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MEDIA RELEASE

SHIRE OF MERREDIN EARNS STATEWIDE RECOGNITION FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

The Shire of Merredin is one of 3 local governments that were honoured at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) 2025 Volunteer Employer Recognition Awards (VERA) held on Friday 7 November 2025.

DFES presents the VERA annually to acknowledge the employers and self-employed volunteers who provide vital support to emergency service groups across Western Australia.

Chief Executive Officer Craig Watts attended the ceremony at Perth's ANZAC Club on behalf of the Shire to accept the award.

"We're proud to offer the support and flexibility needed for our first-responder staff to attend local emergencies and keep our community safe," Mr Watts said.

In recent years, the Shire has implemented a model to streamline the delivery of critical emergency services and introduced policies to formalise our commitment to providing machinery and support for first responders, including paid leave and honorarium arrangements. This assistance also extends to committee meetings and leadership training to further strengthen our emergency response capabilities.

Shire President Donna Crook said Council believes it's important to support Shire employees who are first responders, as well as the colleagues and family members who shoulder their other capacities during incidents, such as helping with childcare or work responsibilities.

"We're honoured to accept this award alongside the other recipients across the State and would like to extend our congratulations to RSM Australia, Merredin who were also recognised with this award," she said.

Shire of Merredin employees make up 2.3% of the Merredin population but currently account for more than one third of the 17 active members in the Merredin Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS). As well as this, of the 50 incidents during the 2024/25 period, 17 occurred during normal working hours. Without Shire staff, Merredin VFRS would have only been able to attend 2 of those incidents with a full crew.

VFRS Lieutenant Sheree Lowe, who is also the Shire's Emergency Services Officer, said Merredin as a regional community relies on the tireless efforts and sacrifices of local volunteers and their families.

"The Shire's support makes a difference to the Merredin VFRS's ability to service the community during working hours," she said.

The full list of the 2025 recipients, as well as the photo gallery from the awards ceremony, can be viewed on the DFES website.

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