

SHIRE OF
MERREDIN
INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT



ADVOCACY *Prospectus*

2026

ABOUT Merredin





Located 262 kilometres east of Perth in Western Australia's Central East Wheatbelt, the Shire of Merredin spans 3,296km² and services a population of approximately 3,335 residents across the towns of Merredin, Hines Hill, Burracoppin and Muntadgin, along with surrounding rural localities. Positioned at the crossroads of major regional transport routes, Merredin functions as the primary commercial, retail and administrative centre for the Central and Eastern Wheatbelt, supporting a wide regional catchment well beyond its residential population.

The Shire has experienced steady population growth of 7.8% over the past five years, reflecting increasing economic confidence, employment stability and improved liveability. Merredin maintains high workforce participation and provides a strong service base including government agencies, health services, education facilities, industrial operations and small-to-medium enterprises. This diversity underpins economic resilience and reinforces Merredin's role as a strategic regional hub.

Agriculture remains the foundation of the local economy. The region is a significant producer of wheat, barley and canola, supported by a strong sheep farming sector. Merredin is a key receival site for Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH), making it an integral part of Western Australia's grain export supply chain. Its location along the Great Eastern Highway — carrying approximately 2,250 vehicles daily — together with regular Transwa Prospector and Merredin Link rail services, provides reliable connectivity for freight, business and workforce mobility.

Merredin is also emerging as a renewable energy powerhouse in regional Western Australia. The \$750 million Collgar Wind Farm, the largest single-stage wind farm in the Southern Hemisphere, alongside the Merredin Solar Farm, demonstrates the region's capacity to host large-scale infrastructure projects. Building on this momentum, the \$200 million Merredin Big Battery Project will further strengthen grid reliability and energy storage capacity, positioning the Shire at the forefront of the State's energy transition. Collectively, these projects represent more than \$1 billion in renewable energy investment within the district.

Beyond its economic strengths, Merredin offers a high quality of life supported by significant recent public investment, including a \$12 million CBD redevelopment delivering upgraded public spaces, enhanced walkability and improved community infrastructure. Natural attractions such as Merredin Peak and Tamma Parkland provide recreational opportunities and biodiversity assets, while the town's World War II military history and well-preserved heritage buildings contribute to a distinctive regional identity. Cultural facilities, including the historic Cummins Theatre, further support community vibrancy and regional visitation.

With strong infrastructure, strategic location, renewable energy leadership and a diversified regional economy, Merredin presents a compelling investment environment anchored in stability, growth and long-term opportunity.

Merredin COMMUNITY

Population



2021
2021, ABS Census

3,119

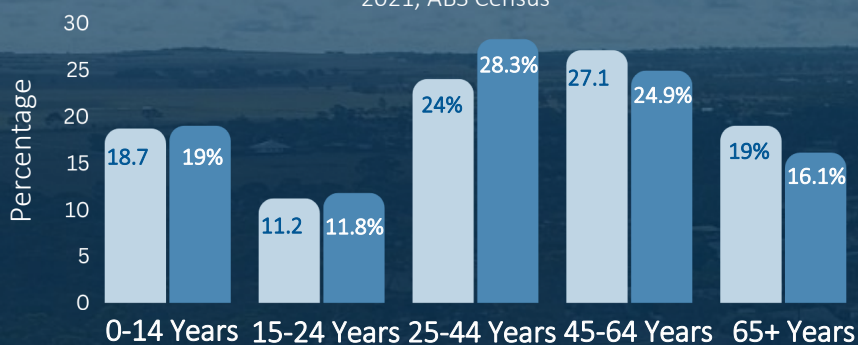
↑ 7.9%

2026
.idcommunity

3,365

Age Profile

2021, ABS Census



● Shire of Merredin ● WA

Median Age

2021, ABS Census



41

People

2021, ABS Census

51.4% Male



48.6% Female



Disability

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5.7%

Aboriginal / Torres Strait

Islander People

2021, ABS Census



5.4%

Employment Rate

2021, ABS Census



95.4%

Families

2021, ABS Census



760

Average Household Size

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2.22

Languages

2021, ABS Census



6.3% of households
use a non-English
language

Industries

14.9% - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 10.7% - Health Care and Social Assistance | 9.7% - Retail Trade
3.6% - Education and Training

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.”



Council PLAN

The Shire of Merredin is committed to driving sustainable growth, economic diversity, and a vibrant regional lifestyle. Guided by our core mission, "Innovating the Wheatbelt," we are proactively shaping a resilient future that honours our rich heritage while capturing forward-looking investment opportunities.

Like many key regional centres, Merredin faces structural challenges, particularly around regional housing availability, climate adaptability, and infrastructure renewal. Overcoming these hurdles requires targeted, strategic partnerships. As the undisputed commercial and service hub for the Central East Wheatbelt, Merredin benefits from a robust agricultural foundation, an expanding tourism sector, and pioneering large-scale renewable energy installations - including major solar and wind farms, and state-of-the-art battery storage systems scheduled to begin construction in

2026.

To maximise this economic momentum, our strategic focus centres on population growth and community liveability. We are actively creating a town where people choose to settle long-term. This means deploying capital into the revitalisation of our Central Business District (CBD), enhancing public open spaces like Apex Park | Danjoo Waabininy Boodja, and continually upgrading our transport and logistics networks.

Against this backdrop, the Shire of Merredin Council Plan 2025–2035 serves as our definitive blueprint. This integrated planning framework ensures that every investment, policy, and action directly aligns with the long-term economic and social aspirations of our region.

THE Pillars



Community & Culture

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



Economy & Growth

Merredin is a regional hub that thrives with a job-rich and multi-faceted economy, building on local strengths and supporting local and regional business growth.



Environment & Sustainability

Merredin looks after the natural environment and supports innovation to improve sustainability.



Communication & Leadership

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



Places & Spaces

Merredin is an attractive regional town, with inviting public spaces for residents and visitors to access and share.



Transport & Networks

Merredin has a well-connected infrastructure network, linking people and industry both regionally, and nationally.

Merredin POOL



Operating from November to March/April the Merredin District Olympic Swimming Pool (MDOSP) is more than just a leisure facility; it is an essential service for the Eastern Wheatbelt. It provides a rare 50m Olympic-sized pool to the region, supported by a water slide with a splash pool and a covered toddler pool featuring a fountain.

A Critical Need for Renewal

Since its opening in 1956, the Merredin District Olympic Swimming Pool (MDOSP) has served as a vital hub for health, recreation, and social cohesion. However, as the facility nears 70 years of service, it has reached a critical "end of asset life" stage. The infrastructure currently displays severe structural deterioration, corrosion, and plant failure risks.

Without major renewal or redevelopment, the facility cannot remain operational, presenting significant safety and compliance risks that threaten to leave the region without its primary cooling, exercise, and social hub during harsh Western Australian summers.

The MDOSP is far more than a recreational asset; it is essential community infrastructure. As one of the few 50-metre pools in the region, it serves as a key

aquatic venue for teaching local children essential water safety and life skills, as well as hosting long course swimming competitions.

An investment in Merredin's Pool is a direct investment in regional equity and public health. Demographic analysis highlights that Merredin's population is ageing, with more than half of all residents living with a long-term health condition. In addition, the town experiences higher rates of disability, chronic health conditions, and socio-economic disadvantage than the Western Australian average, indicators that are even more pronounced within our local Indigenous community.

The \$15 million investment will allow the Shire to construct a new facility for our community.

The STATS

SWIMMING POOL PATRONS

2021/22: **16,774**

2022/23: **15,093**

2023/24: **11,572**

2024/25: **10,633**



AN AGING POPULATION

By 2041, almost one-third of Merredin's population will be over **65**

A POPULAR VENUE

Annually, the MDOSP hosts:

- 3** Major pool party events
- 3** Swimming Carnivals

KEY Benefits

- Provides a safe place to exercise and stay active, including for people with disabilities, seniors, and those with health conditions.
- Acts as a vital space for kids to learn how to swim and stay safe in the water through school and vacation lessons.
- Is a key regional venue for the town's major community events like the Australia Day and Christmas pool parties.
- Offers a social hub where everyone from toddlers to retirees can hang out and connect in a safe environment.
- Ensures the continuation of the Merredin Swimming Club, as well as ensuring ongoing local and interschool swimming carnivals can continue.
- Provides a much-needed place for residents to cool off and stay safe during the scorching summer heat.
- Makes Merredin a more attractive place for families and workers to move and stay the long term.



Merredin Swim Club



2026 Kickstart Pool Party

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$15 MILLION

MERREDIN Daycare



The Merredin Daycare facility is currently operated by Regional Early Education and Development Inc. (REED), providing licensed, high-quality care for up to 36 children. To support the needs of working families within the community, the centre operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:15 pm, offering a reliable and structured environment for early childhood development.

A Need for Expansion

The Shire has placed a strong focus on attracting and retaining young families to balance our aging population, including major investments in upgrading local infrastructure, in an effort to ensure Merredin remains a sustainable and vibrant regional hub for generations to come.

Unfortunately, the current childcare deficit remains a major barrier to unlocking the full potential of this major investment. We are seeing young families relocating because they cannot access daycare, while others are declining jobs here for the same reason. In the current cost-of-living crisis, most families cannot afford to live on a single income and without childcare, returning to work isn't an option for many.

The Shire is proactively addressing the childcare deficit by working closely with REED to expand its services in both the short and long term. As a key part of this strategy, investment is required to secure additional land to expand the centre's services. The Shire has provided a letter of support for REED's Building Early Education Fund (BEEF) application to expand its existing service.

Without this expansion, the childcare deficit will continue to act as a major barrier to workforce participation, local business growth, and the attraction of essential regional staff.

The STATS

CURRENT PLACEMENTS

36



WAIT LIST

25

CURRENT NO. EDUCATORS

12

OUR YOUNG POPULATION

In 2021, Merredin recorded **185** children aged **0 to 4**

However, with Merredin experiencing an 8% increase in overall population since then, this figure is expected to be significantly higher in 2026. Crucially, these statistics also only capture local residents and do not account for families from neighbouring Shires who rely on Merredin as their closest childcare hub.



KEY Benefits

- Enables local parents to re-enter the workforce, leading to an increase in the available labour for businesses currently effected by staff shortages.
- Enhances Merredin's competitive advantage in recruiting high-priority workers, including doctors, nurses, and teachers, who are vital to regional health and safety.
- Attract and retain young families to the region, which will in turn, balance Merredin's aging population.
- Creates immediate new employment opportunities in Merredin for childcare educators while also creating traineeship pathways for young people wanting to enter the early childhood education sector without leaving town.
- Reduces the financial strain on households by removing the need for long-distance travel arrangements just to access care.



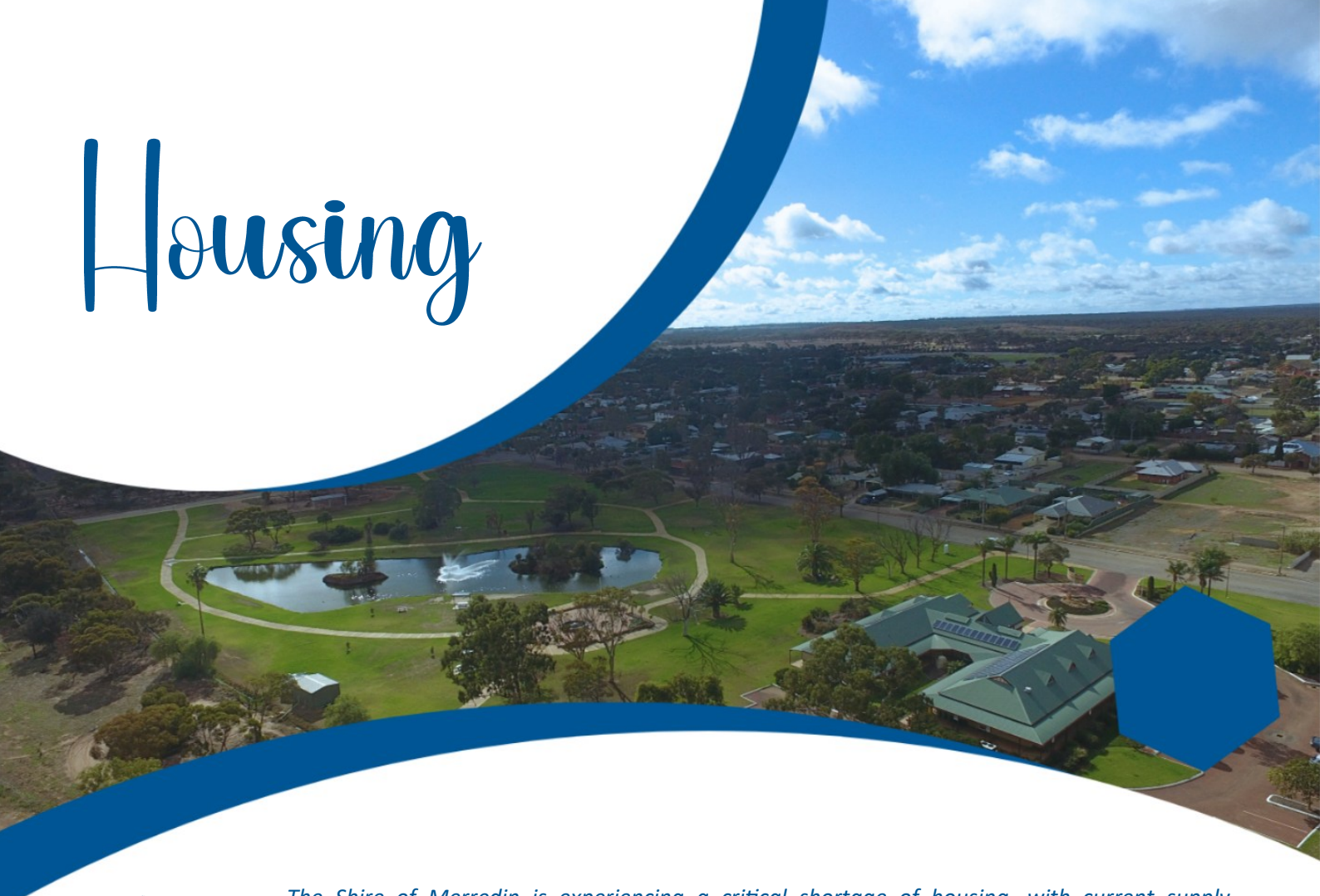
Merredin Toddlers



Merredin REED Facility

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$250,000

Housing



The Shire of Merredin is experiencing a critical shortage of housing, with current supply significantly below demand. While it is estimated that 15 - 23 new dwellings are required annually for the next 7 years to meet local needs, current construction rates are averaging only 1.8 dwelling per year. This shortfall is contributing to extremely limited housing availability, reduced choice, and increasing pressure on workforce attraction and retention.

A Housing Supply Crisis

Housing availability and diversity are fundamental to the development of resilient, vibrant and sustainable regional communities. In Merredin, the current housing shortage is constraining economic growth and limiting the Shire's capacity to attract and retain a skilled workforce, including essential service providers.

Since the onset of COVID-19, regional Western Australia has experienced a decline in housing supply. Disruptions to the flow of capital, skilled trades, and construction materials have resulted in low vacancy rates and minimal new housing development.

Between 2019 and 2024, a total of 11 dwellings were constructed within the Shire, equating to an average of just 1.8 dwellings per year. In contrast, it

is estimated that between 15 and 23 dwellings will need to be delivered annually over the next seven years to meet current and projected housing demand.

Without targeted intervention to address these supply constraints, Merredin will continue to face significant barriers to growth and service delivery. To stabilise the market and support industry, key worker accommodation units should be prioritised.

The Shire has 2 properties (see images overleaf) identified as ready for development, and are already connected to utility services. These properties located with the southern residential area of Merredin have the potential for 10 units and 6 units respectively to provide accommodation targeting essential workers, apprentices and young families.

The STATS

BUILDING CRISIS

Between 2019 and 2024, a total of **11** dwellings were constructed within the Shire of Merredin.

No. of New Dwellings Required (per year): **15 - 23**

HOUSING AVAILABILITY

Rentals: **6**



For Sale: **15 Houses, 3 Land**

As at 18 June 2026 advertised on realestate.com.au

VACANT LAND

262 Lots

This includes private freehold, local government and state crown land. 54% of these lots are fully serviced.

Lot Size	Quantity
<1000sqm	95
1000-1999sqm	127
2000-9999sqm	28
>1 Hectare	12

KEY Benefits

- Building key worker accommodation will help stabilise the local housing market and support the construction industry.
- Providing adequate housing allows the Shire to attract and retain critical skilled workers, including essential service providers.
- Gives local businesses and industries the capacity to recruit from outside of town, knowing there is a place for them to live.
- By securing housing for skilled workers and their families, Merredin transforms from a temporary place to live, into a permanent home where families stay, put down roots, and invest back into the local community.
- Bringing in a steady influx of new residents, young families, and skilled workers directly increases foot traffic and daily spending at Merredin's local retail, hospitality, and service businesses.



TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$2.5 million

Upgrades MRCLC



The Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre (MRCLC) is the main sporting and recreational hub in the Eastern Wheatbelt region. The multi-purpose facility collectively supports 19 sporting clubs, providing essential infrastructure that facilitates active participation and enhances community wellbeing.

Supporting the Growth of Sports in Regional WA

Engagement with clubs and the community revealed strong support for the MRCLC, however, they have also acknowledged that the current arrangements are no longer sustainable. Courts and ovals currently operate at or beyond available capacity across most of the year. Clubs consistently report significant scheduling conflicts, poor lighting that restricts scheduling, surface deterioration, and limited storage.

These degraded surfaces introduce safety issues that directly affect participation and volunteer capacity. While recent asset improvements, including the resurfacing of the indoor courts and the replacement of one bowling green, have successfully upgraded key areas, the broader facility still faces severe constraints. While minor upgrades offer short

-term relief, substantial renewal is required to secure the facility's long-term operations.

To address infrastructure deficits and meet modern regulatory standards, the facility requires a comprehensive renewal of its primary sporting zones. This includes resurfacing the outdoor hockey astro turf, the second bowling green, and the outdoor courts, alongside a cricket pitch renovation and the installation of new batting cages. Additionally, the project will enhance the main football oval's lighting to allow for safer night fixtures. Together, these targeted structural upgrades will eliminate safety hazards, restore optimal playing conditions, and ensure the facility can reliably host both local league play and high-tier regional competitions.

The STATS

OUR POPULATION

52 percent of residents live with long term health conditions.



DRAWING AN AUDIENCE

36 percent of MRCLC patrons travel from outside the Merredin region, demonstrating strong regional draw.

APPROX. MRCLC USERS

12,680

This approximate figure is for 2025/26 and represents hydro pool users, private hires, MRCLC programs, club members, and the use of Sports Bar.

A SPORTING HUB ✓

19 Sporting Clubs rely on the MRCLC as their primary sporting base. Sports include **football, tennis, hockey, basketball, netball, cricket, golf, and bowls** with a total of **1,033 members**.

KEY Benefits

- Accommodates higher user volume and allows for expanded programs and sports offerings.
- Ensures sports clubs have reliable indoor and outdoor spaces to play year-round.
- Keeps local youth engaged and active via social sports programs, local club training, and the adjoining outdoor playground.
- Upgrades will allow Merredin to bid for major regional competitions, exhibition matches, and tournaments that bring visitors to the town and boosts the local economy.
- Modern, high-quality infrastructure removes barriers to entry, making sports more appealing to newcomers, juniors, and families.
- Replacing worn flooring, uneven turf, and aging court surfaces significantly lowers the risk of impact and joint injuries as well as accidents during competition.



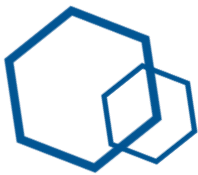
Multipurpose Synthetic Turf



Multipurpose Outdoor Courts

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$3 million

Community EVENTS



The Shire of Merredin delivers a diverse annual events calendar, featuring seven major events, three seasonal school holiday programs, and an array of year-round workshops and pop-up activations. Designed for all ages and interests, these events build a strong sense of community, support resident health and wellbeing, and provide vital opportunities for social connection.

Enhancing the Social Fabric of Regional WA

Beyond their local impact, the Shire's events act as key economic drivers by attracting tourists and visitors to the region. Below highlights three major annual events that strengthen social cohesion, and support community mental health and wellbeing.

Harmony Festival (March) - \$10,000

The annual Harmony Festival celebrates Merredin's rich cultural diversity by bringing the community together to share food tastings, traditional arts and crafts, and diverse cultural performances. The event continues to grow as a vital platform for multicultural inclusion, drawing 300 attendees this year.

Festive Night Out (December) - \$20,000

As the Shire's flagship annual Christmas event, Festive Night Out transforms the town street into a vibrant family celebration. Attracting approximately 1,100 residents and visitors, the event offers a dedicated space for families to connect, celebrate the end of the school year, and drive local holiday trade.

School Holiday Program - \$5,000 per block

Delivered across two weeks of each school holiday period, this program features a series of smaller, targeted activations designed to keep local youth active and engaged. The diverse range of activities supports working parents and strengthens social connections, attracting a total of 500 participants over each two-week block.

The STATS

SHIRE INVESTMENT

During 2025/26, the Shire invested over **\$140,000** into community events, workshops, and Cummins Theatre shows.

EVENT CALENDAR

Annually, the Shire hosts:



- 7** Major Events
- 4** Blocks of School Holiday Activities
- 10** Cummins Theatre Shows (minimum)

EVENT ATTENDANCE

In 2025, Festive Night Out drew a crowd of approximately **1,000** throughout the night.

The April School Holiday Program in 2026 yielded more than **1,100** attendees across 12 events.

Harmony Fest in 2026 crowds exceeded **500** throughout the 4 hours festival.

KEY Benefits

- Supports community mental health and wellbeing by providing high-quality social outlets close to home.
- Attracts tourists and regional visitors, stimulating local business and boosting the economy.
- Enhances Merredin's liveability, making the town a more appealing place for workers and families to settle long-term.
- Provides accessible, low-cost youth engagement that keeps children active and safe during school holiday blocks, also reducing youth crime.
- Fosters mutual respect and reduces social isolation by providing a safe, welcoming platform for migrant families and long-term residents to share traditions, food, and arts.
- Provides free, high-quality entertainment and activities, ensuring families facing financial stress can participate without barriers.



2026 Harmony Festival



Easter School Holiday Activity

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$50,000

Industrial LAND DEV



Merredin's industrial land is distributed across three primary zones. The eastern hub encompasses Adamson Road, Mitchell Street, and Mackenzie Crescent, which is dedicated to heavy agricultural machinery, local trades, and major transport logistics. Near the town centre, Railway Avenue includes a mix of light industrial warehouses and retail showrooms. Further west, Gabo Avenue and Goldfields Road accommodate general and rural industries, including bulk freight networks and renewable energy infrastructure.

Unlocking Economic Potential

As the largest regional town between Northam and Kalgoorlie, Merredin is uniquely positioned as a vital industrial hub. However, future economic growth is currently constrained as all available industrial land is fully utilised, with no further land available for development. This means Merredin can no longer accommodate new business investment, or current business expansions.

To accommodate the continuous demand from both new enterprises and existing local businesses looking to grow, the Shire has proactively amended its local planning scheme to identify new plots of land specifically for industrial land use.

Development of industrial land also supports job

growth and the provision of additional services within the region, which boosts both economic activity and employment opportunities, adding to the diversity of the area. Provision of industrial land also fosters innovation and growth of new industry in the region, providing the infrastructure to deliver goods and services to both the town and the broader region, and supporting the local community.

The majority of large land holdings suitable for industrial development are either under private or state ownership and are currently not serviced. Funding will enable further detailed works to support the delivery of development ready blocks of land to support growth of the town.

The STATS

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Merredin is home to approximately **49** industrial and industrial-service businesses spanning **engineering, fabrication, transport and logistics, agricultural services, machinery sales and servicing, earthmoving, energy, fuel distribution and industrial contracting.**



TOTAL INDUSTRIAL AREAS

3

INDUSTRIAL LAND

As of June 2026, the number of industrial zoned properties in Merredin was **68**.

KEY Benefits

- Creates an economic drawcard for the region by bringing in capital, new residents, and increased investment into Merredin, driving vital flow-on effects that boost local businesses, increase school enrollments, and maximise the use of community facilities.
- Supports large, high-capacity commercial operations and attracts major corporate investment to Merredin.
- Supports diversification of the local and regional economy, increases employment opportunities and growth of the town.
- Provides opportunity to innovate, implement new technologies and expand the growth of services within the region.



Current Industrial Area



Mackenzie Crescent Loop

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$3 Million

Cummins THEATRE



Nestled in the heart of the Wheatbelt, the historic Cummins Theatre has been Merredin's premier performance venue since 1928, driving tourism by hosting iconic Australian talent. Its stage has welcomed rock royalty like AC/DC and Diesel, contemporary stars Pete Murray and Amy Shark, and beloved favourites like Shannon Noll and The Wiggles, cementing its reputation as a major entertainment destination for regional audiences.

A Historic Venue worth Preserving

For nearly 100 years, the Theatre has served as a vibrant community hub, bringing people together through the shared magic of live performance.

To preserve this valuable asset, the Shire of Merredin is implementing a comprehensive heritage conservation plan. A total investment of \$500,000 is needed for restoration and modernisation, ensuring the theatre meets production standards while honouring its past. Key priorities include essential roof repairs, internal and external painting, and upgraded perimeter fencing to secure and beautify the site. The performance space itself will see a completely renewed stage floor to safely accommodate a diverse range of artists, alongside technical upgrades like a modern dual-winch system capable of supporting major, technically demanding

touring productions. Additionally, the Shire is expanding and upgrading the 'Hall of Fame' exhibition walk designed to display and archive the theatre's past performances.

In celebration of the Theatre's centenary in 2028, the Shire will host a month-long festival featuring weekly events designed to engage locals and visitors alike. The programmed festivities will include diverse concerts and hands-on workshops, culminating in a spectacular, traditional "Period Community Ball."

The goal of this centenary program is to deepen community connections, spotlight the immense heritage value of the venue, and celebrate Merredin's identity. To bring this vision to life, we are seeking \$30,000 in funding.

The STATS

THEATRE PATRONS

2024 — 2026

9000

A PREMIER VENUE



During 2024/25, the Cummins Theatre had a total of **42** private hirers, while the Shire hosted **20** shows / events.

TICKETS SOLD

2022/23: 2,283

2023/24: 1,630

2024/25: 2,093



HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 2025/26 alone, staff have conducted **37 venue tours**, with more than **100 tourists** attending.

KEY Benefits

- Upgrading the venue's technical capacity will support large, demanding touring productions and attract high quality artists to the region, allowing locals to experience major productions without having to travel to the city.
- Ensures the Theatre remains a premier function space for the community.
- Strengthens local community ties and fosters a shared sense of pride and identity in Merredin.
- Makes Merredin a more attractive and culturally rich place for families and workers to move to, live, and stay for the long term.
- Preserves and highlights Merredin's unique history by protecting a 100-year-old landmark with structural restorations and expanding the "Hall of Fame" exhibition to proudly display and archive a century of local performance stories.
- Creates a massive tourism drawcard for the region through a month-long centenary festival in 2028, boosting the local economy.



Boasts most of original interior of the Tivoli Theatre from 1897.



2021 Disco Event

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT: \$530,000

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