

Shire of Merredin

Local Emergency Management Committee Minutes

Local Emergency Management Committee Draft Minutes
3 February 2022 at 4.00 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
Cr Romolo Patroni	Shire of Merredin
Lisa Clack	Shire of Merredin – CEO
Andrina Prnich	Shire of Merredin – Deputy CEO
Lindon Mellor	Shire of Merredin – Executive Manager Engineering Services
Sheree Lowe	Shire of Merredin – Emergency Services Officer
Meg Wyatt	Shire of Merredin – Executive Support Officer
Chris Thompson	WAPOL
Yvette Grigg	DFES – District Emergency Management Adviser
Mark Briggs	Merredin SES
Joanne Spadaccini	Department of Communities
Sally Trunfio	Department of Communities
Chris Cox	Merredin Hospital
Suzanne Taylor	WACHS
Greg Shea	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Tracy Pickering	Merredin College
Lyndon Clark	Water Corporation
Scott Rastall	St John Ambulance
Ben Thropp	St John Ambulance
2.0 Apologies	
Cr Julie Flockart	Shire of Merredin
Peter Zenni	Shire of Merredin – Executive Manager of Development Services
Heath Soutar	WAPOL
Matthew Reimer	DFES – District Officer, Natural Hazards
Jeremy Willis	DFES – Area Officer, Central Wheatbelt
Michael Caughey	Merredin Bush Fire Services
Karen Horsley	Merredin Hospital
Philippa Davey	Department of Communities
Graeme Keals	Department of Parks and Wildlife
Johnno Bowring	St John Ambulance
Caine Denyer	Merredin Residential College
Gren Putland	Main Roads WA
Gary Anderson	CBH

3.0 Welcome

3.1 Opening of Meeting

The Chair opened the meeting at 4.05pm and welcomed all in attendance. The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the Njaki Njaki people of the Nyongar Nation and paid his respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Motion: That the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee held on 7 October 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Moved: R Patroni

Seconded: L Mellor

5.0 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1 Nil.

Outcomes:

6.0 Correspondence

6.1 Incoming Correspondence

Email from Jo Spadaccini, Department of Communities, containing:

- Merredin Local Emergency Welfare Plan
- COVID-19 Welfare Centre Guide
- COVID-19 screening requirements poster

Email from Yvette Grigg containing:

- Discussion points for LEMCs giving consideration to COVID 19 preparations (left off distribution - Sheree Lowe to circulate to the LEMC after the meeting)

6.2 Outgoing Correspondence

Nil

Motion: That correspondence in/out be received as presented.

Moved: P Van Der Merwe

Seconded: S Taylor

7.0 HMA and other Agency Updates

7.1 Agency Briefings pre-circulated (attached)

Nil.

7.2 Other Agency Briefings

a. Department of Communities – Jo Spadaccini

There are two main areas for contact for the Department of Communities, the Merredin office, and the Northam office. However, there is a new afterhours on call number which is 0418 943 835. There is an essential number that people can call for assistance during COVID, this is the 13COVID number. This number can be advertised to the community on the Shire's Facebook page.

b. WAPOL Merredin – Chris Thompson

There are three staff members leaving meaning that the station is three staff down at the moment reducing their capabilities for a short time. WAPOL Merredin are currently working on their business continuity plan, they have been undertaking planning in regards to COVID to allow them to plan for coverage if and when an outbreak occurs.

c. Shire of Merredin – Chief Executive Officer, Lisa Clack

The Shire of Merredin is currently working on their business continuity plan and following health directions to help guide them with what they need to put in place. The Shire is currently working with WACHS to identify a suitable site for surge testing.

d. Merredin SES – Mark Briggs

The Merredin SES have only lost one member from the vaccination mandate.

e. St John Ambulance – Ben Thropp

St John Ambulance is currently focusing on their capabilities leading into the expansion of COVID and working on their business continuity plans. There are emergency caches of PPE stored in Northam and Merredin to ensure the safety of volunteers within the region. There is a possibility that they will need to shut the station down if deep cleaning or staff/volunteer shortages necessitate. They are currently training 2 new members, and volunteer training has focused on reinforcing correct PPE and sanitising protocols. The community has adapted well to wearing masks, scanning into venues, and making sure they keep on top of hand washing and sanitising; however, Mr Thropp asked that we all be vigilant and advise people to do the right thing if they aren't.

f. St John Ambulance – Scott Rastall

Mr Rastall's role is to provide wider support to ambulance stations around the region, and has also been prioritising volunteer training in PPE and sanitising. There is a Special Ops truck based in Northam to deal with COVID cases. There are an extra 10-12 volunteers in the region that have completed all of their training. All volunteers have been double vaccinated since 1 December 2021.

g. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Greg Shea

DPIRD is currently working on their business continuity plan. They don't have a lot of face to face however have immunocompromised staff meaning they still need to ensure there is protection in place.

h. Merredin College – Tracy Pickering

Merredin College is currently working on their business continuity plan, focusing on keeping a healthy work force and having back up relief staff if needed. The Department of Education takes their lead from the Department of Health with regard to policies, processes and directives around COVID. The 3 cases in Perth schools have acted as a sample as to what will happen if there are cases in Merredin schools. There are online teaching platforms in place and all staff must be triple vaccinated by the 5th February 2022.

i. Merredin VFRS – Phil Van Der Merwe

Operations haven't changed for the Merredin VFRS. Volunteers are now wearing masks. They do not have enough crew to be able to split shift during COVID.

j. WA Country Health Service – Suzanne Taylor

The Merredin Hospital is following statewide directives. They are currently going through their business continuity plans. They have been trying to recruit continuously and there may come a time when the hospital needs to reduce their services but they will maintain all services as long as they can. The hospital is moving to telehealth services for outpatients.

They have been planning for surge testing and are moving the swab testing from the emergency department to another location. COVID positive patients will be stabilised at Merredin Hospital and transferred to another service for COVID treatment as soon as stable, with the assistance of St John Ambulance. It is expected that most cases of COVID now will be mild, and people will be able to recover at home. Information for treating COVID at home will be made available soon. The hospital doesn't have the capacity for rapid antigen tests however are looking at improving that capacity.

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When there is a positive case the contact tracing process is managed from Perth, which means that WACHS often find out information about the positive case after the positive case and close contacts have been informed, they also need to consider confidentiality obligation when announcing positive cases locally.

Exposure sites will not be listed on Healthy WA if contact tracing is able to contact everyone that was at that site. Visitors to hospitals need to wear a mask and prove that they are vaccinated. ED staff are now required to wear eye protection and masks.

k. Water Corporation – Lyndon Clark

The Water Corporation has business continuity plans in place and have organised to split into teams or work in isolation if needed.

l. DFES District Emergency Management Adviser – Yvette Grigg

DFES have got business continuity plans in place and the ability to split teams when needed. Ms Grigg advised of the elevated fire danger for the weekend, with strong winds and dry conditions leading to an Extreme fire danger rating on Sunday

m. Introduction of new CEO, Lisa Clack.

Ms Clack has a strong background in emergency management with 15 years' experience. She has worked at DFES in bushfire planning and shark response. She developed the first emergency warning alert system in the Pilbara. She worked in the Pilbara when COVID first hit and organised the East Pilbara COVID response team, kept the airport running meaning mining staff could keep going to work and organised for staff to replace front services for other agencies. She is looking forward to working with everyone in the LEMC.

Cr Van Der Merwe queried how Ms Clack dealt with community members that weren't taking COVID seriously. Ms Clack responded that due to strong support from mining industries employers, issues were kept to a minimum.

Mr Thompson, explained that they were notified that BWS were having some issues with the new rules in place however this has now eased.

Ms Lowe, stated that the Shire has received calls for assistance from businesses and the Shire has provided them with posters to try and help.

8.0 Standing Items (Submitted at each Meeting)

8.1 Update of Contacts and Resources Register

Remove Crs Flockart and Patroni from Shire of Merredin and replace with Crs McKenzie and Van Der Merwe.

Remove Mark Dacombe from Shire of Merredin and replace with Lisa Clack.

Remove Renee Manning from DPIRD and replace with Greg Shea.

Update position details for Yvette Grigg from DFES.

Remove Chicken Treat from Food Outlets & Catering.

Remove Jarrad Ritchie from Merredin College and replace with Tracy Pickering.

Remove Elizabeth Moody as Manager of Merredin Residential College and replace with Caine Denyer; update Merredin Residential College landline.

8.2 Change of Positions/Leave and Acting Arrangements Notification

Appointment of Lisa Clack as Shire of Merredin CEO.

Election of Cr Mark McKenzie as Shire President.

Nomination of Cr Phil Van Der Merwe as LEMC Chair.

Appointment of Tracy Pickering as Merredin College Principal.

Appointment of Caine Denyer as Merredin Residential College Manager.

8.3 Incident Support Group Activations

8.4 Risk Profile Change

8.5 Local Emergency Management Arrangements

LEMA Review Update - Shire of Merredin, Sheree Lowe

After the LEMC approved the LEMA to be submitted to Council at the October meeting, the draft LEMA was approved by Council for public consultation. No public feedback was received, and the LEMA was subsequently submitted to the January Council meeting for endorsement to the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC). The document will be submitted to SEMC via Ms Grigg presently.

8.6 Local Recovery Plan

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

9.0 Documentation

Nil.

10.0 Presentations or Proposed Exercises

10.1 Emergency management discussion exercise

Ms Lowe suggested that this discussion exercise is left until after the meeting.

Discussions were had on 3 different scenarios relating to COVID-19 followed by four questions that the LEMC committee discussed.

11.0 General Business

11.1 LEMC appointment of voting delegates and proxies

Chief Executive Officer, Ms Clack explained that the LEMC is currently missing a Terms of Reference and voting delegates from each agency. The Shire is going to start to tidy this up and write to each agency for a voting delegate and a proxy if they would like. The intent is not to limit the amount of people that come to the meeting but to formalise who will vote, and ensure the voting is not stacked towards one agency or another.

11.2 LEMC Terms of Reference

A Terms of Reference was circulated with the agenda. The LEMC currently doesn't have a formal Terms of Reference in place and will be updating this using a template provided by Ms Grigg. Discussions regarding this will occur in the next couple of months and it will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

11.3 Around the table

a. WAPOL Merredin – Chris Thompson

Recently attended a COVID conference which showed a snapshot of what is coming and what to expect. At the conference they spoke lots about business continuity and gave lots of ideas about agencies working together, being flexible and open minded.

b. St John Ambulance – Ben Thropp

There are lots of ideas regarding what could be done when COVID hits however there is nothing firm and they have mainly been for metro meaning it is taking longer for plans for regional areas to be put in place. There could be a huge strain on resources at the peak of COVID.

c. St John Ambulance – Scott Rastall

Volunteers are now wearing P2 masks meaning they would not need to isolate.

d. WACHS – Suzanne Taylor

The hospital is currently increasing the amount of drill that are done to allow for staff to practise grabbing their masks and PPE and putting it on before dealing with a situation.

e. Shire of Merredin, Executive Manager of Engineering Services – Lindon Mellor

If an outbreak occurs the works crew is able to be put into 2 teams with different work times meaning they can work around each other. They have been provided with sanitiser and wipes for their vehicles and have been told that if they feel unwell to stay at home and get tested if required.

12.0 Next Meeting

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

Date and Time	Venue
Thursday, 5 May 2022 at 4.00pm	Council Chambers
Thursday, 4 August 2022 at 4.00pm	Council Chambers
Thursday, 6 October 2022 at 4.00pm	Council Chambers
Thursday, 2 February 2023 at 4.00 pm	Council Chambers

Moved: L Clack

Seconded: S Rastall

13.0 Close

At 4.58pm the Chair introduced the emergency discussion exercise at item 10.1 and invited those participating online to sign off if they were having trouble hearing the group discussion.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 5.51pm, thanking all in attendance.