



**Local Emergency Management Committee Minutes  
3 October 2024 at 2.00 pm  
Shire of Merredin Council Chambers  
Cnr Barrack Street and King Street, Merredin**

<b>1.0 Attendance</b>	
Cr Phil Van Der Merwe	Shire of Merredin – Chair / Merredin VFRS
Craig Watts	Shire of Merredin
Amer Tawfik	Shire of Merredin
Sheree Lowe	Shire of Merredin / Merredin VFRS
Greg Hart	WAPOL
Mark Feast	DFES – A/Superintendent
Ashley Smith	DFES – District Officer, Natural Hazards
Shelby Robinson	DFES – District Emergency Management Adviser
Michael Caughey	Merredin Bush Fire Services (left at 2.45pm)
Laurent Marsol	Department of Parks and Wildlife
Joanne Spadaccini	Department of Communities
Di Dixon	Merredin Hospital (arrived at 2.04pm)
Gary Anderson	CBH
<b>2.0 Apologies</b>	
Codi Brindley-Mullen	Shire of Merredin
Peter Zenni	Shire of Merredin – Executive Manager of Development Services
Kylie Cattaway	Merredin College
David Hamersley	St Mary’s School
Alan Matthews	St John Ambulance
Terrence King	Western Power

### 3.0 Welcome

#### 3.1 Opening of Meeting

The Chair welcomed all attendees and opened the meeting at 2.00pm

### 4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

**Motion:** *That the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee held on 1 August 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.*

**Moved:** A Smith

**Seconded:** C Watts

### 5.0 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Nil

### 6.0 Correspondence

#### 6.1 Incoming Correspondence

Email from Shelby Robinson to all LEMC stakeholders “Consultation Request – State Hazard Plan – Human Biosecurity”

Email from Shelby Robinson to LG “Earthquake Webinar”

Email from Shelby Robinson to LG “DFES Pre High Threat Period Preparedness”

#### 6.2 Outgoing Correspondence

Nil

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

**Moved:** P Van Der Merwe

**Seconded:** C Watts

### 7.0 HMA and other Agency Updates

#### 7.1 Agency Briefings pre-circulated

Nil

#### 7.2 Other Agency Briefings

**Merredin SES:** Not currently busy, focusing on training and preparing for cyclone and bushfire season

**Department of Fire and Emergency Services:** The Commissioner has brought the high threat period forward. The High Threat Fleet has already been pre-deployed, and several training sessions have been delivered for crews not familiar with operating them

Workshops are taking place in country operations regarding the new Australian Warning System.

The ROC has completed audits on IMT structures, and has been exercising and upskilling staff.

A briefing was held for Local Governments on community and recovery preparedness.

**Merredin Hospital:** Been extremely busy recently. There have been a lot of people presenting with pneumonia over the last two months. Concern that there is “immunisation fatigue” in the community, and people are potentially not getting their flu shots like they normally would.

Have also been busy with trauma and critically ill people. Having St John Ambulance paramedics has been a great help.

Using a lot of agency staff still, but have appointed a nurse practitioner, and should be fully staffed from February next year. Relying on GPs for the hospital has been working well with few shortfalls. There are a few gaps in staffing over the Christmas period which they will be working to resolve.

Theatre is going well, with the surgeon wanting to increase their hours.

It is increasingly difficult to get ambulance transfers; in many cases they’ve needed to use the RFDS to transfer people in the absence of an ambulance crew. In one case, a patient had to wait 72 hours for a transfer. Nungarin and Mukinbudin crews usually do the ambulance transfers, but they’ve been struggling for capacity in recent times.

**The Shire of Merredin:** Contract rangers will shortly be starting to do pre-firebreak inspections.

There will only be a skeleton staff over the Christmas break and therefore reduced services.

There were crews out on Tuesday night to deal with a fallen tree, with a few other trees they’re keeping an eye on.

**Merredin Police:** Low staff numbers at the moment. The only remaining sergeant, Todd Roberts, has transferred to Kununurra and there will be no replacement in the short term. Still providing a 24/7 service, but may be slower to respond as people will have to be called in from home.

**Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions:** Only conducted 4 prescribed burns in April (in Yilgarn, Dryandra National Park in Narrogin and Lake Grace). Attempted to complete a burn at Bonnie Rock, but had to extinguish due to adverse wind.

For the incoming season, water bombers are again expected to be available as they move from Geraldton to Cunderdin around 7<sup>th</sup> November. It is expected that there will be two

water bombers and one air attack. Strongly advise firefighters to call on them if they are needed. Air support can be mobilised through the DFES Rostered Duty Coordinator (RDC). The Incident Controller (IC) will have to provide a Ground Controller (GC) and a radio channel. Water bombers are very confident and experienced and can prompt if there is no-one present with GC training. Laurent will send an aide memoire to the ESO for distribution.

Merredin SES are starting to be trained up as water bomber reloaders.

**Merredin Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service:** Potential for a bad fire season. There is a lot of fuel around, but some late rains mean the fuel is still quite green and they can't carry out hazard reduction burns like they normally would at this time of year. They'll only just be ready to burn when the Prohibited Burning Period (PBP) begins. Looking at requesting an extension to the PBP.

**Department of Communities:** At state level, Department of Communities Emergency Relief and Support are looking at the logistics of placement of equipment. They are working on locating an emergency supplies trailer in Merredin (so that if something happens in Mukinbudin or Southern Cross, for example, there is emergency bedding nearby. Currently investigating possible storage options.

Evacuation Centre training for Local Governments and LEMC members will start being rolled out once the team are happy with revisions.

Evacuation Centre audits for Merredin is complete. Michael will be in touch soon to check whether what the DC have online for Merredin is accurate and relevant. Currently looking at some more information from the Fremantle office regarding the logistics of using educational residential colleges as evacuation centres.

**Merredin Bush Fire Brigades:** ESO has been busy organising and running courses including Ground Controller, Machine Supervision and Bushfire Safety Awareness. In a couple of weeks the pre-season meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Council will take place.

Conditions are quite dry in the northern and eastern parts of the Shire, and barley harvesting will start in 2-3 weeks, a bit earlier than normal. Fuel to the south and the west are much greener with higher fuel loads out there.

**CBH:** Areas out to the North will be harvesting a lot earlier. South and South West still a couple of weeks away. CBH crews are gearing up and making sure everything is ready to go when harvest begins.

## 8.0 Standing Items (Submitted at each Meeting)

### 8.1 Update of Contacts and Resources Register (Attachment 2)

### 8.2 Change of Positions/Leave and Acting Arrangements Notification

Jeremy has been seconded to another role for 6 months and will be replaced by Keith McCarron. Keith has been Acting Area Officer (Mortlock) for a few months, so will be hitting the ground running.

**8.3 Incident Support Group Activations**

Nil

**8.4 Risk Profile Change**

Nil

**8.5 Local Emergency Management Arrangements**

Nil

**8.6 Local Recovery Plan**

Nil

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

Nil

**9.0 Documentation**

Nil

**10.0 General Business**

The Shire of Merredin grant application for funding for the emergency generator for the Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre was unsuccessful. The feedback was that a lot of Local Governments put in for generator-related grants and many missed out. Council has allocated funding for rewiring the board to make the facility generator-ready.

CBH may have a trailer mounted generator to loan.

**11.0 Presentations or Proposed Exercises**

**11.1 Emergency management discussion exercise**

Craig Watts, CEO, Shire of Merredin, presented a case study/discussion exercise on his experiences working in emergency response before and after cyclones in Port Hedland and Karratha.

**12.0 Next Meeting**

A new start time of 3pm will be trialed for the next two meetings.

Date and Time	Venue
Thursday, 6 February 2025 at 3.00pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 1 May 2025 at 3.00pm	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 7 August 2025 at TBC	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers
Thursday, 2 October 2025 at TBC	Shire of Merredin Council Chambers

**13.0 Close**

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance and closed the meeting at 3.34pm.