



ANNUAL

Report

2021/22



SHIRE OF
MERREDIN
INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT

Acknowledgement of *Country*

The Shire of Merredin would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land people on which the Shire stands today, the Njaki Njaki people of the Nyoongar nation, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge their continued connection and care for country of the land and waters around Merredin, and the ongoing contribution they make to this region.

Our *Vision*

“Merredin is the commercial and cultural heart of the eastern wheatbelt region. A place people are proud to call home and where visitors are always welcome”

Where to find this Report

Copies of this report can be obtained in the following ways:

- ▶ **In person:** Collect a hard copy from the Shire Administration Office or Library
- ▶ **Online:** www.merredin.wa.gov.au
- ▶ **Email:** admin@merredin.wa.gov.au

Comments and Feedback

Council and Shire officers are keen for any feedback you may have on the Annual Report. Feedback can be in writing and dropped off at any Shire venue, phoned through to the Shire Admin Building on (08) 9041 1611 or emailed to the Shire via admin@merredin.wa.gov.au

SHIRE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	1
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	3
OUR SHIRE & FACT FILE	5
OUR COUNCILLORS	7
COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE & DIVERSITY	8
OUR ORGANISATION & VALUES	9
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT & SHIRE SERVICES	10
OUR STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN	12
2021/22 BUDGET & PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS	23
4 YEAR SUMMARY STATS	24
COMMUNITY SERVICES	25
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	33
ENGINEERING SERVICES	35
CORPORATE SERVICES	39
FINANCIAL REPORT	45

Shire President Report

See page 2 for more



2021/22 Report from Chief Executive Officer, Lisa Clack

See page 4 for more



Progress Against the Strategic Community Plan

See page 11 for more



4 Year Summary & Budget

See page 23 for more



Department Updates

*See page *25 for more*



2021/22 Financial Report

See page 48 for more



Shire President's *Message*

On behalf of the Shire of Merredin Council, it is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for the 2021/22 reporting period.

It has been an busy year for the new Shire Council, especially with having to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Wheatbelt remained relatively unaffected until March 2022, strategies were still in place to prepare us in the event of an outbreak. Council meetings moved into a digital space through the Zoom platform, allowing Councillors to sign in from home if they were isolating or had fallen ill.

Despite these challenges, the Council has been actively engaged in planning for the CBD Redevelopment and advocating for the Shire and its key projects. As part of this, we met with a number of state and federal politicians to discuss the Shire's economic priorities and value proposition.

In August 2021, The Hon. Mark McGowan MLA, Premier of Western Australia, was welcomed to town by the Council to present a cheque on behalf of Lotterywest for \$25,000 towards the inaugural Merredin festival.

As part of the Shire's transition to a new federal electorate in the seat of O'Connor, Mr Rick Wilson, MP and Senator Matt Wilson were welcomed to town in early February 2021 to discuss urgent matters of importance with the Council and Executive Staff. We were also able to discuss our CBD Redevelopment including Apex Park and any funding opportunities that may be available in the coming year.

On 10 February 2022, we welcomed Hon. Dave Kelly MP, Minister for Water, along with Hon. Sandra Carr MLA on to discuss the upcoming water projects within the Shire. During this visit, the minister was briefed regarding potential upgrades to the Shire's irrigation network to prioritise the use of less rainfall dependent water sources.

Gateway Merredin *Festival*

During the extensive community engagement undertaken in 2020 for the Shire's new Strategic Community Plan, the community's desire to create an annual event to showcase the rich culture and history of the town and region was recognised. After a lengthy period of COVID-19 restrictions, there was an urgent need to capitalise on grant funding opportunities once restrictions began to ease in order to capture the interstate audience.

The Council resolved to include seed funding of \$26,700 for a large scale event in the 2020/21 Budget to allow the Shire to actively plan and coordinate a festival for the town. The Shire also received grant funding of \$35,000 through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' Regional and Remote Festivals Fund.

Once festival planning was underway and the external working party from the Merredin community was in place, the evolution to the Gateway Merredin Festival – 'Troops, Trains & Treasures' theme took place and along with it, a significant natural expansion of the event program over time.

In September, the Shire, in conjunction with many community members and organisations, successfully delivered the Gateway Merredin Festival from Friday, 24 September 2021 to Sunday, 26 September 2021, inclusive. In total, 19 activations were held in the main streets of Merredin and in the prestigious Cummins Theatre.

The festival brought an additional 1400 people to town across the weekend, and generated a substantial economic impact directly to the businesses within the Shire of Merredin. An

estimated \$248,863 in direct new spending in Merredin was resulted from the festival.

Local Government *Elections*

Following the October 16 Local Government Ordinary Postal Elections, four candidates were elected to the role of Councillor for the Shire for a term of 4 years. I would once again like to offer my congratulations to Councillors Elect Cr Romolo Patroni and Cr Flockart for retaining their positions, and I would like to congratulate and welcome Cr Donna Crook and Cr Megan Simmonds to the Council.

Thank you once again to departing Councillors Mal Willis and Roy Butler for their years of dedicated service to the Shire council.

2022 Citizen of the Year *Awards*

Every year, Local Governments around the country recognise the remarkable achievements and contributions of local community members through the Auspire Community Citizen of the Year Awards. These awards showcase active citizenship amongst community members who are making a difference to our society.

I had the absolute pleasure of awarding the 2022 Community awards on January 26 at the Australia

Day Breakfast, hosted by the Merredin Community Resource Centre.

In total, there were nine nominees across four categories, all of whom were brilliant achievers who were driven to succeed by a determination to help their fellow Australians and make our community an even better, brighter place.

I would like to congratulate the winners for their efforts:

- ▶ Tyler Winter (Citizen of the Year);
- ▶ Jane Patroni (Senior Citizen of the Year);
- ▶ Maddie Earle-Sadler (Youth Citizen of the Year); and
- ▶ Petticoat Lane (Active Citizenship)

Closing *Comments*

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors and the Shire's dedicated staff members for their outstanding work during the 2021/22 reporting period. Despite the constant challenges associated with COVID-19 lockdowns and changing health measures, we have banded together to ensure that essential services have continued for our community.

We have an exciting year ahead delivering our key projects, including the remainder of the CBD Redevelopment and also the expansions to our recycled water network. We will also be reviewing our Corporate Business Plan, updating it for the first time since 2018.

I look forward to working close with our community to ensure we are achieving our goals and paving the way for the future generations to come.



Mark McKenzie

Shire President



Chief Executive Officer's *Report*

This year has proved to be challenging and unpredictable, but has provided the organisation with an exciting opportunity to refocus our strategic direction to have our best impact—and provide the foundational work for a number of key projects that will be taking place over the course of the next 3 years.

Works for stage one of the CBD Redevelopment have commenced, with Pioneer Park entering the construction phase in May 2022. The new carpark has been completed, while the landscaping and greenery are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The redevelopment works at Pioneer Park were designed to highlight views of Merredin's pioneer history, including the heritage listed Merredin Water Tank and Merredin Railway and Military Museums, and draw tourists from Great Eastern Highway with new car parking, recreational spaces, and improved landscaping and drainage.

The CBD Redevelopment Project as a whole has been designed around improving walkability, attracting tourists, enhancing key sightlines, and supporting local businesses, while also providing high quality infrastructure and facilities.

The value of the construction and increased use of the CBD for Merredin businesses has been estimated to be \$7.9 million, in present value, over the next 20 years. There are also significant community and social benefits projected to be achieved from the project.

It is expected that on completion of the CBD Redevelopment Project, an additional 11,320 tourists will visit the Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre (CWVC) per year, spending an additional \$430,000 in local businesses, and creating 9 new ongoing full-time jobs.

Key Updates

Governance: This year, the Shire was dedicated to improving Governance and transparency, with the creation of a dedicated Governance Officer role. This position will be overseeing policy creation and

review, while also assisting with Council matters and providing operation support to the Executive team.

Emergency COVID-19 Management Team: The Shire established an Emergency Management Team early on in an effort to combat the impacts associated with COVID-19 in the office and the community. The role of this team was to establish clear guidelines and policies surrounding health advice and essential guidelines. They also outlined the key steps that would be taken, should there be an outbreak of the virus within the organisation.

The well-being of our staff was the main priority and we continued to implement measures to ensure their safety. Vulnerable staff were able to work from home, as were those who were required to isolate due to an exposure. Amongst the COVID-19 measures implemented in the office included offering staff Rapid Antigen Tests, as well as masks and personal protective equipment. Sneeze screens were also installed at our venues and automatic, non-contact hand sanitizer stations.

In March 2021, once the spread of COVID-19 was imminent within the community, the Shire implemented a split-team system which would ensure the continuation of services if there was an infection within the Administration Building. Each team would work one week in the office and one week home, alternating every week. This continued for a month, during which the Shire was able to continue to operate with little to no disruption to services due to our proactive planning.

Snap Send Solve: The Snap Send Solve platform has assisted the Shire to improve our customer request management to make the process more efficient, while also offering ease of access to our community

when reporting an incident.

This year, the Shire committed to the improvement of community reporting by upgrading our subscription of the platform to offer a more personal experience for the users. Each report sent to the Shire now receives a follow up call or email stating the progress of their request and a final call once the request has been completed.

Welcoming New Shire *Staff*

A number of new staff joined the Shire team over the duration of the reporting period. In January 2022 Daniel Hay-Hendry commenced as the Manager of Projects, with the important role of managing the CBD Redevelopment and overseeing the delivery of other key project milestones.

We also welcomed Chloe Townsend in an acting capacity in the Deputy Chief Executive Officer role. Chloe has brought a fresh outlook and new perspective to the Communities team in her short time with the Shire.

I look forward to working with our new Executive Management team to deliver major projects in the coming years.

Looking *Forward*

Merredin has been selected as one of only four locations throughout WA, to take part in a

desalination technology trial. This project will be completed in partnership with Water Corporation, Murdoch University and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development as part of the Water Smart Farms initiative.

The desalination plant to be installed in Merredin as part of the two-year program will be one of the largest in the trial, able to deliver around 80kL per day of high-quality potable water initiative.

To support the trial, the Shire of Merredin also applied, and successfully received, a further \$99,000 of funding from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulations Community Water Supply program, which will go towards the installation of the unit and associated infrastructure.

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

Closing *Comments*

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the entire Shire team for their hard work during the reporting period. I am really proud of everyone for pitching in when we were short staffed due to zCOVID-19, with many staff working multiple jobs and long hours to ensure the Shire met important deadlines and continued to function business as usual.

We have together built a solid foundation moving forward, and it is an exciting time ahead for our organisations.



Lisa Clack

Chief Executive Officer



Our Shire

The Shire of Merredin (the Shire) is a local government area in the Eastern Wheatbelt of Western Australia.

Situated approximately 262 kilometres east of Perth (the capital city of Western Australia), the Shire includes the towns of Burracoppin, Hines Hill, Merredin and Muntadgin, and the localities of Goomarin, Korbel, Nangeenan, Nokanning, South Burracoppin, Tandegin, Norpa, and Nukarni (displayed on the Shire of Merredin map below).

Merredin acts as a major commercial and retail

centre for the Central Eastern Wheatbelt, serving the industrial and retail needs for surrounding Eastern Wheatbelt Shires and is a base for a range of government agencies and services.

The Shire is an area with high employment, extensive community involvement, and is well connected with around 2,250 vehicles travelling along Great Eastern Highway past the town each day. The town is also serviced daily by the Transwa Prospector Train, making it convenient to find by road and rail.



Fact File

AREA



3,296
SQUARE KM

POPULATION



3,221
ESTIMATED

DWELLINGS



1,632
TOTAL

ELECTORS



2,012
PEOPLE

PATHWAYS



36.45
KM

SEALED ROADS



565
KM

STREET TREES



3,536
ESTIMATED

PLAYGROUNDS



6

MORE ABOUT THE SHIRE OF MERREDIN

Population Density	0.98 per square km
Length of Unsealed Roads	866 km
Median Age of Residents	41
Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Population	5.4%
Median Weekly Household Income	\$1,380
Unemployment	5.3%

Our Councillors



MARK MCKENZIE

Shire President

Current Term: 2019 - 2023



LEAH BOEHME

Deputy Shire President

Current Term: 2019 - 2023



ROSS BILLING

Current Term: 2019 - 2023



DONNA CROOK

Current Term: 2021 - 2025



JULIE FLOCKART

(Shire President until Oct 21)

Current Term: 2021 - 2025



RENEE MANNING

Current Term: 2019 - 2023



ROMOLO PATRONI

Current Term: 2021 - 2025



MEGAN SIMMONDS

Current Term: 2021 - 2025

Outgoing Councillors



PHIL VAN DER MERWE

Current Term: 2019 - 2023

MAL WILLIS
Deputy Shire President
Current Term:
2017 - 2021

ROY BUTLER

Current Term:
2017 - 2021

Councillor Attendance

12 Ordinary Council Meetings



5 Special Council Meetings



1 Annual Electors Meeting



2 Audit Committee Meetings



Shire of Merredin Councillor Attendance 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022	Ordinary Council Meeting	Special Council Meeting	Annual Electors Meeting	Audit Committee Meeting
Cr Mark McKenzie	11	4	1	2
Cr Leah Boehme	11	5	1	2
Cr Ross Billing	12	5	1	0
Cr Roy Butler**	3	4	1	0
Cr Donna Crook*	8	1	-	2
Cr Julie Flockart	11	5	1	0
Cr Renee Manning	12	4	1	2
Cr Romolo Patroni	12	5	1	2
Cr Megan Simmonds*	9	1	-	0
Cr Phil Van Der Merwe	12	4	1	0
Cr Mal Willis**	3	3	1	0

* Denotes Incoming Councillor as of October 2021 | ** Denotes Outgoing Councillor as of October 2021

GENDER



5

4

LANGUAGES

English

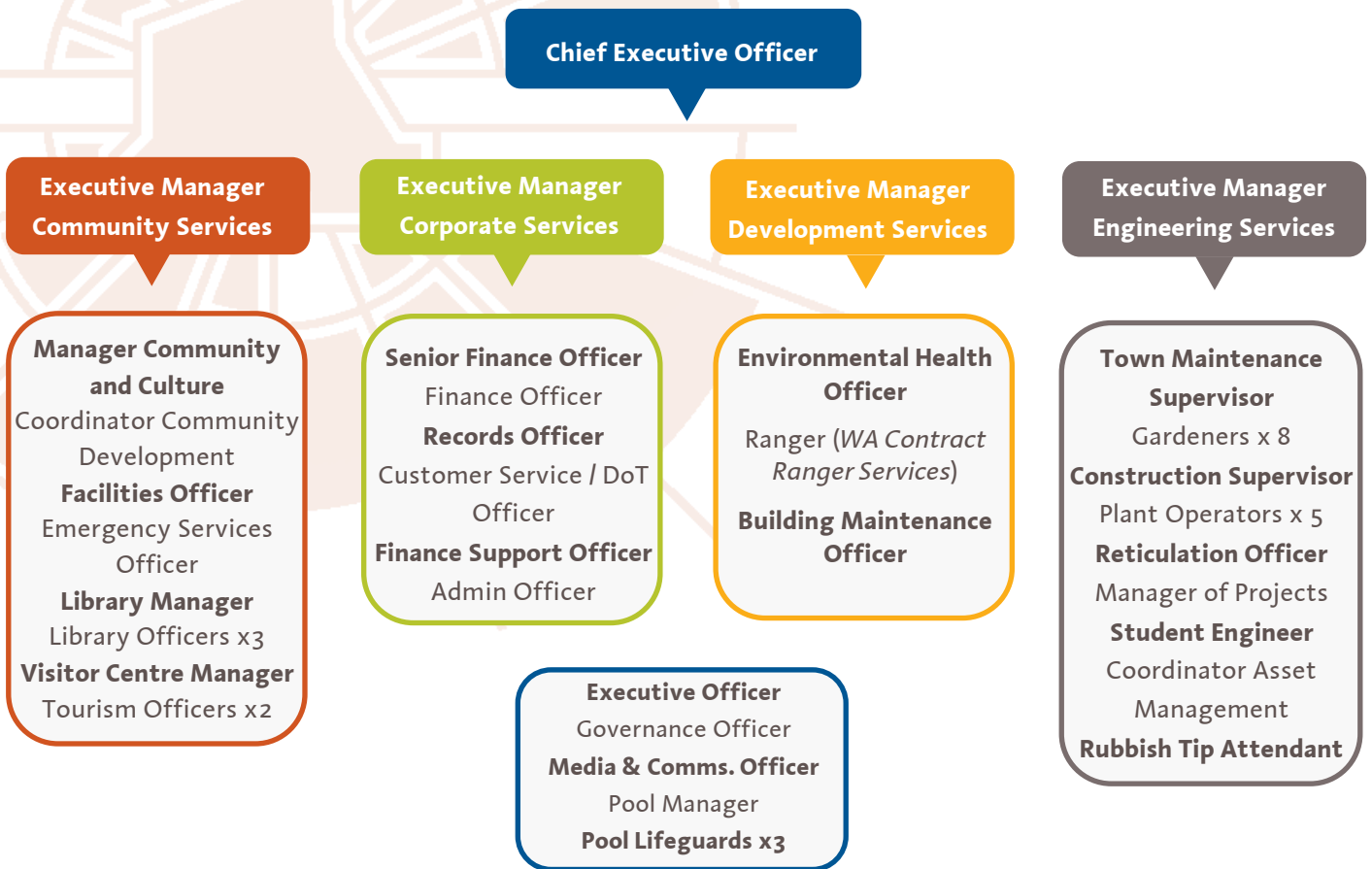
COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Australia
England

ABORIGINAL / TORRES STRAIGHT ISLANDER

Nil

Our Organisation



Our Values



Integrity - Act in an honest, open and accountable manner in all of our activities ensuring they are equitable and socially just.



Participation - Provide genuine opportunities for informed community participation in decision making in a framework of local democracy.



Service - Be sensitive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of our community and focusing



Learning - Continue learning from training, our actions and experiences, and continually seeking better and more innovative ways of doing things.



Valuing People - Value the contribution the people inside and outside the organisation make to the achievement of the Shire's vision.



Commitment - Ensure our actions serve the people of Merredin and their long-term interests.



Sustainability - Have a global perspective and ensure our actions minimise the impact on the environment and the resources available for future generations.

Executive Management & *Shire Services*

Our current organisational structure consists of four Executive Management positions representing four directorates, as well as the Office of the CEO. Depicted below includes the services offered by each of the directorates along with the Executives appointed during the reporting period. Please note, in several of the roles, multiple names are listed due to staff changeover during the 2021/22 financial year.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - MARK DACOMBE / LISA CLACK

- ▶ Governance
- ▶ Marketing and Communications
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Councillor Liaison
- ▶ Council Matters

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE - ANDRINA PRNICH / CHLOE TOWNSEND

- ▶ Art and Culture
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Emergency Services
- ▶ Organisational Planning and Reporting
- ▶ Library Services
- ▶ Recreation
- ▶ Visitor Services

EXECUTIVE MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES - GEOFF GARSIDE / LINDON MELLOR / DANIEL HAY-HENDRY

- ▶ Customer Service
- ▶ Financial Management
- ▶ Human Resource
- ▶ Information Communication Technology
- ▶ CCTV
- ▶ Records Management

EXECUTIVE MANAGER ENGINEERING SERVICES - CALVIN SHOTTER / LINDON MELLOR

- ▶ Project Management and Delivery
- ▶ Natural Resource Management
- ▶ Waste Management
- ▶ Infrastructure Construction and Maintenance
- ▶ Water
- ▶ Asset and Fleet Management
- ▶ Parks, Gardens, and Town Maintenance

EXECUTIVE MANAGER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES - PETER ZENNI

- ▶ Public Health
- ▶ Building
- ▶ Planning
- ▶ Property Management
- ▶ Ranger Services
- ▶ Disability Access



Progress Against Our Strategic Plan

The overleaf pages provide an update on the Shire progress towards the priorities and objectives in the Strategic Community Plan 2020-30, highlights achieved in 2021/22, and significant activities planned for 2022-23.

Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

The IPR Framework provides local governments with a guideline for translating community priorities and aspirations into operational objectives, and track the progress in delivering on these objectives.

Underlying principles of the integrated planning and reporting framework include:

- ▶ understanding the external environment and what our community aspires to;
- ▶ setting direction within our resource capacity;
- ▶ monitoring performance for accountability and adaptability; and
- ▶ applying a holistic approach to improve outcomes.

Strategic Community Plan

The Shire's Strategic Community Plan (SCP) recently had a major review which Council adopted in early 2021. The Shire's SCP has six key themes which is

depicted in the table below.

2021/22 Update

During the 2021/22 financial year, the Shire continued to deliver against many of the key theme areas of our Strategic Community Plan, which are outlined in the following pages. These pages report not only on the progress towards the priority areas, but also activities done to achieve objectives under each theme. Other data representing the Shire's services has also been reported.

The pandemic saw a series of border closures and state-wide lock-downs in Western Australia. This had a widespread impact on the ability of the organisation to deliver of projects, and operate facilities, services and events during the financial year.

Despite the challenges, the Shire is progressing well against the goals in the Strategic Community Plan, and we are pleased to present these results.

THEME 1: COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Merredin is rich in culture, arts, sport and community life. Everyone is safe. Everyone belongs.

THEME 2: ECONOMY & GROWTH

Merredin thrives with a job-rich and multi-faceted economy, building on local strengths.

THEME 3: ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Merredin looks after the natural environment and minimises its carbon footprint.

THEME 4: COMMUNICATIONS & LEADERSHIP

The Merredin community is highly engaged in planning and action for its future, with a well governed, forward-looking, and proactive local government.

THEME 5: PLACES & SPACES

Merredin is an attractive regional town, with an inviting public realm.

THEME 6: TRANSPORT & NETWORKS

Merredin is easy to get around for all and well-connected regionally, nationally and internationally for people and industry.



THEME 1: *Community and Culture*

Priority 1: Development of cultural life: infrastructure and spaces; activation; and celebration of Njaki Njaki

Objective/s	2021/22 Update
<p>1.1 Events, Arts and Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community that is engaged in a variety of inclusive events, arts and other cultural activities which enrich their community experience and increase their sense of belonging. • The Cummins Theatre is an accessible and inclusive cultural space, serving the needs of Merredin and other surrounding wheatbelt towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ North Merredin Primary School (NMPS) continued to support regular hirers, dedicated space to community groups and bookings such as the pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinics. ▶ Gateway Merredin 2021 was held: 1000 people were in attendance across the three day festival period and delivered an economic impact of more than \$248,000 worth of direct spending in Merredin. ▶ After some time without events due to COVID-19 the Shire delivered many events including ANZAC Day, Gateway Merredin and Gala Night.

Priority 2: Development of sport and recreation: “infrastructure and participation

Objective/s	2021/22 Update
<p>1.2 Community Sports and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting clubs are thriving in membership and volunteers, with an appropriate standard of facilities and other support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Secured grant funding for a Club Development Officer. Through the program, clubs participated in 3 workshops to assist with their governance. The Shire created a Club Development Manual and strategy. ▶ Repairs were undertaken to the indoor and outdoor courts at the MRCLC.

Priority 3: Community safety

Objective/s	2021/22 Update
<p>1.3 Community Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shire, Local Emergency Services and wider community working together to prevent bushfires and other emergencies as well as being well placed to respond and recover in such events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Through the All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) funding the Emergency Services officer updated a range of critical procedures. ▶ Council committed to continue funding the Emergency Services Officer position. ▶ The Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils (WERO) considered a joint arrangement however it was unable to be progressed during 2021/22.



2021/22 *Highlights*

- ▶ Highly successful festival, Gateway Merredin, was held in October 2021.
- ▶ Emergency management improved compliance including updating critical procedures such as the Local Area Management Arrangements and Bushfire Operations Procedures.
- ▶ Agreed to enter into a partnership with Wheatbelt RDA to deliver the Lumen Wheatbelt Regional University Centre (Lumen WRUC) program.
- ▶ Agreed to enter into a partnership with PCYC to support the delivery of youth programs in the Shire.

Looking *Forward*

- ▶ Conduct an Operational Management Review of the MRCLC.
- ▶ Develop a Strategic Recreation Masterplan.
- ▶ Implement a new Library Management System.
- ▶ RSPCA Dog and Cat Sterilisation Program to be implemented to subsidise the cost of sterilisation and microchipping for concession card holders and low income earners.
- ▶ Implementation of the Lumen WRUC program.



THEME 2: *Economy and Growth*

Priority 1: Clearly articulate Merredin's identity and value proposition

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>2.1 Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merredin is well known by those not local to the area, as a great place to live, work and visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement of CBD redevelopment project. Pioneer Park revitalisation works commenced. Advocated for improvement in our heritage assets such as our water tower. 2021 drew tourists to the area as a key aim.

Priority 2: Tourism product development, including cultural tourism

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>2.2 Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shire works closely with businesses and other community groups to actively support and develop visitor growth Visitors to the Shire are well serviced and accommodated, with opportunities that leverage our historic, cultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with DPLH towards to the land transfer at Hunts Dam to Njaki Njaki Aboriginal Cultural Tours. 6317 visitors at the CWVS 2387 additional enquiries to the CWVC, including TransWA bookings Provide tourism service on behalf of 13* local governments

Priority 3: Building on Merredin's strengths to expand the economy

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>2.3 CBD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Merredin town centre is strengthened as a regional centre, serving the needs of the Merredin community and surrounding catchment Merredin has suitably located and sized land for various industrial opportunities that serve the productive needs within the Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement of the review of the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Strategy, amendments to the Local Planning Scheme No. 6 and local planning policies will ultimately allow for future growth of Merredin and ensure provision of suitably zoned land to facilitate development approvals. Local businesses promoted through the Local Business Registry for the revitalisation of Pioneer Park project



- ▶ .A number of local businesses offering specialty trades, general labour, materials and accommodation were all utilised during the construction works associated with Stage One of the CBD Redevelopment.
- ▶ Commenced discussion with Development WA, advocating for the development of light industrial land and general industry land in Merredin.

2021/22 *Highlights*

- ▶ Visitation increased with visitor from intrastate, interstate and a few internationals returning since the WA and international borders re-opened in March 2022.
- ▶ Completion of the construction of the vehicle bridge and car park in Pioneer Park, offering off-road parking and access between the Railway and Military Museums as well and drawing visitors into the CBD off Great Eastern Highway.

Looking *Forward*

- ▶ Commence the review of the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Strategy, amendments to the Local Planning Scheme No. 6 and local planning policies.
- ▶ Completion of Pioneer Park and the commencement of Stage Two of the CBD Redevelopment.
- ▶ Partner with the Electric Vehicle Highway – agreement for Merredin to become part of the EV fast charging network in WA.
- ▶ Investigate the feasibility of providing an increased tourism offering on behalf of the WEROC Shires.



THEME 3: *Environment and Sustainability*

Priority 1: Address climate change

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>3.1 Environmental Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Shire of Merredin observes a number of sustainable water and energy harvesting conservation and usage practices</i> <i>The Shire of Merredin's fleet is dominated by vehicles fuelled by renewable or alternate fuels</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Prioritised a series of water management actions as part of our continued commitment towards climate change. ▶ Shire has begun building climate change assumptions into the Shire's Asset Management Plans. ▶ Planning began to update the Shire's Water Management Plan and drainage plans, which will be delivered in 2022/23. ▶ The Shire has partnered with Murdoch University and Water Corporation for a research project focused on sustainable groundwater supply options using on-farm desalination technology led by the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development. ▶ Watersmart Farms project commenced. ▶ Facilitated development improvements for the CDS in Merredin.

Priority 2: Developing a more efficient and sustainable waste management service

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>3.2 Waste Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reduced waste through increased recycling, reuse and reduction education and practices</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ WEROC progressed the development of a Strategic Waste Management Plan and Regional Landfill Consolidation Report identifying Merredin as a possible Regional Landfill site.

Priority 3: The Shire leading by example

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>3.3 Environmental Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Land use planning respects our natural assets and ensures limited impact on climate change</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Approximately 1000 trees were planted along the Burracoppin–Campion roadside. The tree planting was conducted as part of the Shire's Recovering Roadside Conservation Values Pilot Project, which is supported



- *Natural assets are protected and conserved* supported through funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program.

2021/22 *Forward*

- ▶ The Shire has secured a small-scale desalination unit through the WaterSmart Farms project, which will enable the treatment of saline groundwater abstracted from the townsite.
- ▶ The Shire has applied for round two of the Community Water Supply Program. If successful, the grant will fund the expansion of the recycled water usage scheme.
- ▶ The Shire was awarded Gold Status for its leadership in effective water management at the Merredin District Olympic Pool.
- ▶ Installation of a new water tank and pump at the Merredin Cemetery, with connection to existing reuse network to allow the Shire to use the water.

Looking *Highlights*

- ▶ Implementation of a new tip shop located at the Merredin Waste Facility.
- ▶ WEROC Investigation into regional waste facility.
- ▶ The installation and commissioning of the WaterSmart Farms desalination unit will enable the Shire to supplement the irrigation of green spaces and provide a community water source for fire mitigation, construction projects and agriculture, by utilising treated saline ground water abstracted from the Merredin townsite.
- ▶ Budget has been included in the 2022/23 financial year to update the Shire's Water Management Plan and drainage plans.



THEME 4: *Communications and Leadership*

Priority 1: Effective mechanisms for community representation in key decision-making

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>4.1 - Community Engagement</p> <p><i>The Shire regularly engages with its community and, in return, communicates the information gathered in a clear and transparent manner</i></p> <p><i>The Shire has a strong working relationship with the Njaki Njaki Noongar Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal community members</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consulted the community on the Apex Park Redevelopment and Town Centre concept plan. ▶ Consulted the community on Public Piazza Pilot Project. ▶ The Shire arranges for Welcome to Country ceremonies at Shire events. ▶ An Acknowledgement of Country has been included at the start of Council meetings and on official documents.

Priority 2: Maximising the value of Shire assets

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>4.2 - Decision Making</p> <p><i>Council is equipped with appropriate technology, allowing for better public accessibility to the Council Chambers</i></p> <p><i>The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identified the strategic value of the land at Throssell Road for purchase. ▶ Identified assets for disposal such as the Lutheran church. ▶ Completion of the new Merredin Cemetery recycled water storage and irrigation system with funding from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.



2021/22 *Highlights*

- ▶ Completion of the new Merredin Cemetery recycled water storage and irrigation system with funding from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, improving the Shire's water management practices and assisting with water security into the future.
- ▶ Achieved a balanced budget in complex financial times.
- ▶ Election and induction of Councillors.
- ▶ Recruitment and commencement of new CEO and Executive Manager Engineering Services..
- ▶ Creation of Project Manager role to support the delivery of key infrastructure projects.

Looking *Forward*

- ▶ Update the Corporate Business Plan (CBP), the first CBP against the new Strategic Community Plan 2020-2030 .
- ▶ Record Keeping Plan update.
- ▶ Regulation 17 and Risk review to be conducted to improve our governance.
- ▶ Update the Enterprise Agreement with outdoor workers and transition to State Industrial Relations Award for indoor workforce.
- ▶ New payroll system implementation.
- ▶ The Shire will continue to invest in Asset Management planning which will consider Shire owned facilities and held infrastructure assets.



THEME 5: *Places and Spaces*

Priority 1: Revitalise the Merredin CBD

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>5.1 - Streetscapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Merredin CBD has been significantly upgraded and is well maintained and representative of the regional status that it holds</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding from the Building Better Regions Fund and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure have been secured and allocated towards the CBD Redevelopment project. Construction of Pioneer Park is underway, with continued development of designs for Town Centre and Apex Park. Minor upgrades to the town entrance signs to improve visual appeal.

Priority 2: Improve public open spaces

Objectives	2021/22 Update
<p>5.2 - Parks and Gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parks within the Shire are maintained to a high standard, with adequate facilities for community members of all ages and abilities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding has been allocated towards the revitalisation of Apex Park. Existing concept designs being reviewed to inform the detailed design stage of the project.

2021/22 *Highlights*

- ▶ \$2,139,309 of Federal Government funding was secured for the CBD Redevelopment through the Building Better Regions Fund.
- ▶ \$1,618,415 of Federal Government funding was secured for the CBD Redevelopment through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program.
- ▶ Construction works for the first stage of the CBD Redevelopment, the revitalisation of Pioneer Park commenced.

Looking *Forward*

- ▶ The revitalisation works for Pioneer Park will be completed, marking the completion of the first phase of the CBD Redevelopment. Providing parking and improving access between the Railway and Military Museums, as well as drawing visitors off Great Eastern Highway into the CBD.
- ▶ The designs for the Town Centre and Apex Park are to be completed, ready for construction to commence.
- ▶ Further advocacy with State Government on the restoration of the Merredin Water Tower.
- ▶ Seeking further funding from State Government Agencies for the revitalisation of Apex Park.



THEME 6: *Transport and Networks*

Priority 1: Improving Local Roads

Objectives	2021/22 Update
6.1 - Roads and Footpaths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Shires road system, footpaths and cycle trails are well maintained and safe</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commenced the development of a Road Hierarchy, to priorities the renewal of our assets.

Priority 2: Improving storm water management

Objectives	2021/22 Update
6.2 - Drainage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater drainage is well maintained and capable of handling storm events at an appropriate standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of an Asset Management Plan for Roads, footpaths and stormwater infrastructure has commenced.

2021/22 *Highlights*

- ▶ The investigation and pavement design works were completed for the next sections of Merredin-Narembeen Road as part of the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network Project.
- ▶ Reconstruction and resealing of South Avenue was completed in partnership with Main Roads WA.
- ▶ The kerbing along South Avenue following the reconstruction and resealing works was completed.
- ▶ Concept designs completed for the upgrades to Crooks roads, to be used to advocacy for State or Federal funding for this important piece of enabling economic infrastructure.
- ▶ Completed a lighting upgrade to Bulls Head Road.
- ▶ Reconstruction of resheeting of Burracoppin South Road.
- ▶ Stabilization of Nolan Street.

Looking *Forward*

- ▶ The Asset Management for Merredin's stormwater infrastructure is to be completed.
- ▶ An Asset Management Policy and Strategy currently being developed.
- ▶ The Road Hierarchy and Asset Management Plan for road infrastructure is to be completed, which will inform, all future road construction and maintenance works.
- ▶ Delivery of \$2.18M Merredin-Narembeen Road reconstruction.

2021/22 Budget

How Your Money is Spent



- General Purpose Funding
- Health
- Community Amenities
- Economic Services
- Law, Order & Public Safety
- Housing
- Governance
- Education & Welfare
- Recreation & Culture
- Other Property & Services
- Transport

How Services are Funding



- Rates
- Operating Grants, Subsidies & Contributions
- Fees and Charges
- Interest Earnings
- Other Revenue
- Profit on Asset Disposals
- Non-Operating Grants

Capital Expenditure



- General Purpose Funding
- Recreation & Culture
- Education & Welfare
- Governance
- Transport

Capital Income



- 300,000.00 General Purpose Funding
- 33,409.00 Housing

Previously, the Commission pre-paid a portion of the following years grant funding at the end of the previous financial year. While this has continued to occur, the portion pre-paid in 2021/22 was significantly higher. At this stage, it is expected that the portion of the advanced payment will continue at the 2021/22 percentage and will therefore not impact the 2022/23 figures.

Project Highlights



4 Year Summary Stats

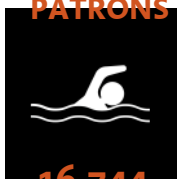
Shire of Merredin	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total Number of Rateable Properties	2348	2379	2398	2441
Minimum General Residential Rate	\$865	\$890	\$890	\$910
Rates Levied	\$4,126,707.43	\$4,268,263.69	\$4,329,412.62	\$4,570,226.33
Operating Revenue	*N/A	*N/A	*N/A	\$7,974,339
Capital Works Program Expenditure - Roads	\$1,779,659.87	\$1,577,452.14	\$2,914,122.32	\$1,735,874.21
Roads Maintenance Expenditure	\$926,898.52	\$1,183,158.98	\$1,166,554.47	1,504,997.63
Footpath Maintenance Expenditure	*N/A	\$158,000	\$209,000	\$177,556
Expenditure – Parks and Gardens	\$754,736.94	\$753,573.77	\$624,810.01	\$754,666.95
Full Time Equivalent Staff	42.8	42	37	41
Employment – Women %	37.5%	46.9%	42.3%	42%
Tenders Awarded	4 Tenders 4 Awarded \$163,851.44	*N/A	8 Tenders 6 Awarded \$2,549,858.42	5 Tenders 3 Awarded \$2,044,062.41
Planning Applications Approved	18	18	29	34
Building Permits Approved	37	33	45	19
Value (\$) of Permits Approved	\$13,208,713	\$2,357,480	\$4,954,043	\$1,873,085
Community Funding Provided (Grants)	\$26,259	\$28,418	\$26,389	\$39,816
Waste – Tonnage Collected	1082.29	1096.64	1131.95	1168.61
Tones of Recycled Materials Taken	220.74	209.06	190.59	145.03
Dog and Cat Registrations	83	*N/A	153	271
Patrons at the Library	8922	6997	6,523	6,548
Visitors to the CWVC	6759	6939	5626	6317
Patrons at the pool	18627	15584	16908	16774
Cummins theatre tickets sold	6392	3055	1,606	1,938
Waste water reuse volume (for irrigation)	86,369m ³	76,755m ³	86,672m ³	86,844m ³
Number of statutory inspections	*N/A	148	333	324
Expenditure on CBD	\$ 14,444.97	\$ 5,729.16	\$ 72,305.00	\$ 1,062,202.83
Department of Transport transactions	7653	6557	6937	6740
Number of Council resolutions	134	178	180	202

*N/A denotes unavailable figure for the corresponding reporting period



COMMUNITY *Services*

**SWIMMING POOL
PATRONS**



16,744

**REGIONAL LIBRARY
PATRONS**



6548

**VISITOR CENTRE
PATRONS**



6317

**EVENTS
HELD**



52

The Community Services team had a busy year organising, and subsequently holding, the Shire's new major event, Gateway Merredin. The festival was born through extensive engagement with the community whom had a vision to create an festival that highlighted the best of Merredin and drive tourism, while also celebrating the rich culture and history of the town and region.

Gateway Merredin was an opportunity for the community of Merredin to extend its generous hospitality to our neighbours across the State as they immersed themselves in a variety of offerings over the course of the festival weekend.

The inaugural 'Troops, trains and Treasures,' festival was held between September 24 - 26. The three - day event included 19 program events, which involved 21 community groups, with over 689 tickets sold. Events included illumination projections, live entertainment, unique historic tours and a public art trail.

The main objectives of the event were to:

- ▶ celebrate and raise the profile of Merredin's unique military involvement;
- ▶ increase economic development through tourism;
- ▶ create opportunities to upskill and collaborate with members of community groups; and
- ▶ support art and culture in Merredin and the Wheatbelt region.

Club Development

The Shire successfully obtained a grant from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to support local sporting clubs to build their organisational capacity and capability through accessible and flexible club development services.

Nine clubs were involved this project and participated in a series of workshops that which supported the development of a needs analysis, and then subsequently a club development manual which would support good governance, help clubs to build capacity, and increase overall participation.

Youth Week

Youth Fest was a free event to celebrate Youth Week, and was aimed at engaging young people residing in Merredin and the surrounding Wheatbelt towns. Local youth attended basketball clinics, art and craft activities, had fun on inflatables and food.

For this event, the Shire partnered with Merredin Youth Committee, WA Country Health Service, Merredin College, St Mays Primary School, and the Merredin Police. This event was financially supported by the Department of Communities.

Emergency Services

Through an AWARE grant, the Shire secured funding for an Emergency Services Officer, to deliver work as part of the Shire's renewed focus on emergency management.

This year the Shire has developed and reviewed vital plans and resources to support emergency management service, including:

- ▶ Develop of Local Emergency Management Hazard Register;
- ▶ Develop the Local Emergency Management Arrangements;
- ▶ Develop a Bushfire operating procedures manual;
- ▶ Develop a water sources booklet; and
- ▶ Create a terms of reference for the Local Emergency Management Committee.

Council endorsed the ongoing Emergency Services Officer position, which demonstrates the Shire's commitment to emergency management.

Community Funding Program

Each year, the Shire of Merredin provides financial and in-kind support to various community groups through its Community Grants Program. In the 2021/22 financial year, the Shire supported the following:

- ▶ Merredin Senior Centre Inc
- ▶ Merredin Museum & Historical Society
- ▶ Merredin Show
- ▶ Merredin Community Resource Centre
- ▶ Merredin Community Singers (A Choired Taste)
- ▶ Wheatbelt Endurance Riders Incorporated

2021/22 *Events and Programs*

JULY 2021

- ▶ Merredin Rep Club – Make Ups + Break Ups
- ▶ NAIDOC Week
- ▶ EWEYN Bootcamp
- ▶ Over 50's Information Session
- ▶ School Holiday Activities at the Library

AUGUST 2021

- ▶ Night Sports
- ▶ Arty Farty Party
- ▶ Vietnam Veterans - Long Tan Memorial Day
- ▶ Comedy Gold
- ▶ Morning Melodies
- ▶ Over 50's BINGO

SEPTEMBER 2021

- ▶ Matt Hale Comedy Hypnotist
- ▶ Merredin Country Music Weekend
- ▶ Farewell Friends featuring Justin Friend
- ▶ Don't you know who I am
- ▶ The Cicada Experience – school holiday drama workshop - Amphibian Production
- ▶ Gateway Merredin
 - WAYJO – Celebrating the Greats
 - Illuminart – Our Stories, Our Voices
 - The Australian AC/DC Experience
 - Swingin' at the Savoy – It's a Jazz Party
- ▶ School Holiday Activities at the Library
- ▶ Skate Sculpture Engagement Session

OCTOBER 2021

- ▶ School Holiday Activities at the Library
- ▶ Arty Farty Party
- ▶ Morning Melodies
- ▶ The Australian Beatles + Jumping Jack Flash
- ▶ Pink Morning Tea
- ▶ Over 50's BINGO
- ▶ Screen Printing with Louise Snook

NOVEMBER 2021

- ▶ Merredin Repertory Club – The Pirate Prince

- ▶ Remembrance Day
- ▶ NHPW – Merredin Mayhem
- ▶ Grug
- ▶ Over 50's BINGO

DECEMBER 2021

- ▶ Gala Night
- ▶ Morning Melodies
- ▶ Games Day

JANUARY 2022

- ▶ Citizen of the Year
- ▶ Australia Day Pool Party
- ▶ School Holidays Activities

FEBRUARY 2022

- ▶ Whisky + Boots: Mama Stitch Residency
- ▶ Over 50's BINGO

MARCH 2022

- ▶ Theatre 180 Sydney II
- ▶ Mama Stitch Residency + Shows
- ▶ Easter in the Park

APRIL 2022

- ▶ Mama Stitch Shows
- ▶ Anzac day
- ▶ A Choired Taste – An Evening of Song
- ▶ School Holiday Activities at the Library

MAY 2022

- ▶ The Motherhood – Mums Gone Wild Comedy
- ▶ Rep Club Workshops
- ▶ Amy Shark

JUNE 2022

- ▶ Morning Melodies
- ▶ Christian Brothers College Jazz Orchestra



THE
AUSTRALIAN
AC/DC
EXPERIENCE

Merredin Library

The Merredin Regional Library continues to be a popular service within the community, providing an array of activities that cater to both elderly people and young children. The Library also plays a vital role in providing Library members with educational resources and access to essential technology.

Located at the old North Merredin Primary School site, the Merredin Regional Library is run by a small team of dedicated staff who regularly host interactive workshops and reading challenges for local community members. The team also hold the annual Pink Morning Tea, raising money for the Cancer Council in support of breast cancer awareness.



This year, the team raised more than \$1,100 thanks to generous local businesses and wonderful volunteers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library introduced a pick-up and drop-off service while the building was closed. Due to its phenomenal success, this service continued during the 2021/22 financial year but expanded to also include a 'Housebound Service' for those who were isolating at home where staff would drop books off at the front door. Isolating patrons were also able to access digital resources through their own internet at home.

The Library team offered 12 school holiday programs throughout the year with 138 participants. The most popular activity for the kids was painting with spinners and shaving cream.

In total, the Library welcomed 6,548 visitors to the facility throughout the year, with a total of 11396 checked out items.

Other activities completed include:

- ▶ A new e-Resource was added to the collection with free access to all members;
- ▶ The Library hosted 10 Over 50's Bingo sessions with 88 participants;
- ▶ Library staff participated in two Early Years Network activities;
- ▶ The Library hosted three Work Placement students from Merredin College and one Return to Work participant;
- ▶ 1,215 new items and resources were added to the collection; and
- ▶ More than 200 items were added to the Local History Memorabilia Room.

Return on Investment

For every \$1 spent by the Shire for the Library services, members received the equivalent of \$1.71.



The Cummins Theatre (the Theatre) program of events in 2021/22 continued to be disrupted due to the closure of Western Australian borders and other pandemic lockdowns. Despite these challenges, a number of concerts and shows were able to proceed at the facility with COVID-19 precautions in place.

The Theatre again hosted numerous corporate bookings, workshops, weddings, funerals, and a range of other community groups who regularly hire the facility for activities such as dance classes, fitness sessions and corporate meetings.

Due to difficulties with backstage equipment during the month of July 2021, several events were either cancelled or postponed.

March and April saw Mama Stitch, with Georgia King and Mark Storen, Holly Garvey and Tom Garve. The visiting artists spent two weeks in Merredin collecting and recording stories from a selection of local residents before transforming the anecdotes into a series of exquisite performances celebrating mums and the special place they hold in our hearts. The stories were underscored with original music and songs that had been inspired by the recollections and memories shared.

March also saw the production of Sydney II by Theatre 180. Sydney II told the tale of Australia's greatest naval disaster – the sinking of HMAS Sydney II by the German raider, Kormoran in November 1941, with the loss of all lives.

In September, the Merredin community hosted Gateway Merredin. This event showcased a number of events featured at the Theatre including the Western Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra, the Australian AC/DC Experience, and Swingin' at the Savoy. On Sunday night, a movie night was also hosted by the Military Museum in the Theatre auditorium.

A double act was featured in October by the Australian Beatles and fellow rocker Jumping Jack Flash (Rolling Stones tribute) which featured Tommy Jennis as Mick Jagger and Rocky Evangelisti as Keith Richards, and the original 'Glimmer' Twins.

Throughout the year several shows specifically for the younger Merredin audience were presented including Grug by the Australian Children's Performing Arts Company Windmill Theatre Co.

Australian pop singer-songwriter Amy Shark hit the stage on a Sunday, 29 May 2022 to perform to a packed house at Cummins Theatre. The event was attended by close to 400 people hailing from all over the region, with some travelling almost four hours to see Amy perform in Merredin.

Merredin was the ninth stop on the West Australian leg of Amy's "See U Somewhere Australia" tour. The artist spoke at length about her desire to get out and see the regions, to tour to places outside of the major cities and how important that was for her.

Theatre Attendance

A total of 1,606 tickets were sold to events held at Cummins Theatre, with an additional 678 refunded for 9 cancelled shows due to boarder restrictions and on-going COVID-19 lockdowns.



Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre

A marked visitation increase from intrastate during state border closures in 2021 and interstate visitors returning once borders re-opened in March 2022. A smaller number than in pre-COVID-19 years of fly-drive internationals gaining confidence in returning to WA during the peak 2022 season.

Tourism Initiatives

Merredin Map Pad: A Merredin Map Pad printed January 2022 with Merredin Heritage Trail on reverse to encourage visitors to experience our history and heritage sites.

Rediscover Merredin Brochure: Updated, redesign and reprinted June 2022 key marketing tool for the Shire of Merredin, promoting Merredin's accommodation, museums and attractions, places to eat, tours and service businesses with advertising support from these businesses.

Central Wheatbelt Map & Guide – Along the Golden Pipeline: Updated, redesign and reprinted September 2022 on behalf of the WEROC Local Government's and the Shire of Cunderdin through financial co-contribution of participating shires. Promoting the museums and attractions, and accommodation along the Central Wheatbelt section of the Golden Pipeline Heritage Trail.

AGO/Wheatbelt Co-op Marketing: Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre continues to provide support to WEROC and Shire of Cunderdin in promoting the four Wheatbelt self-drive trails Road Trips through itineraries and attractions in print media and paid and organic social media channels. A cooperative marketing initiative with AGO and the 4 Self-drive trails in a Travel Feature in the West Australian March 2022.

Pioneers' Pathway Story Town Podcasts: Liaised with EO and provided contacts for Storytown stories in a Pioneers' Pathway and New Travel participating shire and grant funded project. Podcasts went live in early November 2022 through

the Storytown App.

Visitor Centre Stats and Highlights

- ▶ 6317 walk in visitors
- ▶ 1199 transwa bookings & enquiries
- ▶ 850 phone enquiries
- ▶ 217 email enquires
- ▶ 121 brochure mail-out requests
- ▶ A Monthly e-events newsletter emailed to distribution list
- ▶ Weekly email updates to Merredin businesses
- ▶ Continue to stock Merredin businesses with Merredin, CWB brochures
- ▶ Continue to post out requests for brochures to state VC's

District Olympic Swimming Pool

The Merredin District Olympic Swimming Pool opened to the public on 1 November 2021 and closed on 25 March 2022, with a 7% increase in patrons visiting the facility during the 2021/22 financial year. While some COVID-19 restrictions continued to apply, there was no disruption to facility events or programs.

Gold Waterwise Status

The Merredin Swimming Pool was once again awarded a Gold Waterwise Status for Waterwise Council Program for 2020/21.

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and Water Corporation runs the Waterwise Council Program to aid and support local governments to improve water efficiency.

The Shire was awarded Gold Status for demonstrating a sustained commitment in reducing water use and implementing effective water management. This was achieved through the use of a data logger which enables the Shire to regularly monitor the Pool's water usage throughout the day.

Pool Attendance

In total, 16,774 patrons visited the pool over the duration of the 5-month season, with 79 season passes sold and a total income of \$41,073.38 (ex GST).

Swim Club had a very successful season with 60 children signing up for membership, meanwhile

school carnivals were able to be return after being cancelled the previous year due to COVID—19.

Vacation swimming also returned, with 3.5 weeks of swimming lessons offered to children in the community.

Pool Events

The Merredin District Olympic Pool hosted a number of activities including;

- ▶ Australia Day Pool Party
- ▶ EWEYN Christmas Pool Party
- ▶ Vacation Swimming
- ▶ School Swimming Lessons
- ▶ 2 x School Swimming Carnivals
- ▶ 2 x Interschool Swimming Carnivals

COVID-19 Measures

Hand sanitiser continued to be provided at the pool facility, and where applicable, visitors were asked to scan the check in QR code or complete the sign in sheet.





DEVELOPMENT *Services*

**BUILDING PERMITS
ISSUED**



34

**PLANNING
APPROVALS**



19

**POOL BARRIER
INSPECTIONS**



17

**VALUE OF
DEVELOPMENT**



\$1,873,085

The focus of the development services team was to provide for the efficient assessment and approval of building applications submitted to the Shire of Merredin, while also ensuring compliance with statutory codes.

Development *Services*

The key achievements for the Development Services team have included:

- ▶ The efficient processing of applications for development approval as well as applications for a building permit;
- ▶ Providing timely advice to ratepayers on development and building proposals;
- ▶ Guidance on required documentation that needs to be incorporated into applications for development and building permit approval;
- ▶ Responding to complaints relating to dilapidated buildings and structures as well as concerns relating to substandard accommodation; and
- ▶ A firm, but fair, approach to enforcement of statutory compliance requirements.

Environmental *Health*

The focus for environmental health was food safety and public health including the inspection of food premises, lodging houses, hairdressers and public buildings.

The key achievements in this department include:

- ▶ Targeted mosquito monitoring to prevent mosquito breeding activity;
- ▶ Improvement of public health by engaging with members of the public as well as implementation of enforcement measures;
- ▶ Issued several unfit for human habitation notices and building orders relating to a number of premises in the Shire of Merredin;
- ▶ Implemented regular inspections of private swimming pool barrier fencing to prevent accidental drowning by children;
- ▶ Completed 32 public building inspections and 63 food business inspections; and
- ▶ Issued 27 stall holder permits to a number of vendors.

Waste *Management*

During 2021/22, the Shire produced;



1168.6
tonne

145.0
tonne

Ranger *Services*

Throughout 2021/22, the Shire's ranger services continued business as usual with parking patrols, burning permits issued, animal control, phone enquiries, and pound services.

Fire Control: During the bush fire season 49 infringements were issued in relation to noncompliance under Section 33(3) of the Bush Fires Act 1954 for failure to comply with the Shire of Merredin's firebreak order.

Dogs: The Ranger received 245 customer calls regarding dogs, and 30 dog related complaints. There were six dog related infringements issued for the year. In total, 182 new dogs were registered, and 26 dogs were impounded by the Shire.

Cats: The Ranger received 163 customer calls regarding cats, while the Shire registered 89 new cats and impounded 50 cats.

Parking: The Ranger completed a total of 105 parking patrols.

Vehicles: Three abandoned vehicles were reported to the Ranger, one of these vehicles was removed / impounded.

Call Outs: The Ranger attended 10 after hours call-outs



ENGINEERING *Services*

**\$ SPENT ON
FOOTPATHS**



\$277k

**\$ SPENT ON
ROADS**



\$3m

**\$ SPENT ON PARKS
AND GARDENS**



\$630k

**\$ SPENT ON
STREET LIGHTING**



\$159k

It has been a big year for the Engineering team, as we took on the CBD Revitalisation project, starting in Pioneer Park, along with several other road and infrastructure projects. The team has had faced some challenges due to COVID-19 and current economic conditions, but has continued to work hard to move the Shire forward in our maintenance scheduling, asset management planning and project delivery.

Town Maintenance

It has been another busy and productive year for the town maintenance crew performing their duties that include street and footpath maintenance, rubbish collection, gardening, slashing, spraying and the maintenance of the town parks, gardens and recreational spaces. They had the added challenges that COVID-19 brought which included sanitising the CBD and our parks daily for several months. The team were involved with a number of events and works including the Gateway Festival, Gala Night, works on South Avenue and several improvements throughout the Shire's parks and gardens.

Works and Services

Council has continued with the commitment to enhance public open spaces, roads, footpaths, and drainage infrastructure within the Shire. This is achieved through the utilisation of its own financial resources and funding from the following external sources received in 2021/2022;

- ▶ Roads to Recovery Program (Federal);
- ▶ Regional Road Group (State);
- ▶ Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network (Federal and State);
- ▶ Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (Federal); and
- ▶ Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) (Federal).

Construction Projects

Footpaths: Renewal and construction of new concrete footpaths took place on the following streets as part of the Shire annual footpath program:

- ▶ South Avenue
- ▶ Coronation Street
- ▶ Cohn Street
- ▶ Todd Street

The Shire's annual footpath program aims to

improve access and walkability throughout the town by constructing new footpaths and pram ramps as well as renewing existing ageing assets.

Merredin Cemetery Irrigation System: The installation of the new recycled water storage and irrigation system at the Merredin Cemetery was completed. This project was co-funded by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (DWER) Community Water Supply Program (CWSP).

The project included the installation of a new 362 kL storage tank and a stand-alone solar recirculation and irrigation system. To connect the new storage tank to the existing Merredin Recycled Water Network, the Shire's works crew completed approximately 3 km of trenching. This has enabled the Shire to reduce its use of scheme water, saving approximately 6,720 kL per year, as well as improving water efficiency by improving the irrigation system pressure.

Pioneer Park: Construction of the Pioneer Park redevelopment began in May 2022, marking the commencement of the construction of the first stage of the CBD Redevelopment Project. This stage includes the construction of a new car park and revitalised recreation space, providing a better access to both the Military and Railway Museums and drawing visitors into Merredin off Great Eastern Highway.

The vehicle bridge and car park phase of the project has been completed with the remaining works to be finalised for a formal opening in late October 2022. This project was co-funded with funding being contributed by the Federal Government through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program and the BBRF..



Road Construction

Grading Program: The Shire's maintenance grading program focused on high priority road such as bus routes and high traffic roads, completing repairs as required after storm and rain events.

Roads to Recovery: The Roads to Recovery Federal Funding Program was used to complete \$594,339 of road works in the 2021/2022 financial year. This included:

- ▶ Asphalt reseals on Coronation St and Hay St;
- ▶ The reconstruction and stabilisation of Nolan Street;
- ▶ The repair and pathing of Knungajin Road; and
- ▶ Shire contribution towards the reconstruction and resealing of South Avenue (completed by Main Roads).

Regional Road Group: The Shire of Merredin received \$205,832 through Regional Road Group state funding which was put toward the following projects:

- ▶ The widening of Bulls Head Road between Merredin-Narembeen Road and the Collgar Wind Farm Lookout
- ▶ The continued reconstruction and resheeting of Burracoppin South Road

Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Route: During the 2021/2022 financial year \$649,116 of funding was received through the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network funding program for the upgrade of Merredin - Narembeen Road. This program is jointly funded by both Federal and State Government. This funding was utilised to finish the first 7km of pgrade works as well and complete the geotechnical assessment and pavement design for the next construction stages.

Building Better Regions Fund: In 2021/22 the Shire secured \$2,139,309 of funding through the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF), round five. The BBRF program is designed to deliver

funding for regional infrastructure projects and community development activities. The Shire received the funding for the revitalisation of Pioneer Park and Merredin Town Square as part of the larger Merredin CBD Redevelopment, the BBRF funding will be matched by the Shire. The projects aim to renew the existing open and community spaces to contribute positively to economic, social and community life in Merredin. These projects will improve quality of life for residents and visitors to Merredin, by creating a vibrant area that will encourage people to meet, socialise, move, and explore while still retaining Merredin's unique regional identity.

Local Roads and Community Infrastructure: The federal initiative to help the economy and communities bounce back from the impacts of COVID-19 saw the inclusion of two more funding phases. In addition to the \$573,735 received in the 2020/2021 financial year as part of LRCI Phase One, the Shire of Merredin was allocated \$470,945 for Phase Two, and \$1,147,470 for Phase Three. These two additional stages will be used towards the revitalising of Pioneer Park and Apex Park, respectively.

EV Charging Station: The Merredin has been selected for the installation of an Electrical Vehicle (EV) charging station, as part of the State Government's \$21 million EV fast charging network. This project will create Australia's longest EV fast charging network by installing charging stations at 49 locations across the state. Installation of the charging stations is scheduled to begin in November 2022 with the network fully operational by January 2024. The Shire has been liaising with Synergy to formalise the design and formal agreement for installation of the charging

station within the carpark opposite Barrack Street, west of the Town Centre.

Natural Resource *Management*

The Waterwise Council program is a jointly run program between the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and Water Corporation to support local governments to improve water efficiency and help create waterwise communities. The Shire was again re-endorsed as a Waterwise Council, an achievement that recognises the work of the Shire, leading by example, and inspiring residents to be waterwise.

Approximately 1000 trees were planted along the Burracoppin–Campion roadside, which included species such as salmon gum, tan wattle, jam trees, native apricots, boree and salt bush. The road was selected as the location of this project because of its low amount of vegetation, its proximity to existing remnants of vegetation, and the relatively low use of the road by traffic meant it was a safe place for volunteers to plant. The tree planting was conducted as part of the Shire’s Recovering Roadside Conservation Values Pilot Project, which is supported through funding from the Western Australian Government’s State Natural Resource Management Program.

The Shire was selected to partner with Murdoch University and Water Corporation for a research project focused on sustainable groundwater supply options using on-farm desalination technology led by the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD). As part of the

project, the Shire will be provided with a small-scale desalination unit to treat the saline ground water currently abstracted from aquifers below the Merredin Townsite. This saline water is abstracted to manage the water table, preventing salinity damage to infrastructure and water logging. Due to the saline nature of this water, it is currently unused and disposed of directly to drying beds. The desalination unit will enable the Shire to treat this saline water for utilisation in Merredin’s irrigation network as well as being made available for fire mitigation, construction projects and as an off-farm community water source.

The Shire applied for, and has since been successful for outside of the reporting period, a grant from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) through the Community Water Supply Program (CWSP) for the installation of the WaterSmart Farms desalination unit. This grant will partly fund the introduction of new infrastructure including a standpipe, upgrade of the existing hard stand, a solar power system, water pump, security fencing, and all required pipework.

The Shire has since applied for the second round of CWSP grants for the upgrade of the Merredin recycled water network. We are expected to receive notification if successful in February 2023.



CORPORATE *Services*

**ADMIN FINANCIAL
TRANSACTIONS**



4135

**DoT
TRANSACTIONS**



6740

**FTE
EMPLOYEES**



41

**WEBSITE
USERS**



32,000

The Corporate Services team encompasses many aspects of the organisation, including Finance, Records, Cemetery management, Human Resources, Customer Service, Department of Transport and Information Technology. In 2021/22 the Corporate Services team included eight staff members and was led by the Executive Manager Corporate Service, Mr Geoff Garside until Mr Lindon Mellor commenced acting in the role in early 2022.

The team had a largely operational focus during the period, finalising the 2020/21 Audit processes and managing and maintaining the budget. The decision to hold rate increases in the 2020/21 financial year due to the effects of COVID-19 had a large impact on the overall budget of the Shire and the flow on effects were felt throughout the 2021/22 year. A structural change was also implemented within the budget and CEACA's assets were written out of the Shire's financials. Increases to inflation and construction costs have also meant that the Shire has had to move cautiously and focus on expending grants and completing acquittals to ensure funding streams were reliable.

Customer Service

The customer service team answered calls, and also responded to emails and served customers face to face throughout the period. An outbreak of COVID-19 in the community meant that staff worked from home where possible for a period of time and face to face service was reduced.

Throughout 2021/22 there were a large number of service requests made, including 112 Snap Send Solve reports. On average, the team completed monetary transactions for 17 Council customers per day, equating to roughly 4135 per year, and a further 27 Department of Transport customers, totalling 6740 per year.

Phone, email and front counter enquiries that do not result in a monetary transaction are unable to be tracked, though it is estimated that the figures listed above would close to double if they could be reported.

Records Management

Work was also commenced on updating the Shire's Record Keeping Plan, and it is hoped that this will be finalised by the end of 2022. The current plan, as

adopted by Council at its September 2015 meeting, is in operation. Incoming correspondence is captured onto the electronic records system and then allocated to the relevant officer for attention whilst the hardcopy is filed. Work continues to educate officers of the procedure for recording incoming and outgoing correspondence via email. During 2021/22, the Shire of Merredin created 3366 new records.

Human Resources

During the 2021/22 financial year, the total number of Shire employees was 51, with 38 employed in full-time roles, one in a part-time position and 12 in a casual capacity. This equated to a full-time equivalent of 41 staff.

Executive Staff

Three executive staff members commenced working with the Shire during the reporting period;

- ▶ Lisa Clack, Chief Executive Officer
- ▶ Lindon Mellor, Executive Manager Engineering Services
- ▶ Chloe Townsend, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Employee Initiatives

The Shire is committed to the mental health and overall wellbeing of its staff. During the period, flu vaccinations were offered to all employees to support their health and wellbeing through flu season.

Councillor Remuneration

Details regarding the remuneration awarded to the Shire President, Deputy Shire President, and Councillors is contained on Pages 31 and 32 of the financial report.

Executive Remuneration

Regulation 19B (2) of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 states the Annual Report is to include the number of employees entitled to an annual salary of \$130,000 or more, and the number of those employees that fall within each band of \$10,000 over \$130,000. As at 30 June 2022, the Shire had five employees entitled to an annual salary of more than \$130,000:

Salary Range	No. of Employees
\$130,001—\$140,000	4
\$140,001—\$150,000	-
\$150,001—\$160,000	-
\$160,001—\$170,000	-
\$170,001—\$180,000	-
\$180,001—\$190,000	1

In accordance with changed reporting requirements, it is advised the Chief Executive Officer's total remuneration package totalled \$224,875 inclusive of salary and other benefits.

Competitive Neutrality

It is the Shire's responsibility to determine whether it is engaged in "significant business activities" within the context of its operations and therefore whether it is required to apply the competitive neutrality principles.

Local government is only required to implement the above principles to the extent that the benefits to be realised from implementation outweigh the costs in respect of individual business activities exceeding an annual income of \$500,000. Within these criteria, the Shire has not identified any business activities for the 2021/22 financial year.

Register of Complaints

In accordance with Sections 5.53(2) and 5.121 of the Local Government Act 1995, the Annual Report is required to disclose the number of complaints of minor breach received each year.

There were no complaints received in the 2021/22 reporting period.

Freedom of Information

The Western Australian Freedom of Information Act 1992 provides the public with the right to apply for access to documents held by the Shire of Merredin.

There were no Freedom of Information Applications received in the reporting period.

Compliance Audit Return

All local governments are required to carry out an annual Compliance Audit Return (CAR) for the period 1 January to 31 December as specified by the *Local Government Act 1995*. The 2021 completed CAR was considered by the Audit Committee at its March Audit Committee meeting held on 22 March 2022.

Recommendations from that meeting were then adopted by Council at their Ordinary Council Meeting on 29 March 2022.

Council Policies

There were no new Council Policies adopted by Council in 2021/22.

Register of Delegated Authority

During the reporting period, Delegation DL4.12 - Payments from the Municipal or Trust Funds was reviewed by Council.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Throughout the 2021/22 financial year, the Shire held a number of community events attended by more than 500 people. These events included the inaugural Gateway Merredin Festival, the Merredin Gala Night, Australia Day pool party and the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. These events complied with AS 1428.1 with respect to access and provision of facilities for persons with a disability.

The Shire is currently redeveloping Pioneer Park as part of the broader redevelopment of the Merredin Central Business District. The

Redevelopment of Pioneer Park (Stage 1) incorporates a new carpark facility provided with dedicated ACROD parking bay.

The Shire has spent \$115,000 of its own funds in the provision of new footpaths and road crossing points within the Shire (see below).



The Shire has commenced a review of all its ACROD parking bay facilities throughout Merredin. This review and associated implementation of the resulting recommendations will take place in the 2022/23 financial year.

There has been a continuation of the review and associated improvements to the Shire website to make it more intuitive and easier to navigate by persons with a disability. The website has been developed to meet W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA. The website provides updated information about Council function, facilities and services including contact information for executive staff and elected members and complaints procedures. The website has a high contrast function as well as the ability to increase font size for persons with visual difficulties. It also incorporates quick link icons to make the website easier to navigate.

The Shire has spent \$48,000 in the 2021/22 financial year on improvements to the audio / visual conferencing facilities at the Council Chambers and Function Room, thus facilitating the ability of persons with a disability to attend meetings and functions remotely.

As part of the preparation of the Shire of Merredin DAIP 2020/2025, the Shire consulted a range of stakeholders and local community representatives. One of the main areas identified as needing to be addressed was the lack of a wheelchair accessible platform at the Merredin Railway Station. Whilst the platform forms part of state government infrastructure, the Shire has lobbied the Minister for Transport, the Public Transport Authority and the Department of Communities with respect to the provision of a suitable platform that can adequately cater for needs of persons with a mobility related disability.

Shire officers met earlier in the year on site at the Merredin Railway Station together with Mr Tim Woolerson, General Manager (TransWa), and various contractors involved with the tender for the construction of the second railway platform at the Merredin Railway Station. Discussions with TransWA in late June 2022, have revealed that the new second platform will be installed at the Merredin Railway Station early in the 2022/23 financial year.

Upon completion this will be a great benefit to the local community, especially persons with a disability and the aged who currently experience difficulty accessing the train services in Merredin.



Media and *Communications*

The Shire is committed to the timely and accurate dissemination of news and information to the Merredin community. Each year, the Shire delivers key messages across a number of platforms, including social media, the corporate website, notice boards, local and state newspapers, as well as signage, electronic signs, and through an SMS text service.

During 2021/22, the Shire's social media accounts reached more than 60,000 people, with our total following growing to 3887 with the top locations being Merredin, Perth, Bruce Rock and Northam.

Other communications key achievements included;

- ▶ Creation and establishment of Gateway Merredin website and social media channels;
- ▶ Development of a Communications Plan for the CBD Redevelopment;
- ▶ Delivering the Gala Night marketing program; and
- ▶ Creation of a new Shire pull-up banner design.

Corporate *Website*

The Shire's corporate website continues to be the most accessed communications tool, having a total of 31,418 unique visitors during 2021/22, an increase of 36% from 2020/21. Of these, 83.7% were comprised of new users.

Sessions totalled 48,000, with the average duration being 1 minute and 23 seconds and 1.41 pages viewed per visit.

This year, the Shire implemented the Fire Danger Warning module on the main page, allowing website users quick and easy access to the fire danger ratings for the corresponding day.

Community News and *Information*

The Shire produces a monthly newsletter in both a digital and hard copy format that includes information regarding Shire projects, upcoming event information, public

notices, employment opportunities, and articles. In total, the Shire has a total of 445 subscribers, and the average open rate was 45%.

In 2021/22, the Shire composed 10 newsletters, a decrease from previous years due to a vacant media position due to employee maternity leave from April 2021 onwards.



Shire of Merredin

FINANCIAL *Report*

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JULY

Contents

Statement by Chief Executive Officer.....	
Statement of Comprehensive Income by Nature or Type.....	
Statement of Comprehensive Income by Program.....	
Statement of Financial Position.....	
Statement of Changes in Equity.....	
Statement of Cash Flows.....	
Rate Setting Statement.....	
Index of Notes to the Financial Report.....	
Independent Auditor's Report.....	

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merredin.wa.gov.au

📍 Cnr King and Barrack Streets, Merredin WA 6415

Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre

(08) 9041 1666

wheatbelttourism.com

📍 85 Barrack Street Merredin WA 6415

Cummins Theatre

(08) 9041 1325

cumminstheatre.com.au

📍 31 Bates Street Merredin WA 6415

Merredin Library

(08) 9041 1222

📍 22 Coronation Street Merredin WA 6415

District Olympic Swimming Pool

(08) 6140 1257

📍 1 Throssell Rd, Merredin WA 6415

Merredin Regional Community & Leisure Centre

(08) 9041 3033

merredinleisurecentre.com.au

📍 Bates Street Merredin WA 6415



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