

PIONEER PARK REDEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE TOURISM BOOST TO WHEATBELT HUB

Merredin's Pioneer Park was officially re-opened today, following a staged \$1.8 million redevelopment which has been taking place since May 2022.

The opening was marked with an on-site ceremony held by the Shire of Merredin, with Shire President Mark McKenzie cutting the ribbon and welcoming community members back to the park which will act as the new gateway to Merredin's CBD.

Shire President Mark McKenzie said he was thrilled to re-open the park, knowing what it means for the Merredin community.

"Pioneer Park is such an iconic part of Merredin, and I am pleased to be able to welcome the community back to the space, so they can see what we have delivered as the first part of our CBD Redevelopment," he said.

"We are looking forward to the improved park providing a vital boost for tourism to the area and in turn stimulating the local economy."

The redevelopment works at Pioneer Park were designed to highlight views of Merredin's pioneer history, including the heritage listed Merredin Water Tank and Merredin Railway and Military Museums, and draw tourists from Great Eastern Highway with new car parking, recreational spaces, and improved landscaping and drainage.

The redevelopment was funded through a combination of Shire and federal funding, with the Australian Government contributing approximately \$1 million in total to the project, as the first stage of the larger overall CBD Redevelopment project.

Federal Member for O'Connor, Rick Wilson MP, said the funding had been a great economic stimulus for Merredin and a chance for the community to progress a highly valued infrastructure project.

"This project reflects the Shire of Merredin's priorities and it's exciting that, after a 15-year wait, Pioneer Park was able to be included in a suite of revitalisation works in the Merredin CBD," he said.

The revitalisation of Pioneer Park is one stage of Merredin's CBD Redevelopment Project, with a further \$6.6 million of works to occur over the next few years, including the Town Centre and Apex Park stages which are to be completed next.

It is expected that on completion of the CBD Redevelopment Project, an additional 11,320 tourists will visit the Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre per year, spending an additional \$430,000 in local businesses, and creating 9 new ongoing full-time jobs. Shire of Merredin Chief Executive Officer Lisa Clack acknowledged the staff and community who had worked on and contributed to the upcoming projects.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has been involved in the planning and delivery [of the CBD Redevelopment Project] so far. Not only staff, but community members and groups who have volunteered their time," she said.

“While Pioneer Park is one small part of our overall program of works, I am really proud of the team that have delivered such a fantastic and quality start to our CBD Redevelopment for our community, and I am excited for both our team and the community as we now move onto our next stages.”

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Fast Facts

- The CBD Redevelopment Project as a whole has been designed around improving walkability, attracting tourists, enhancing key sightlines, and supporting local businesses, while also providing high quality infrastructure and facilities.
- The value of the construction and increased use of the CBD for Merredin businesses has been estimated to be \$7.9 million, in present value, over the next 20 years. There are also significant community and social benefits projected to be achieved from the project.
- Across the various projects planned for the CBD redevelopment - the Shire have secured \$4,331,459 in funding from the Australian Government.
- Key projects to be delivered under the total \$8.4m program of works for the CBD Redevelopment include:
 - Revitalisation of Pioneer Park
 - Revitalisation of Town Square
 - Relocation and fit-out of the Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre
 - Revitalisation of Apex Park
 - Potential refurbishment of the state heritage listed Water Tower, and interpretive strategy

