

Local Emergency Management Committee Minutes
1 February 2024 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
Leah Boehme	Shire of Merredin – A/CEO
Amer Tawfik	Shire of Merredin – Executive Manager Engineering Services
Sheree Lowe	Shire of Merredin – Emergency Services Officer
Laurie Barron	WAPOL
Ashley Smith	DFES – District Officer, Natural Hazards
Stewart Low	Merredin Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service
Joanne Spadaccini	Department of Communities
Kylie Cattaway	Merredin College
Terrence King	Western Power
2.0 Apologies	
Codi Brindley-Mullen	Shire of Merredin – Executive Manager Strategy and Community
Peter Zenni	Shire of Merredin – Executive Manager of Development Services
Yvette Grigg	DFES – District Emergency Management Adviser
Michael Caughey	Merredin Bush Fire Services
Laurent Marsol	Department of Parks and Wildlife
Di Dixon	Merredin Hospital
Jeremy Willis	DFES – Area Officer, Central Wheatbelt
Gren Putland	Main Roads WA

3.0 Welcome

3.1 Opening of Meeting

The Chair welcomed all attendees and opened the meeting at 4:05pm.

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

It was noted that there was an error in the circulated minutes of the previous meeting. The new vehicle acquired by the Merredin SES is a General Rescue Utility, not a Troop Carrier as had been minuted. The minutes were moved subject to the amendment being made.

***Motion:** That the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee held on 26 October 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.*

Moved: A Smith

Seconded: L Barron

5.0 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1 Nil

Outcomes:

6.0 Correspondence

6.1 Incoming Correspondence

Jacinta Herbert – Ammonium Nitrate Emulsion Tanker Explosion report
Yvette Grigg – Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan – out for consultation
Stacey Iveson – Minutes & Attendance – Essential Services Disruption Meeting
DFES Northam – ISG/OASG for the power outage emergency meeting minutes 22 & 23 January

6.2 Outgoing Correspondence

Nil

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

Moved: S Low

Seconded: J Spadaccini

7.0 HMA and other Agency Updates

7.1 Agency Briefings pre-circulated

Department of Communities: A new permanent staffing structure is being put in place. Two additional officers are now in place in the Wheatbelt to support Jo, and will be introduced to local governments in the coming weeks.

The current Shire of Merredin Local Emergency Welfare Plan (LEWP) has been sent to the ESO for updates, and will be transitioned to the Local Emergency Relief and Support Plan (LERSP).

7.2 Other Agency Briefings

Merredin Police: Good January/December from a police perspective. Provided back up support for other regions struggling with bushfires and storms. Laurie thanked the group for being able to gather in numbers at short notice after he requested the emergency LEMC meeting.

DFES/Merredin SES: Ash had been deployed to the Kimberly on the Sunday prior to the storms, so got to watch the drama unfold from afar! SES assisted with one request for assistance connected to the storms. There are some debriefs coming up tomorrow (DFES staff) and on Saturday (Merredin SES). The debriefs will be looking at the learnings gained from the event and opportunities to put processes and equipment in place for when it happens again.

Merredin SES have only one had the one request for assistance (mentioned above) since the last LEMC. Now transitioning from fire season to training season – a number of training events are scheduled over the next few months.

The DEMA (previously held by Yvette Grigg) vacancy has closed to applications, interviews have been conducted, and now they're awaiting the results. Will not be able to announce the new position holder for a period of time.

Western Power: Due to forecast peak flow this evening, Merredin Energy has been connected into the grid and is currently injecting energy. The 220 line has been back up and running since Saturday, so Merredin area faults are currently "business as usual" (ie, no longer being fed from Northam). 5 transmission towers between Kondinin and Merredin have been replaced with 6 sets of steel poles, which is a permanent solution. The steel poles are as good as, if not better than, the towers that were previously there.

Merredin College: As it's only the second day of first term, it's too early to call student numbers yet. Students have been permitted access to the gymnasium during breaks in the hot weather. With regard to staffing, the College are now two staff members short. There are temporary solutions in place, and hoping to secure permanent replacements soon. One of the positions is for high school Phys Ed – there are plenty of Phys Ed teachers around, the challenge is in convincing them to come to Merredin. New principal Kylie Cattaway spent the last few years in metro, but prior to that spent nine years in Bunbury and seventeen years in Kalgoorlie. She loved her regional placements and is happy to be back in the regions again. She also attended primary school in Merredin for one year as a child. Kylie is a permanent appointment, not acting or seconded.

Merredin VFRS: Extremely lucky during the storms as rain preceded the lightning so no fire calls that evening.

Shire of Merredin: Amer was away during the storms, but a few roads were closed due to rain and a few trees came down. Barrack street was closed to traffic due to a leaning power pole.

Leah is currently acting in the CEO role. Due to the Apex Park and CBD redevelopment, there will be a number of road closures around town in the coming weeks. The Shire are expecting complaints, but they are a necessary part of the redevelopment. Road closure information can be found on the Shire website at <https://www.merredin.wa.gov.au/area-road-closures.aspx>, and Sheree will circulate the link in the email with the minutes.

Bush Fire Brigades have dealt with a number of fires this fire season, but nothing they weren't able to get on top of quickly. There was concern of a firebug earlier in the fire season which was reported to Laurie, but nothing recently.

The Shire has put a single emergency number (6140 1246) in place following discussion at the last meeting. When this number is phoned the call goes to all the executive managers, ensuring that someone senior enough to authorise action will answer the call.

8.0 Standing Items (Submitted at each Meeting)

8.1 Update of Contacts and Resources Register

- **Lisa Clack** has been removed as Shire of Merredin CEO.
- **Yvette Grigg** has been removed as DFES District Emergency Management Advisor.
- **Tracy Pickering** has been removed as Merredin College Principal and replaced by **Kylie Cattaway**.
- **Andy Di Carlantonio** has been removed as St Mary's Principal and replaced by **David Hamersley**.
- **Kim Cooper** has been removed and **Terrence King** added as Western Power Field Operations Team Leader.

(Attachment 6)

8.2 Change of Positions/Leave and Acting Arrangements Notification

- **Lisa Clack** has resigned as Shire of Merredin CEO. A replacement has not yet been appointed but Leah Boehme is currently acting in the role.
- **Codi Brindley-Mullen** is currently on long service leave, but will be back in her role by the next LEMC.
- **Councillors Ross Billing, Romolo Patroni and Julie Flockart** have all resigned, and have been replaced by **Councillors Brad Anderson and Hayley Billing**.
- **Yvette Grigg** has resigned as District Emergency Management Advisor for DFES Goldfields-Midlands. A replacement has not yet been named.
- **Tracy Pickering** is no longer Principal of Merredin College. She has been replaced by **Kylie Cattaway**.

- **Andy Di Carlantonio** is no longer Principal of St Mary's School. He has been replaced by **David Hamersley**
- **Alan Matthews** is no longer Acting Station Manager, St John Merredin.
- **Terence King** is acting in **Kim Cooper's** role at Western Power.

8.3 Incident Support Group Activations

Shire of Merredin LEMC was activated in response to the power outage emergency following storms on Wednesday, 17 January.

The notes from the Shire of Merredin LEMC extraordinary meeting were circulated with the agenda.

8.4 Risk Profile Change

Nil

8.5 Local Emergency Management Arrangements

Annual review of LEMA

The Merredin LEMA was formally approved by the SEMC early in 2022 following its major 5-year review. It is recommended that the LEMA undergo minor reviews annually.

The LEMA has undergone an initial minor review, and a version of the document with recommended changes is attached for endorsement at the meeting. Members are encouraged to suggest any changes or recommendations.

This item was held over from the October meeting because people requested more time to look at it. No changes were requested at today's meeting; Laurie, Jacinta and Jo were the only people who indicated changes needed to be made at the October meeting, so Sheree will follow up with them individually regarding required updates.

There has been renewed Council discussion regarding getting the MRCLC generator-ready. Even though it wouldn't have been needed as an evacuation centre during the power outages, were a generator available (which we have now discovered is possible through multiple means) it could have been used as a respite centre.

Department of Communities had been requested by the Wheatbelt OASG to be on standby to open evacuation centres in Merredin and/or Northam if required.

The roadblock to progressing the issue in Council is funding. Ash will send through some grant information that may be relevant. Jo can assist with letters of recommendation and refer back to audits done in the district.

8.6 Local Recovery Plan

Nil

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

Nil

9.0 Documentation

Nil

10.0 Presentations or Proposed Exercises

10.1 Emergency management discussion exercise

Ammonium Nitrate Emulsion tanker fire

Sheree presented a summary of the Great Central Road ANE explosion based on the DMIRS incident investigation report circulated with the agenda. Agencies present discussed the incident response if the same incident were to occur in Merredin townsite.

11.0 General Business

11.1 Around the table

Terrence, Water Corp: Included in the agenda documents was a DFES PDF arising out of the Wheatbelt OASG outlining regulations around Total Fire Bans (TFBs) and Harvest and Vehicle Movement Bans (HVMBs). It states that Western Power are not exempt from HVMBs unless authorised by the Chief Bush Fire Control Officer in the Harvest Ban Notice – could this exemption be included in future HVMBs?

Sheree will discuss further with Terrence outside the meeting.

12.0 Next Meeting

At the next meeting, we will trial an earlier meeting time and reassess future meeting times.

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

Date and Time	Venue
Thursday, 2 May 2024 at 2:00pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 1 August 2024 at TBC	TBC
Thursday, 3 October 2024 at TBC	TBC
Thursday, 6 February 2025 at TBC	TBC

Moved: L Barron

Seconded: S Low

13.0 Close

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 5:52pm, thanking all in attendance.