & BOOTS



CUMMINS THEATRE



CIRCUIT WEST



FRIDAY, 25 MARCH
1.30PM-3PM | MERREDIN LIBRARY

FREE OVER 50'S EVENT

FEEL FREE TO BRING ALONG SOME NIBBLES!
TEA AND COFFEE PROVIDED

FUN, WACKY PRIZES FOR WINNERS!

MASK WEARING IS MANDATORY.
NO PROOF OF VACCINATION REQUIRED.



MERREDIN REGIONAL LIBRARY



EASTER In The PARK

6 APRIL | 0-5 YEARS
APEX PARK, MERREDIN
9.30AM - 11.30AM

FOOD, CRAFTS & ACTIVITIES, AND AN EASTER EGG HUNT!
WHEATBELT COFFEE VAN WILL BE ATTENDING

WINNERS OF THE COLOURING COMP ANNOUNCED! ENTRIES CLOSE 30 MARCH. PICK UP YOUR COLOURING PAGE FROM ANY OF THE BELOW ORGANISATIONS

RSPV TO THE MERREDIN LIBRARY ON 9041 1222 BY 4 APRIL

2022 MERREDIN SHOW

Celebrating Rail in Merredin

POSTPONED

"SEE YOU AT..."
 merredinshow
www.merredinshow.com.au

Saturday, 2nd April
10am - 8pm
Merredin Rec Centre

FREE ENTRY FOR KIDS UNDER 16
thanks to
Collgar Wind Farm

TRAINS

Cars | Music & Dance
Food Trucks | Stalls
Sideshow Alley | Rides
Workshops | Animals
Fireworks | Showbags
Kids Activities

Executive Sponsors