

Notice of Meeting



Dear President and Councillors,

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Merredin will be held on Tuesday, 26 May 2026 in the Council Chambers, corner of King and Barrack Streets, Merredin. The format of the day will be:

3:00pm Briefing Session

5:00pm Council Meeting

CRAIG WATTS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
22 May 2026

DISCLAIMER

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER BEFORE PROCEEDING:

Statements or decisions made at this meeting should not be relied or acted on by an applicant or any other person until they have received written notification from the Shire. Notice of all approvals, including planning and building approvals, will be given to applicants in writing. The Shire of Merredin expressly disclaims liability for any loss or damages suffered by a person who relies or acts on statements or decisions made at a Council or Committee meeting before receiving written notification from the Shire.

The advice and information contained herein is given by and to Council without liability or responsibility for its accuracy. Before placing any reliance on this advice or information, a written inquiry should be made to Council giving entire reasons for seeking the advice or information and how it is proposed to be used.

| Common Acronyms Used in this Document | |
|--|--|
| BFAC | Bush Fire Advisory Committee |
| CEACA | Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CWVC | Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre |
| DSO | Development Services Officer |
| EO | Executive Officer |
| EMCS | Executive Manager Corporate Services |
| EMIS | Executive Manager Infrastructure Services |
| EMS&C | Executive Manager Strategy & Community |
| GECZ | Great Eastern Country Zone |
| GO | Governance Officer |
| LEMC | Local Emergency Management Committee |
| LGIS | Local Government Insurance Services |
| LPS | Local Planning Scheme |
| MCO | Media and Communications Officer |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MRCLC | Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre |
| OAG | Office of the Auditor General |
| OCM | Ordinary Council Meeting |
| SCM | Special Council Meeting |
| SRP | Strategic Resource Plan |
| WAEC | Western Australian Electoral Commission |
| WALGA | Western Australian Local Government Association |
| WEROC | Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils |



May Ordinary Council Meeting

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Shire of Merredin
Ordinary Council Meeting
5:00pm Tuesday, 26 May 2026.



1. OFFICIAL OPENING

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2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Councillors:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Cr D Crook | President |
| Cr P Van Der Merwe | Deputy President |
| Cr P Boehme | |
| Cr P Madigan | |
| Cr L O'Neill | |

Staff:

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| C Watts | CEO |
| L Boehme | EMCS |
| C Brindley-Mullen | SCEM |
| M Hussey | EO |
| S Doncon | GO |

Members of the Public:

Apologies: Cr H Billing

Approved Leave of Absence:

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public may submit questions up to 2pm on the day of the meeting by emailing ea@merredin.wa.gov.au.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

5. APPLICATIONS OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE

6. PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

7.1 Ordinary Council Meeting held on 28 April 2026 (Attachment 7.1A)

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 28 April 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING WITHOUT DISCUSSION

9. MATTERS FOR WHICH THE MEETING MAY BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

20.1 Funding Variation for RFQ11 25/26

10. RECEIPT OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

10.1 Minutes of the GECZ Meeting held Thursday 23 April 2026. Attachment 10.1A.

10.2 Minutes of the CEACA Meeting held Monday 4 May 2026. Attachment 10.2A.

10.3 Minutes of the LEMC Meeting held Tuesday 7 May 2026. Attachment 10.3A.

10.4 Minutes of the ARIC Meeting held Tuesday 26 May 2026 (subject to the meeting held prior to the OCM). Attachment 10.4A.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council;

- 1. RECEIVES the minutes of the GECZ Meeting held Thursday 23 April 2026;**
- 2. RECEIVES the minutes of the CEACA Meeting held Monday 4 May 2026;**
- 3. RECEIVES the minutes of the LEMC Meeting held Thursday 7 May 2026; and**
- 4. RECEIVES the minutes of the ARIC Meeting held Tuesday 26 May 2026.**

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR CONSIDERATION

Recommendations of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee held Tuesday 26 May 2026 (subject to the outcome of the meeting held prior to the OCM). Attachment 10.4A

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES** the Planning Summary provided by the OAG, for the Shire of Merredin's 2025/26 Audit;
2. **NOTES** that the CEO will sign the agreement for the 2025/26 Audit and provide the relevant information requested by the Auditors to complete the 2025/26 Audit
3. **NOTES** the Risk and Regulation Action Plan, as tabled to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee;
4. **ADOPT** the Fraud and Corruption Control Plan for May 2026 and the Fraud and Corruption Policy, as tabled to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee;
5. **NOTES** the review of the Risk Dashboard Report for May 2026, as tabled to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee;
6. **ENDORSES** the Risk Dashboard Report for May 2026, as as tabled to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee; and
7. **ADOPTS** the proposed Integrity Framework 2026, as tabled to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

12. OFFICER’S REPORTS – DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

12.1 Lot 1285 (160) Mitchell Street Merredin – Proposed Dome Structure with Sea Containers

| | |
|---|--|
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Development Service</h2>  | |
| Responsible Officer: | Craig Watts, CEO |
| Author: | Xinyi Zhao, DSO |
| File Reference: | A260 |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author and Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 12.1A - Application for Development Approval and Supporting Documentation. |

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to determine a Development Approval (DA) application for the placement of a 15m x 12.192m x 7.5m Dome Structure supported by two 2.438m x 12.192m x 2.9m sea containers at Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street Merredin.

Background

The Shire of Merredin has received a DA from Tim Cartledge on behalf of the owners (Nutrien Ag Solutions Limited) for the placement of a of a 15m x 12.192m x 7.5m Dome Structure and 2 x 2.438m x 12.192m x 2.9m sea containers at Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street Merredin.

The land measures 2.4268 hectares. The proposed siting of the structure is near some existing infrastructures, and it was reported that the nature of the existing land use is for rural farm supplies storage and administration.

Comment

Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street Merredin is zoned ‘Light Industry’ under the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6 (the Scheme). A warehouse/storage development is a P use in Light Industry zone. However, in accordance with Local Planning Scheme Policy No.1 – Moveable Buildings, the proposed dome structure with sea containers development includes transportable buildings and as such subject to Council’s discretion.

The proposed structure has a floor area of approximately 242.34m² and is proposed to be located with setbacks approximately 50 metres from Mitchell Street, approximately 37.2

metres from the southeast boundary. The proponent has also advised that the distance between the existing buildings and proposed dwelling would be approximately 32.8 metres.

It is also noted that the design and siting of the proposed structure should be compatible with the objectives of the Light Industry zone and retain the general streetscape of the locality. The proposed shed will be located approximately 50 metres from Mitchell Street, and the development on the immediately adjoining properties are of a similar character as Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street Merredin. The dome shelter will be constructed behind the existing buildings on the property. All of these circumstances contribute to minimising any visual impact on the amenity of the surrounding area.

Figure 1 below shows a concept drawing of the proposed development provided by the applicant.

FIGURE 1 – CONCEPT DRAWING OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



Source: Applicant, Dome Shelter Australia

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

Local Planning Scheme

Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street, Merredin is zoned as 'Light Industry' under the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6 (the Scheme). A warehouse/storage is a P use in Light Industry zone. 'P' means that the use is permitted by the Scheme providing the use complies with the relevant development standards and the requirements of the Scheme.

Local Planning Scheme Policy No.1 – Moveable Buildings

The proposed dome structure with sea containers development includes transportable buildings, and as such is subject to policy requirements specified by the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme Policy No.1 – Moveable Buildings as follows:

The objectives of Planning Scheme Policy No.1 – Moveable Buildings

- a) ***To maintain high amenity standards of buildings, especially within the residential areas in the Townsites of the Shire.***
- b) ***To ensure that the visual aesthetics of residential areas are not compromised by the introduction of moveable buildings that are generally out of character with the predominant housing style in the locality.***
- c) ***To ensure that the moveable buildings, established within the Shire, do not use materials considered by the Council to be unacceptable (eg. asbestos).***
- d) ***To avoid the erection and use of extensive areas of moveable structures for accommodating temporary workforces, or other business or company activities, in inappropriate areas.***
- e) ***To prevent the introduction of housing, or other use structures, that are designed to be used on a temporary or short stay basis and that may detract from the standards already established in the residential areas of the Townsites.***
- f) ***To protect the visual amenity of the urban environment by not permitting the establishment, storage or use of 'containers' within the non-industrial areas of the townsite.***

The placement of the sea containers and dome at Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street, Merredin is not considered to be in conflict with the objectives specified by the Scheme and Local Planning Scheme Policy No.1 – Moveable Buildings.

Statutory Requirements – Building Act Considerations

Building work including the placement or erection of a building or incidental structure on land is subject to building permit requirements. In this case the builder will need to apply to the Shire of Merredin for relevant building permit to place the proposed structure on site at Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street, Merredin.

Statutory Requirements – Health Act considerations

The Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme Policy No.1 precludes any relocatable building containing unacceptable materials (asbestos). The proposed transportable office building is a newly constructed building and does not contain asbestos materials and is therefore compliant with the Scheme and its policies.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Theme: | 2 Economy and Growth |
| Strategic Objective: | 2.2 Support access to land development opportunities to meet local residential, commercial and industrial needs. |
| Priority Actions: | 2.1.2 Support provision of civil works and services to new residential and commercial land developments lead by. |

Sustainability Implications

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

There is minimal compliance risk associated with this Item as the development will comply with provisions of the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6 and Local Planning Scheme Policy No.1 – Moveable Buildings. The risk rating is considered to be LOW (2), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Insignificant (1). This risk will be minimised by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council:


- 1) GRANTS Development Approval for a proposed dome structure (15.0m x 12.192m x 7.5m high) and two sea containers (2.438m x 12.192m x 2.9m high), to be situated at Lot 1285 (#160) Mitchell Street Merredin, as outlined in Attachment 12.1A;**
- 2) ADVISES the applicant that the granting of Development Approval does not constitute a building permit and that an application for a building permit must be submitted to the local government for all building work.**

13. OFFICER'S REPORTS – INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Nil

14. OFFICER’S REPORTS – CORPORATE SERVICES

14.1 Statement of Financial Activity – April 2026

| | |
|--|---|
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">Corporate Services</h2>  | |
| Responsible Officer: | Leah Boehme, EMCS |
| Author: | As Above |
| File Reference: | Nil |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 14.1A – Statement of Financial Activity Attachment 14.1B – Detailed Statements Attachment 14.1C – Capital Works Progress Attachment 14.1D – Investment Report |

Purpose of Report

- Executive Decision
 Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider the Statements of Financial Activity and Investment Report for the month of April 2026 and be advised of associated financial matters, including consideration of a proposed budget amendment.

Background

The Statement of Financial Activity, Detailed Statements, Capital Works Progress and Investment Report are attached for Council’s information.

Comment

Statement of Financial Activity

Regulation 34 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* requires the Shire to prepare a monthly statement of financial activity for consideration by Council within 2 months after the end of the month of the report. These reports are included at Attachments 14.1A to D inclusive.

Budget Amendments

The following budget amendment is recommended:

| GL/Job | Description | Current Budget | Variation Amount | Revised Budget | Reason |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 4120790/ WC006 | Recycled Water Network Fence | \$0,000 | \$8,250 | \$8,250 | Fence required by Dept of Health |
| Total extra expenditure: | | | \$8,250 | | |

The above-mentioned amendment is recommended so that this project can be finalised prior to the new financial year. It was not anticipated that a fence would be required around the newly installed tank, however the Department of Health have flagged this as a requirement.

As the increase to the Shire’s expenditure totals \$8,250 and there is no increase to the Shire’s income, the current budget surplus of \$11,035 will be reduced to \$2,785.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme: 4 Communication and Leadership
 Strategic Objective: 4.8 Financial Management
 Priorities Actions: 4.8.1 Maintain strong fiscal and financial management of Council’s budget

Sustainability Implications

∅ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer’s recommendation.

Risk Implications

The Statement of Financial Activity is presented monthly and provides a retrospective picture of the activities at the Shire. Contained within the report is information pertaining to the financial cost and delivery of strategic initiatives and key projects.

To mitigate the risk of budget over-runs or non-delivery of projects, CEO has implemented internal control measures such as regular Council and management reporting and a quarterly process to monitor financial performance against budget estimates.

Materiality reporting thresholds have been established at 10% or \$10,000 whichever is greater, for operating and capital, to alert management prior to there being irreversible impacts.

It should also be noted that there is an inherent level of risk of misrepresentation of the financials through either human error or potential fraud.

The establishment of control measures through a series of efficient systems, policies and procedures, which fall under the responsibility of the CEO as laid out in the *Local Government (Financial Management Regulations) 1996* regulation 5, seek to mitigate the possibility of this occurring.

These controls are set in place to provide daily, weekly, and monthly checks to ensure that the integrity of the data provided is reasonably assured.

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* if this Item was not presented to Council. The risk rating is considered to be Low (4), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer’s Recommendation.

Financial Implications

The adoption of the Statements of Financial Activity is retrospective. Accordingly, the financial implications associated with adopting this are nil.

In regard to the proposed budget amendment, the addition of the expenditure as suggested will see the current budget surplus reduced from \$11,035 to \$2,785.

Voting Requirements

- Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Officer’s Recommendation


That Council:

1. **RECEIVE** the Statements of Financial Activity and Investment Report for the period ending 30 April 2026 in accordance with Regulation 34 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*; and
2. **APPROVES** the amendment to the Shire of Merredin 2025/26 Annual Budget as per the following table, pursuant to section 6.8(1(b)) of the *Local Government Act 1995*:

| GL/Job | Description | Current Budget | Variation Amount | Revised Budget | Reason |
|--------|-------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|--------|
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| 4120790/ WC006 | Recycled Water Network Fence | \$0,000 | \$8,250 | \$8,250 | Fence required by Dept of Health |
| Total extra expenditure: | | | \$8,250 | | |

14.2 List of Accounts Paid – April 2026

| | |
|---|--|
| <h3>Corporate Services</h3>  | |
| Responsible Officer: | Leah Boehme, EMCS |
| Author: | As above |
| File Reference: | Nil |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 14.2A - Payments Listing April 2026 |

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider the schedule of accounts paid for the month of April 2026.

Background

The attached list of accounts paid during the month of April 2026, under Delegated Authority, is provided for Council's information and endorsement.

Comment

Nil

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme: 4 Communication and Leadership
Strategic Objective: 4.8 Financial Management
Priorities Actions: 4.8.1 Maintain strong fiscal and financial management of Council's budget

Sustainability Implications

∅ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* if this Item was not presented to Council. The risk rating is considered to be Low (4), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

All liabilities settled have been in accordance with the Annual Budget provisions.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority




Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council RECEIVE the schedule of accounts paid during April 2026 as listed, covering cheques, EFT's, directly debited payments and wages, as numbered and totaling \$1,477,623.45 from the Merredin Shire Council Municipal bank account and \$0 from the Merredin Shire Council Trust bank account.

14.3 Differential Rating Strategy 2026/27

| | |
|---|--|
| <h2>Corporate Services</h2>  | |
| Responsible Officer: | Craig Watts, CEO |
| Author: | Leah Boehme, EMCS |
| File Reference: | Nil |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author and Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 14.3A – Statement of Objects and Reasons for Differential Rating in 2026/27 Attachment 14.3B – 2026/27 Rates % Increase Comparison |

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

For Council to decide the percentage rates yield increase for adoption in 2026/27 and to approve advertising of the proposed differential and minimum rates for the 2026/27 financial year and invite community feedback on those proposed.

Background

Process of setting differential and minimum rates:

Local Governments are empowered to impose differential general rates subject to compliance with Section 6.33 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Differential rating provides Council with flexibility in the level of rates being raised from specifically identified properties or groups of properties within the community. It is common for Councils to base differential rating for properties on Town Planning Scheme zonings, however other criteria such as land use may be used.

Once a budget deficiency has been determined, and after taking into consideration the objectives of the Council Plan, a rating strategy and proposed differential general rates in the dollar can be determined. Rates should not be increased by a fixed amount without due consideration of the deficiency. Unless Ministerial approval is given, the amount expected to be raised through all types of local government rates must be within 90% to 110% of the deficiency of the budget (s6.34). This acts to limit the amount that may be raised by rates, but only in proportion to the expenditure requirement determined by the local government, and not in the manner of a set cap on the maximum level of income which can be raised through rates.

Council is required to give local public notice prior to imposing any differential general rates, or any minimum payment applying to a differential rate category for a minimum of 21 days. Council does, however, have the discretion to vary the rate in the dollar and minimum rate during its budget deliberations without having to re-advertise the changes.

Before local public notice is given, proposed rates should be determined by Council, along with the objects and reasons, providing justification for each differential general rate or minimum payment. It is important that these provide sufficient supporting information to electors and ratepayers, or local governments may be asked to re-advertise by the Minister for Local Government (the Minister).

Differential rating does not currently apply to properties utilising Gross Rental Valuations. Gross Rental Valuation rates are included within Attachment 14.3B, and will be advertised with the differential rating values, with the same percentage increase as determined for the Unimproved Valuation properties.

In considering the differential rating, Council must consider the necessary increase to the rates yield that will be required for the 2026/27 financial year.

Considerations:

The following matters are for Council to consider when determining an appropriate rate increase for the Shire of Merredin (the Shire) in the 2026/27 financial year.

Economic Climate

The changing economic climate and Consumer Price Index (CPI) rises have had a significant impact, contributing to rising costs for services, materials and supply chain disruptions. Though this steadied across 2024/25, increased costs remained during 2025/26. Volatility with fuel supplies due to the war in Iran during 2025/26 have caused further strains to local government budgets, with contractor prices increasing exponentially to deal with fuel market prices and subsequent impacts on transportation, supply of goods, petroleum related products such as bitumen and asphalt, and fertilisers.

The Shire's Strategic Resource Plan 2019-2034 had assumed a minimum annual rate increase of 3% per annum, consisting of 2% CPI and 1% for service changes over time.

Unfortunately, the assumed CPI increases of 2% per annum, was a significant underestimation of the actual annual CPI impact that has been felt by the organisation over the past five years.

Council's decision to increase the Shire's rates yield for 2023/24 by 9%, 2024/25 by 5% and 2025/26 by 7% has pulled back a portion of this deficit, however higher costs are still having an effect on the Shire's ability to provide services and maintain assets.

It is currently predicted that the upcoming CPI (March 2026 to March 2027) will be 3.4-3.5%, however this may change pending global factors. The current CPI (annual to March 2026) has risen to 4.6% as advised by the WA Treasury Corporation.

Landgate Revaluations

In the 2025/26 financial year, Landgate again completed UV revaluations only, with GRV revaluations to occur during the 2026/27 financial year. The most significant change this year again related to Rural Unimproved Valuations which have seen an overall average change for the Shire of 23.27%, higher than the previous year's increase of 19.77%. This relates to broadacre agricultural properties.

Rate in the Dollar (RID) Calculations

With further significant increases to Rural UV valuations, it has been necessary to decrease the RID for this rating category to ensure ratepayers did not feel the full effect of these increases. This also meant that a blanket RID increase was unable to occur, due to this method causing the Shire to have a top RID that is more than double the lowest RID, which is not permitted without Ministerial approval. Section 6.33 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1995* outlines “*In imposing a differential general rate a local government is not to, without the approval of the Minister, impose a differential general rate which is more than twice the lowest differential general rate imposed by it*”. The Shire could make application to the Minister once advertising the differential rates is completed, however this could delay the adoption of the 2026/27 budget while approval is sought.

To ensure the Shire remains compliant, the UV2 – Urban Rural and UV4 – Power Generation RIDs will need to decrease further, which would mean that the total yield would decrease by between \$24,000 and \$27,000, depending on the percentage total rates yield selected by Council. This equates to roughly a 0.4% decrease to the total rates yield, so a 6% increase would actually provide the Shire with around a 5.6% increase to total rates yield and a 5% increase would actually provide the Shire with a 4.61% increase to yield. To counter this, modelling has been completed for a 5.5% increase and a 6.5% increase to allow Council to make an informed decision.

As minimum rates were increased by 3% for the 2025/26 rates collection. It is proposed that these are not increased for the 2026/27 financial year. The table below shows the current minimum rates per rating category.

| Rate Category | Current minimum |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| GRV | \$960 |
| UV 1 – Rural | \$1190 |
| UV 2 – Urban Rural Residential | \$1190 |
| UV 4 – Special Use Power Generation | \$1190 |
| UV 5 – Special Use Airport | \$1190 |
| UV 3 – Mining Tenements | \$200 |

Recreation Services

The operation of the Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre (MRCLC) remains an important consideration in relation to the development of the 2026/27 Annual Budget, and therefore the rates yield increase required, with the cost of capital works to be undertaken expected to continue to be high.

Though \$168,000 of interest and municipal funds are budgeted to be allocated to the Recreation Facilities Reserve during 2025/26, this will only see a balance of around \$1,259,000 available to complete major capital works at the facility moving forward.

Salaries and Wages

Though the wage case has not yet been released for the coming year, it is predicted that this will be around the CPI rate, which was 4.6% for the period March 2025 to March 2026, almost double that of the previous year. The SAT determination of a 3.5% increase for CEOs and Councillors would also indicate a figure in this area for wage increases. Staff wages are the largest average expenditure for the Shire annually, so an increase such as above will require

a substantial financial commitment in the budget. The Superannuation Guarantee is also set to increase from 12% to 12.5%. Based on 2025/26 budget, a 3.5% increase would equate to around \$120,000, a further ~2.75% increase to total rates yield.

Conclusion

As a result of the above, the Administration consider a minimum ~5.5% increase to total yield (equating to an overall rates yield increase of 5.12%) as the base required to partially offset CPI increases and predicted expenditure above that experienced in 2025/26, which will increase the rates yield by a figure of \$299,268.28.

This does not account for any decreases to income that Council may experience or increases to current organisation service levels that Council may consider.

Table of Rates:

The current 2025/26 Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,160.00 | 0.013325 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,160.00 | 0.026650 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.025875 |
| UV4 – Power Generation | \$1,160.00 | 0.025800 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,160.00 | 0.023971 |

The Administration has provided, as part of this agenda item below, a number of options for Council to consider in relation to the percentage yield increase that they may choose to apply for the 2026/27 financial year.

It should be noted, to meet the considerations described above, the following total yield increases would be required:

- Minimal CPI offset – 3.4%
- Salaries and wages – estimated 2.75%

Total: 6.15%

Based on the above, a 6.15% minimum rate yield increase would be required to meet these considerations without reducing current services or delaying other required capital works. This also assumes that untied financial assistance grants received by the organisation are likely to increase somewhat, to assist in meeting rising service costs.

Should Council choose to adopt a lesser yield increase than the above, this may result in reductions of either service levels across the organisation, or a reduction in capital expenditure (with the exception of committed projects).

It should be noted that reduction in capital is something that has already been implemented over a number of previous financial years, and the remaining capital works have focused on strategically aligned projects, such as grant funded roads and other capital projects (and co-funding where required). This results in less opportunities to delay capital as a policy option than in previous years.

As a result, the most likely opportunity to balance the budget depending on the chosen rates yield would be with reduction across services, varying based on the percentage chosen. This would be dealt with during budget development.

The Administration has stepped out the implications for each of the modelled options, to allow Council to make informed choices about maintaining, or reducing service levels across the organisation.

Options for Consideration of Council:

It should be noted that the option endorsed by Council will also be the percentage increase applied to Gross Rental Value rated properties.

Option One: 3% increase to total rates yield (2.59% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 3% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$151,408.18 from the 20245/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the majority of the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case. Choosing this option does not account for capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation or the effects to expenditure of CPI and the current fuel crisis. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 3% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.009938 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.019500 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.018000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation | \$1,190.00 | 0.019876 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018060 |

Option Two: 4% increase to total rates yield (3.61% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 4% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$210,969.35 from the 2025/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case and a portion of the CPI increase expected. Choosing this option does not account for the anticipated capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation or the rest of the effects to expenditure of CPI. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 4% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.010040 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.020000 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.019000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation Gen | \$1,190.00 | 0.020080 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018250 |

Option Three: 5% increase to total rates yield (4.61% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 5% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$269,267.02 from the 2025/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case and a larger portion of the CPI increase expected. Choosing this option does not account for the anticipated capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation or the rest of the effects to expenditure of CPI. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 5% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.010143 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.020200 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.020000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation Gen | \$1,190.00 | 0.020286 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018402 |

Option Four: 5.5% increase to total rates yield (5.12% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 5.5% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$299,286.28 from the 2025/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case and the majority of the CPI increase expected. Choosing this option does not account for the anticipated capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 5.5% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.010194 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.020300 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.020000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation Gen | \$1,190.00 | 0.020388 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018491 |

Option Five: 6% increase to total rates yield (5.6% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 6% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$327,363.32 from the 2025/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case and the CPI increase expected. Some minor capital works (i.e. air conditioner replacement at the MRCLC) could also be covered. Choosing this option does not account for the remainder of the anticipated capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 6% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.010245 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.020400 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.020000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation Gen | \$1,190.00 | 0.020490 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018580 |

Option Six: 6.5% increase to total rates yield (6.11% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 6.5% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$357,085.68 from the 2025/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case and the CPI increase expected. A slightly larger amount of capital works could also be covered. Choosing this option does not account for the remainder of the anticipated capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 6.5% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.010296 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.020500 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.020000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation Gen | \$1,190.00 | 0.020592 |
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018667 |

Option Seven: 7% increase to total rates yield (6.58% adjusted)

Should Council choose to apply a 7% increase to the total rates yield, this would result in an increase of \$384,887.43 from the 2025/26 rates yield.

This revenue would cover the salary and wage increase predicted for staff in line with the wage case and the CPI increase expected. A slightly larger amount of capital works could also be covered. Choosing this option does not account for the remainder of the anticipated capital expenditure that will be required across the organisation. A reduction to services across the organisation would likely be required. This figure does not take into account any increase to current service levels across the organisation, or any reduction in income that Council may propose.

The Table of Rates (Unimproved Valuations) for a 7% yield increase is set out below:

| Unimproved Value | Minimum Rate | Rate in \$ |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| UV1 – Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.010347 |
| UV2 – Urban Rural | \$1,190.00 | 0.020600 |
| UV3 – Mining | \$200.00 | 0.020000 |
| UV4 – Power Generation Gen | \$1,190.00 | 0.020694 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------|----------|
| UV5 – Special Use Airstrip | \$1,190.00 | 0.018753 |
|----------------------------|------------|----------|

These options are all presented for the consideration of Council.

| |
|----------------|
| Comment |
|----------------|

Rateable properties in the Shire are rated on either GRV or Unimproved Value (UV).

Values are determined by the Valuer General’s Office (VGO). Typically, properties within the town boundary are rated using GRV, which is based on an estimate of what the improved property will generate in rent in a year. GRV properties are revalued every three to five years, based on programs determined by the Valuer-General. A revaluation for the Shire occurred in August 2023.

Other properties in the Shire are rated using unimproved values, based on the capital value of the unimproved (bare) land. UV properties are revalued every year by the VGO. Whilst unimproved values are based on the capital value of the land, land prices are still linked to the land’s capacity to generate annual revenue.

The Shire generates rate revenue by charging a rate-in-the-dollar (rates) against the valuations. The Shire’s UV properties are rated as Rural, Urban Rural, Mining, Power Generation and Special Use Airstrip.

A review of other local government authorities advertising of rates indicates that most are seeking an increase in the order of 5% to 6%. The rate increase as proposed by the Shire Administration falls within this range.

| |
|---------------------|
| Consultation |
|---------------------|

Councillor/Officer Consultation

Councillors have been briefed on this item prior to the Council meeting.

Community Consultation

No Community consultation was required.

| |
|----------------------------|
| Policy Implications |
|----------------------------|

Nil.

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Statutory Implications |
|-------------------------------|

Section 6.33 of the *Local Government Act 1995* allows for local governments to differentially rate properties.

Section 6.33 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1995* outlines “*In imposing a differential general rate a local government is not to, without the approval of the Minister, impose a differential general rate which is more than twice the lowest differential general rate imposed by it.*”

As the highest UV sub-category rate is less than twice the lowest, Ministerial approval is not required.

Section 6.35 of the *Local Government Act 1995*:

6.35. *Minimum payment*

(1) *Subject to this section, a local government may impose on any rateable land in its district a minimum payment which is greater than the general rate which would otherwise be payable on that land.*

(2) *A minimum payment is to be a general minimum but subject to subsection (3), a lesser minimum may be imposed in respect of any portion of the district.*

(3) *In applying subsection (2) the local government is to ensure the general minimum is imposed on not less than —*

(a) *50% of the total number of separately rated properties in the district; or*

(b) *50% of the number of properties in each category referred to in subsection (6), on which a minimum payment is imposed.*

(4) *A minimum payment is not to be imposed on more than the prescribed percentage of —*

(a) *the number of separately rated properties in the district; or*

(b) *the number of properties in each category referred to in subsection (6), unless the general minimum does not exceed the prescribed amount.*

(5) *If a local government imposes a differential general rate on any land on the basis that the land is vacant land it may, with the approval of the Minister, impose a minimum payment in a manner that does not comply with subsections (2), (3) and (4) for that land.*

(6) *For the purposes of this section a minimum payment is to be applied separately, in accordance with the principles set forth in subsections (2), (3) and (4) in respect of each of the following categories —*

(a) *to land rated on gross rental value; and*

(b) *to land rated on unimproved value; and*

(c) *to each differential rating category where a differential general rate is imposed.*

[Section 6.35 amended by No. 49 of 2004 s. 61.]

Section 53 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* sets the Prescribed amount in Relation to Minimums.

53. *Amount prescribed for minimum payment (Act s. 6.35(4))*

The amount prescribed for the purposes of section 6.35(4) is \$200

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme:

4 Communication and Leadership

Strategic Objective:

4.2 Provide accountable leadership, transparent decision making and good governance.

4.8 Implement strong financial management to maintain current services and facilities, while providing for future growth.

Priorities Actions:

4.2.1 Support the Shire President and Councillors by working in partnership with the Executive to deliver leadership and oversight of the Shire, providing advice, information and guidance to support sound, informed decision making.

4.8.1 Maintain strong fiscal and financial management of Council's budget.

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation at this stage. However, Council's decision will impact the Shire's resourcing and asset management during 2026/27 and moving forward.

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* if this Item was not presented to Council. The risk rating is considered to be Moderate (6), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Moderate (3). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

Adopting a differential model should result in required rates revenue for the 2026/27 financial year.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority


Officers Recommendation

That Council;

1. **ADOPT** for draft budget purposes, Option _____ as stated in the Item, as the differential rate in the dollar and minimum payments for Unimproved Value rated properties for the Shire of Merredin, subject to finalisation of the draft 2026/27 Annual Budget and the establishment of the funding shortfall required from imposition of rates on Gross Rental Value rated properties;
2. **ADVERTISE** its intention to levy differential rates on Unimproved Value properties together with Gross Rental Value rated properties for the 2026/27 Budget, and advise the public of the availability of the Shire of Merredin's 2026/27 Differential Rating Objects and Reasons (updated to suit the option selected by Council), in accordance with section 6.36 of the *Local Government Act 1995*; and
3. **NOTES** that any public submissions received in response to Item 2 above, will be presented to Council for consideration prior to adoption of the 2026/27 Rates.

15. OFFICER'S REPORTS – COMMUNITY SERVICES

15.1 Annual Community Funding

| <h2>Community Services</h2> | |  SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Responsible Officer: | Codi Brindley-Mullen, EMS&C | |
| Author: | As above | |
| File Reference: | 26/27 Budget | |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. | |
| Attachments: | Attachment 15.1A – Evaluation table | |

Purpose of Report

- Executive Decision Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider the annual community funding applications to be considered and incorporated into the 26/27 budget.

Background

Council adopted Policy 3.19 - Community Funding at its 18th April 2023, (CMRef 83143) which coordinates Council's response to community requests for financial support. It also ensures that Shire funding resources are allocated in a way that is transparent, compliant and equitable and that funded projects further the aims and objectives of the Shire and represent responsible use of public monies.

The aims of the Shire of Merredin's Community Funding Program are:

1. To encourage the development of services, facilities and events that meet identified community needs;
2. To promote active participation of residents in community initiatives and the development of skills, knowledge and opportunities;
3. To provide assistance to the community to develop initiatives and services that support the Shire of Merredin's objectives;
4. Link to the community vision and strategic goals listed in the Strategic Community Plan; and
5. To enhance the image of the Shire of Merredin within the community.

Comment

The Shire has three grant streams as per the following:

1. Recurring Annual Grant
2. Annual Grant
3. Quick Grant

Recurring Annual Grant

Recurring Grants are now into their second year of funding, with the following organisations being approved to receive funding by Council.

| Organisation | Amount \$ | Expiry |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Merredin CRC | \$10,000 | March 2028 |
| Merredin Show | \$10,000 | March 2028 |
| Wheatbelt Agcare | \$2,000 | March 2028 |

Annual Grant

The Annual Grant is open once per year and is the Shire’s largest funding opportunity for community groups to apply for. The Grant is for projects/events seeking cash funding, in-kind contributions or fee waivers up to the value of \$10,000 (ex GST). Administration Staff called for applications aimed at Councils Annual Grants Program for 2026/27 to enable these to be included within budget deliberations.

The following applications were received and are captured on in the evaluation table as per Attachment 15.1A.

| Organisation | Project | Project Cost | Amount Requested \$ | Recommended Support |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Actors Hub Studios | The Blind Eye Trilogy Merredin Community Residency | \$20,000 | \$10,000 | - |
| Burracoppin Tennis club | Upgrade of Burracoppin Tennis Clubhouse | \$50,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| Merredin Seventh Day Adventist Church | Trailer | \$30,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| The Men’s Table | Healthy Men making Healthy Communities in Merredin | \$25,000 | \$10,000 | - |
| Merredin Senior Centre Inc. | Refurbishment of kitchen appliances and installation of Air con unit. | \$10,917 | \$10,000 | Capture within the Building Maintenance Budget |
| St Marys School, Merredin | St Marys School Events | \$7,661 | \$3,083 – Cash \$2,701 – In-kind | \$5,784 |

Quick Grant

The Quick Grant is for projects seeking cash funding, in-kind contributions or fee waivers up to the value of \$2,500 (ex GST) per financial year. Applicants can receive multiple Quick Grants per year, to a cumulative total of \$2,500 (ex GST) per financial year. The Quick Grant is open all year round, and applications will be assessed within 20 working days.

The intention of this funding category is to provide fast response and turn around to projects or opportunities that have merit, and for projects which are unlikely to have the lead time to be planned in advance. An allocation of funding will be recommended to be provided within the 2026/27 budget.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

Councillor were consulted at the May Briefing Session held on Tuesday, 19 May 2026

Community Consultation

Advertising of the Community Grant funding was undertaken between 1 April to 13 May 2026, including the Shire Website (1 April, 23 April, 30 April and 8 May), Social Media pages and Newsletter (2 April and 1 May). Posters were also placed on the Shire’s noticeboards and placed on display throughout the Town Centre, on the bins.

Policy Implications

Policy – 3.19 Community Funding.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership

Strategic Objective: 4.2 Decision Making

Priorities Actions: 4.2.1 Support the Shire President and Councillors by working in partnership with the Executive to deliver leadership and oversight of the Shire, providing advice, information and guidance to support sound, informed decision making.

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

If this allocation is not made into the allocated budget, it would mean that the Administration will receive these requests throughout the year. The risk rating is considered to be Moderate (6), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (4) and a consequence of Moderate (3). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer’s Recommendation.

Financial Implications

If the Officer’s recommendation is supported, the Annual community grant funding for 2026/27 will comprise \$23,083 funding component and \$2,701 in-kind support. The recurring

Annual Grants will comprise \$22,000 in the 2026/27 Budget, with a further \$9,500 allocated for quick grants. The total combined grant funding (cash component) will be approximately \$54,583.

Voting Requirements

- Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Officer’s Recommendation

That Council

- PROVIDES financial support to the following community projects and events, being a mix of cash and in-kind, for the following amounts and conditions as outlined in the tables below:**

Table 1 - Recurring Grants 2026/27

| Organisation | Amount |
|------------------|----------|
| Merredin CRC | \$10,000 |
| Merredin Show | \$10,000 |
| Wheatbelt Agcare | \$2,000 |

Table 2 - Annual Grants 2026/27

| Organisation | Amount | Conditions |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Burracoppin Tennis club | \$10,000 Cash | 1. Acknowledges the support provided by the Shire of Merredin in all media material; and 2. Provides to Council a report upon completion of the program. |
| Merredin Seventh Day Adventist Church | \$10,000 Cash | |
| St Marys School, Merredin | \$3,083 – Cash \$2,701 – In-kind | |

- INSTRUCTS the Chief Executive Officer to include \$9,500 allocation in the 26/27 Budget for the purpose of Quick Grants.**

15.2 Recreational Masterplan Report

Community Services



| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Responsible Officer: | Codi Brindley-Mullen – EMS&C |
| Author: | As above |
| File Reference: | Nil |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 15.2A – DRAFT - Recreational Masterplan |

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider the Recreational Masterplan Report.

Background

The Shire of Merredin (the Shire) engaged Urbis Pty Ltd to undertake research, consultation and analysis to develop options and then deliver a Strategic Recreation Master Plan and Recreation Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, as described in request for tender RFT01-2024-25.

The plan is part of the Shire broader commitment to planning for long term provision and development of our community sporting and recreation infrastructure.

Comment

Urbis commenced works in October 2024. In early November 2024 an engagement plan was established to identify and recognise the important role stakeholders play in shaping the future direction of recreational masterplan.

Throughout late 2024, engineers were engaged to undertake detailed assessment of the Shire's key recreational assets including the Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre as well as the Merredin Districts Olympic Swimming Pool. This assessment focused on the current condition of the facilities, asset lifespan, maintenance requirements and future infrastructure considerations to support long term planning.

In January 2025:

- The Shire received the first interim report alongside the asset condition report.
- Urbis developed and distributed a stakeholder survey for our local sporting groups to gather feedback on the current facility use, future needs and priorities

In March 2025:

- A Councillor Briefing Session was held to review the draft interim report and discuss preliminary findings and identify priorities

In July 2025

- Concept designs and proposed priorities were presented to Council for discussion and feedback. This discussion focused on ensuring the identified priorities aligned with the current community needs, strategic objectives as well as a long-term vision. Consideration was also given to future growth opportunities and ensuring any proposed developments could be planned in a staged manner should future demand and community participation increase over time. Feedback was provided back to Urbis incorporating the comments of both Councillors and the Shire Administration

In August 2025

- The draft Asset Usage and Criticality document was provided to the Administration, with feedback provided on each recreational asset type.
- Urbis provided the draft masterplan for review by the Councillors and Shire Administration.

In November 2025

- Draft of the report is provided with the Shire Administration and Councillors undertaking review and providing feedback. This included updates of works already undertaken, together with items to be removed from the plan as these were not considered priorities. Also sought copies of all supporting documentation and assumptions.

In January 2026

- Further meetings with Urbis to refine the plan and identify areas where Councillors had concerns. Request to amend the priorities within the plan, including projected timeframes for major parts of the plan. Errors within the document identified for rectification.

In March 2026

- Updated plan from Urbis with amendments requested was received and then circulated to Councillors in early April. Plan discussed at briefing with the direction to put the report to Council at the May Ordinary Council Meeting for noting. Urbis requested to provide all detail for inclusion within the Council Report. Council identified that further updating, including as per the current works packages completed, could be included within the document by the Shire Administration.

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

Nil

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan

Theme: Community and Culture
Strategic Objective: 1.3 Sport & Recreation Grow participation in sport and recreation activities through multipurpose inclusive places and facilities which encourage healthy lifestyles and being physically active to improve community wellbeing.
Priorities Actions 1.3.1 Implement the Shire's Strategic Recreation Master Plan.

Sustainability Implications

∅ Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

There is a reputational risk associated with this Item as community consultation and feedback associated with this plan will lead to expectations having appropriate plans in place to maintain and improve recreational services. The risk rating is considered to be Moderate (6), which is determined by a likelihood of Possible (3) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

Costs associated with the development of the Recreational Masterplan are already included within the 2025/26 budget.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES** the attachment 15.2A Strategic Recreation Masterplan.
2. **INSTRUCTS** the CEO to update the document to reflect the works already undertaken within the Masterplan, together with any other updates and considerations directed by Council.

16. OFFICER’S REPORTS – ADMINISTRATION

16.1 Policy Review – Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices

| | |
|---|--|
| <h1>Administration</h1>  | |
| Responsible Officer: | Craig Watts, CEO |
| Author: | Suzanne Doncon, GO |
| Legislation: | <i>Flags Act 1953 [Cth]</i> |
| File Reference: | Nil |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author and Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. |
| Attachments: | Attachment 16.1A – Policy 5.10 - Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy – track changes Attachment 16.1B – Policy 5.10 – Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy – Final |

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider proposed changes to the Shire of Merredin Policy 5.10 Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy.

Background

As a first step in the path of reconciliation, this Policy has been updated to improve the Shire’s processes and procedures in relation to Aboriginal culture and their people. Although the Shire lists development of a Reconciliation Action Plan within the 2025-35 Council Plan, consultation with members of the Merredin Aboriginal Community suggests that this will not be supported, therefore the Shire Policy has been amended to reflect changes to support reconciliation.

Comment

This Policy currently provides some guidance for the Shire on expected cultural protocols practiced for community events. The amendments to this Policy seek to amend the wording of the Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country and Smoking Ceremonies to provide greater understanding and context for when these practices are encouraged and who is permitted to complete them. Provision has also been made to confirm flying of the Aboriginal Flag (and Torres Strait Islander Flag where there are four flagpoles) at Shire facilities and property. Additionally, the amendments seek to include guidance on the Shire’s

actions in engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Shire Administrations procedures for properties and communications.

Policy Implications

Policy 5.10 Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy is proposed to be amended to provide greater cultural understanding for the purpose of Acknowledgements and Welcomes to Country, and to provide guidance for the Shire Administration's consistent engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture.

Statutory Implications

As this is a Council Policy, the policy will provide guidance to the Shire Administration and carry no legislative enforcement powers. Amendments to Policy 5.10 Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices Policy comply with the provisions of the *Flags Act 1953*.

Strategic Implications

∅ Strategic Community Plan

Theme: Communication and Leadership

Service Area Objective: Community Engagement

Priorities and Strategies for Change: The Shire has a strong working relationship with the Njaki Njaki Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal community members.
Work with Njaki Njaki Noongar People and wider Aboriginal Community to develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan.

∅ Council Plan 2025-35

Theme: Community and Culture

Strategic Objectives: 1.6 History and Heritage

Priority Actions: 1.6.1 Strengthen ties with local Aboriginal groups and organisations.
1.6.2 Improve relationships with Aboriginal groups and organisations through development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Sustainability Implications

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendations.

Risk Implications

There is a reputational risk associated with this Item as a lack of clear direction in the form of policies will lead to inconsistent decision making and advice to the public, leading to public embarrassment. The risk rating is considered to be Moderate (6), which is determined by a likelihood of Possible (3) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan. All costs associated with the implementation of this policy are provided within the current budget.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council ADOPTS updated Policy 5.10 Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Practices, as presented in Attachment 16.1B.


17. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

18. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

19. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE PERSON PRESIDING OR BY DECISION

20. MATTERS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

20.1 Funding Variation for RFQ11 25/26

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| <h1>Infrastructure</h1> | |  SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT |
| Responsible Officer: | Craig Watts, CEO | |
| Author: | As Above | |
| File Reference: | Nil | |
| Disclosure of Interest: | The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item. | |
| Attachments: | Nil | |

This report is confidential as it contains information for a contract which includes the tendered methodology for calculating a price as per Section 5.23 (4)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

21. CLOSURE

There being no further business, the President thanked those in attendance and declared the meeting closed at ___pm.

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