

Local Emergency Management Committee Minutes
5 Feb 2026 at 3.00 pm
Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Cnr Barrack Street and King Street, Merredin

1.0 Attendance	
Cr Phil Van Der Merwe	Shire of Merredin – Chair / Merredin VFRS
Craig Watts	Shire of Merredin
Sheree Lowe	Shire of Merredin / Merredin VFRS
Martina Hussey	Shire of Merredin
Greg Hart	WA Police
Ashley Smith	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Nigel Hasson	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Shelby Robinson	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Michael Phillips	Department of Communities
Alan Matthews	St John Ambulance
Di Dixon	WA Country Health Service
Lesley Watson	WA Country Health Service
Kylie Cattaway	Merredin College
David Hamersley	St Mary's School
Caine Denyer	Merredin Residential College
Terrence King	Western Power
Gren Putland	Main Roads WA
Renaë Kesic	Thrive West
Tania Darby-Gethin	REED Merredin
Karalyn Walsh	REED Merredin
2.0 Apologies	
Paul Wanless	Merredin Bush Fire Services
Laurent Marsol	Department of Parks and Wildlife
Troy Scanlon	Thrive West

3.0 Welcome

3.1 Opening of Meeting

The Chair opened the meeting at 1507 hrs and welcomed all in attendance. Attendees were invited to introduce themselves.

4.0 Good Practice Presentation

4.1 REED Merredin – evacuation and emergency processes

REED Merredin are the local early education centre, caring for children from 0-5 years of age. They were invited to share their evacuation practices and processes, and how they adjust their processes to accommodate the diverse needs and limitations of their vulnerable clientele.

REED Merredin manager Karalyn Walsh and cluster manager Tania Darby-Gethin presented to the group.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

***Motion:** That the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee held on 2 October 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.*

Moved: A Smith
CARRIED

Seconded: M Phillips

5.0 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Nil

6.0 Correspondence

6.1 Incoming Correspondence

Email from Michelle Villeneuve – Merredin DIEP report (*See item 7.3*)
Email from Megan Lehaney – P-CEP course guidelines and DIEP next steps
Email from Shelby Robinson – Wheatbelt DEMC dates – Meetings & Activities

6.2 Outgoing Correspondence

Nil

7.0 Standing Items (Submitted at each Meeting)

7.1 Update of Contacts and Resources Register (*Attachment 2*)

- **Brian Wall** removed as Executive Manager Infrastructure Services for the Shire of Merredin.
- **Melissa Warren** removed as Merredin Regional Community & Leisure Centre Manager and replaced by **Warren Liebenberg**. Mobile phone number updated.

- **Jan Brooks** added as Merredin Community Resource Centre Coordinator. Mobile phone number added.
- **Aaron Cuthbert** removed as A/Area Officer (Central Wheatbelt) for DFES and replaced by **Nigel Hasson**.
- **Philippa Davey** and **Sally Trunfio** removed, **Emergency Activations 24/7** added and **Jo Spadaccini** details updated for Department of Communities.
- Updated SES resource information.

7.2 Change of Positions/Leave and Acting Arrangements Notification

- **Brian Wall** has resigned as Executive Manager Infrastructure Services for the Shire of Merredin.
- **Warren Liebenberg** is the new Merredin Regional Community & Leisure Centre Manager.
- **Nigel Hasson** has replaced **Aaron Cuthbert** as A/Area Officer (Central Wheatbelt) for DFES.

7.3 Report and/or debrief of any LEMC exercise(s)

Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning (DIEP) Forum Report (Attachment 3)

The Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning (DIEP) forum facilitators have sent through a summary document of the discussion at the forum held in Merredin on 25th August.

Due to time constraints, this item will be deferred until the May meeting.

8.0 General Business

8.1 Agency briefings (precirculated)

Emergency Relief and Support (Department of Communities) (**Attachment 4**)

8.2 Around the table – agency briefings

Merredin VFRS

Enjoyed a mild summer so far. A lot of fire activity in other areas of the state, but have been extremely lucky here. Great crew at the moment.

WACHS - Aged care

There have been a number of instances of having to evacuate aged residents across the Wheatbelt over the fire season, including at Boddington and Jurien Bay. There have also been extended power outages in the Dalwallinu area. Holding a debrief and lessons learned from that next week. All in all preparation has been fairly good.

Merredin Police

Staffing numbers are currently really good. Sgt Lindsey Collett is moving on to OIC spot at Quairading, but Blair and Greg are still around. From an emergency point of view, only been involved in one incident, a HAZMAT/RCR near Kellerberrin, some interesting learnings. Wants to discuss appropriate processes with VFRS. Potential for a desktop exercise discussing how agencies transfer responsibility.

St John Ambulance

The Chair congratulated Alan on having been made substantive Station Manager for Merredin after several years acting in the role.

Volunteer numbers are steady. Two volunteers are undertaking MIMS training in Perth.

Merredin SES

The unit has three new volunteers. Incidents and searches the unit has assisted with have been mainly outside of Merredin. Most major incidents recently have occurred outside of the region, but our staff have been supporting those incidents. Otherwise, just continuing training.

Merredin Hospital

Significant staff shortages over January, but a new doctor has started recently. The ED has seen a lot of admissions for meth use recently. It has put a lot of pressure on staff, to the point that Di thought she was going to lose some staff. It has settled down now.

Been working on plans for bushfire and keeping up to date on emergency planning.

Department of Communities

Incredibly busy high threat season with 22 activations for Level 2 incidents (compared to 16 last year). Some recovery efforts are ongoing in Boddington and Wandering.

Go Bags are up and running for evacuees, and feedback has been very positive, that the packs give people a sense of independence and control back. As soon as people arrive at an evacuation centre they are given a day bag and a night bag, containing items like a toothbrush, sheets, towels, etc.

A reminder that the 24/7 activation number (0418 943 835) is the only number to activate the Department of Communities.

Shire of Merredin

Merredin Bush Fire Brigades are getting 2 new bushfire trucks in the coming month or so. Big thanks to A/AO Aaron and the DFES team for pumping on the brakes so as not to get new vehicles delivered during harvest, and losing a familiar vehicle during the high threat period.

Western Power

Really good high threat season so far, with no prolonged outages, no escalations, and strong staffing levels.

Merredin Residential College

Student numbers have dropped this year, with 18 residents. In previous years numbers have floated between 30 and 45 residents, with beds for up to 72 students. Emergency planning is quite good, and false alarm callouts have dropped. They have to do evacuation and lockdown drills every term. Good to hear some of the ideas from the REED talk.

The Chair congratulated Merredin Residential College on their progress in the emergency space during his time with Merredin VFRS. In previous years when VFRS turned out to a

false call, kids would be mucking around, or not fully evacuated. Now, every student takes it seriously, is outside with a blanket and pillow, all counted and accounted for.

DFES DEMA

District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC) dates for the year have been set and sent to LGs. At the upcoming DEMC on 25th February, Telstra is scheduled to present. A calendar of activities and events across the district has been put together including continuing with DIEP work, the continuing Emergency Webinar lunchtime series, and looking at doing a digital literacy programme across the Wheatbelt. Merredin has high digital exclusion, low digital inclusion. Shelby will reach out to Craig with more information.

Thrive West

An NDIS agent, disability support. Staffing-wise, they have someone for every client at the moment. Try and train staff as best they can, mentoring, training, tabletop scenario exercises at staff meetings every quarter.

Have sound sensitive clients who they wouldn't recommend taking to the MRCLC in the event of an evacuation.

Merredin College

Currently fully staffed, but two positions will probably need to be filled for term 2. Student numbers are around 500. Had to have two lockdowns last year, and have recently had a debrief for those. Large group of staff did first aid training last year, so they're in a better position to cope with internal incidents.

REED – also have a requirement that all have to have a first aid certificate and CPR renewed every 12 months.

Merredin Residential College – all supervisors have to have first aid/CPR.

9.0 Presentations or Proposed Exercises

9.1 Emergency management discussion exercise

Terrence King, Western Power

Terrence ran a scenario based around a severe electrical supply disruption.

10.0 Next Meeting

Motion: *That the next LEMC Meetings be held on the following dates:*

Date and Time	Venue
Thursday, 7 May 2026 at 3pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 6 August 2026 at 3pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 1 October 2026 at 3pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 4 February 2027 at 3pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers

Moved: D Dixon

Seconded: A Smith

11.0 Close

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance and closed the meeting at 5:31pm.

