



LANDCORP

Merredin

**‘Growing Our Community’
An Economic Development
and Implementation Strategy**



**ROYALTIES
FOR REGIONS**



**Wheatbelt
Development
Commission**

Document Control

This document has been endorsed by:


Wheatbelt Development Commission Board

Shire of Merredin

Merredin Community Reference Group

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The Wheatbelt is a region of enormous opportunity. Its proximity to markets, diverse productive landscapes, strong economic base, its people and their strong sense of community, are all foundations for growth which contribute to the State's prosperity.

Welcome



Tim Shackleton

Chair

Wheatbelt Development Commission

In this exciting time of growth in our state and in our region, the Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) is pleased to be involved in the Growth Planning process committed to the future of Merredin.

This aspirational plan will greatly assist the expansion of industry, services and infrastructure to ensure readiness in supporting a population of 4,800 by 2050, in line with the State's projected population and economic growth.

The strategies outlined will position Merredin to build its competitive advantage and economic drivers to showcase its contribution to the State's prosperity

As a regional development organisation, the Wheatbelt Development Commission has played a responsive role to ensure the broader potential of the Central East sub-region is recognised. An innovative partnership between the Wheatbelt Development Commission, LandCorp and community representatives within Merredin has enforced the leadership and responsibility of the regional centre.

This process has been supported by the Department of Regional Development and LandCorp, with funding assistance from the Wheatbelt Regional Grants Scheme Royalties for Regions (RfR). It has involved extensive consultation with local, regional and State stakeholders and we thank each for their input and expertise. Ongoing consultation will continue to address strengths, inhibitors and opportunities for economic growth.

The Wheatbelt Development Commission is proud to be pioneering this model for delivering regional development and looks forward to future collaboration with the State Government and Shire of Merredin, to ensure that strategic planning and investment result in productive growth.



Renee Manning

Chair

Merredin Community Reference Group

Merredin is in a strong position, in terms of its geography and economic base, and wealth of passionate people, to realise the growth potential that this document articulates. With the wider Wheatbelt achieving an annual average growth rate in GDP of 8.2% over the past 10 years, the Central East region, for which Merredin is the regional centre, is far from disappearing off the map.

The Merredin Community Reference Group has welcomed the opportunity to assist in guiding the development of this document. It is pleasing to see so many diverse interests represented, and that the thoughts and ideas of the community are aligned strongly with the Wheatbelt Development Commission and the Shire of Merredin.

It is clear that without strong articulation and active pursuit of the strategies required to achieve growth, business as usual may prevail. It is clear to the reference group that Merredin will require a greater degree of self-sufficiency to ensure its long term economic sustainability.

This will require innovative funding methods and smart leveraging of investment and support for those with pioneering and entrepreneurial ideas. This will involve purposeful marketing of Merredin's assets, and strong engagement of the private sector and philanthropic community.

The plan identifies Merredin has a solid base from which to grow. Merredin has a plethora of strategic assets, including physical infrastructure, strong health and education services, a diverse business economy, including retail, trade, engineering, mining and agricultural services, underpinned by a stable agricultural base. Importantly, Merredin has the social capital – the people and the networks – to help drive the delivery of this plan.

On behalf of the Merredin Community Reference Group, I would like to commend the WDC and LandCorp on its efforts in developing the Merredin growth plan, and whole heartedly endorse the content of this plan.

As a group of passionate individuals with collective interest in the future of Merredin and the wider Central East region, the reference group looks forward to seeing the Merredin community, government and the private sector working together in the realisation of this plan.

Merredin Regional Centre Project Team



LandCorp



Wheatbelt Development Commission



RPS Group

Merredin Community Reference Group

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The Wheatbelt Development Commission and LandCorp would like to thank the Shire of Merredin, the Community Reference Group, RPS and many State Government agencies for their assistance in developing this document. The project team would also like to acknowledge Grant Stainer's contribution of photos.

Contents

Welcome.....	4
Merredin Regional Centre Project Team.....	6
Contents	7
Figures.....	8
Executive Summary.....	9
Introduction	13
Context	15
Vision for Growth	43
Economy.....	48
Guiding Principle 1 – Create a Vibrant Economy.....	48
Communities.....	58
Guiding Principle 2 - Strengthen the Community.....	58
Built Form and Housing.....	67
Guiding Principle 3 – Create Sustainable Built Form and Housing	67
Infrastructure	75
Guiding Principle 4 – Deliver Successful Infrastructure Management.....	75
Environment	90
Guiding Principle 5 - Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment	90
Governance	95
Guiding Principle 6 – Ensure Successful Governance	95
Acronyms.....	101
Glossary of Terms	102
References	103
Appendices	106



The consultant team would like to acknowledge the Noongar traditional owners and their forebears who have been custodians of this country for many centuries, and on which their community have performed age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and unique role in the life of this region.

Figures

- Figure 1: State and Local Agencies and organisations involved in the development of the Plan
- Figure 2: Strategic Framework Flow Chart
- Figure 3: The Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia
- Figure 4: The Central East Sub-Region
- Figure 5: Merredin Townsite Aerial Map (Source: Landgate, 2012)
- Figure 6: Family Type (Shire of Merredin)
- Figure 7: Age Breakdown (Shire of Merredin)
- Figure 8: Population Projections (Source: WDC)
- Figure 9: Proportional Share of Projected Population Growth (Source: WDC)
- Figure 10: Levels of Educational Qualification - Merredin Shire/ Town Population vs Western Australia
- Figure 11: Employment By Industry - Merredin S/T Population vs Western Australia
- Figure 12: Established House Sales 2000-2014 (Source: Landgate)
- Figure 13: RP Data On Merredin's Housing Market (Source: RP Data)
- Figure 14: Merredin Dwelling Type Breakdown (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- Figure 15: Dwelling Tenure in Merredin & Western Australia
- Figure 16: Breakdown of Merredin Lot Sizes (Source: Landgate)
- Figure 17: Housing Age By Year of Construction (Source: Landgate)
- Figure 18: Examples of Typical Merredin Housing (Source: Landgate)
- Figure 19: Strategic Assets of the Shire of Merredin
- Figure 20: Planned Infrastructure Projects
- Figure 21: Major Road Transport Linkages (Connectivity To Merredin)
- Figure 22: Community Infrastructure
- Figure 23: Relationship Between Employment Diversity & Employment Growth (2001-2006)
- Figure 24: Relationship Between Employment Diversity & Employment Growth (2006-2011)

Tables

Table 1: Timeframes.....	14
Table 2: Distances to Major Centres from Merredin	19
Table 3: Demographic Profile Of Merredin (Town), Merredin (Shire), Central East (including Koorda) & Western Australia	21
Table 4: Size of Total Labour Force (Persons)	26
Table 5: Merredin Housing Data on Residential Land (Source: Landgate)	33
Table 6: Properties on the Merredin Market (Source: RP Data On The Market Report)	34
Table 7: Summary Of Challenges & Opportunities For Growth	39
Table 8: Achieving A Vibrant Economy	57
Table 9: Achieving A Strong Community.....	66
Table 10: Achieving Sustainable Built Form and Housing	74
Table 11: Strategic Roads in Proximity to Merredin (Road Hierarchy & RAV Rating)	78
Table 12: Tier Rail Grain Routes (Length, CBH Receival Sites & Freight Purpose).....	80
Table 13: Achieving Successful Infrastructure Management	89
Table 14: Protecting the Natural Environment	94
Table 15: Achieving Successful Governance.....	100

Executive Summary

‘Growing Our Community’ – An Economic Development and Implementation Strategy for Merredin (the Plan) provides a vision and the guiding principles to enable economic growth, prosperity and wellbeing for the community of Merredin. The Plan includes actions, projects and initiatives to promote and share the benefits of growth throughout the town and across the region and accommodate a population of approximately 4,800 in Merredin by 2050. This Plan has been prepared by the Wheatbelt Development Commission and LandCorp in collaboration with stakeholders and the communities of the region.

Vision for Merredin

‘Merredin will become a more innovative, diverse and attractive regional centre, actively engaged in building a diverse population and economic base, underpinned by sustainability principles.’



© Grant Stainer

Guiding Principles

The Plan identifies six key areas to focus on to achieve the vision.

Economy (page 48)

Merredin will comprise diverse and thriving business, industry and service hubs where innovative opportunities are actively pursued and fostered. This will be achieved by the following:

- Being proactive in attracting new business to the region and encouraging existing businesses to grow.
- Improving the level and range of local employment opportunities.
- Attracting and retaining knowledge and investment, people and skills.
- Creating a supportive business environment.
- Ensuring sustainable growth supported by innovative industry.

Community (page 58)

The region will comprise relaxed, family friendly communities with healthy lifestyles and a wealth of activities for all. This will be achieved by the following:

- Creating a healthy, active, safe and informed community.
- Encouraging community participation and involvement.
- Creating affordable and accessible services that meet community expectations.
- Founding a high quality of life for the people of Merredin.
- Enjoying a diverse range of social, recreational and volunteer opportunities.
- Respecting diversity and being inclusive of all peoples.
- Celebrating Merredin's rich cultural heritage.
- Building on the Central East's emerging arts and cultural following.

Built Form and Housing (page 67)

The built form and housing in Merredin will capture the character and setting of the region; connecting people and places and integrating sustainable infrastructure that meets the needs of the growing community and economy. This will be achieved by the following:

- Creating active and vibrant spaces.
- Developing well connected and liveable communities.
- Encouraging design elements to celebrate communities.
- Supporting sustainable building and infrastructure design.

Infrastructure (Page 75)

Merredin will pursue the delivery of timely, sustainable, integrated and high quality modern infrastructure to meet the social, economic and environmental needs that will create well connected, liveable communities with sustainable employment opportunities. This will be achieved by the following:

- Enhancing Merredin's appeal for lifestyle and business development.
- Encouraging energy efficiency and sustainability.
- Adopting a whole-of-government approach towards infrastructure provision to meet the current and future needs for growth.
- Providing quality regional infrastructure to facilitate appropriate population growth.
- Improving investment in regional infrastructure to ensure greater prosperity, productivity and growth.
- Supporting public-private partnerships and other arrangements to deliver efficient and timely infrastructure projects.

Natural Environment (Page 90)

The environmental values and natural resources of the region need to be protected for the benefit of current and future generations while providing appropriate development opportunities. This will be achieved by the following:

- Maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, addressing risk areas.
- Achieving environmentally sustainable and economically viable management of waste.
- Ensuring the sustainable development of Merredin, integrating natural elements and connecting the community to the environment.
- Ensuring responsible access, use and enjoyment of the natural environment.
- Having a strong connection with the environment.

Governance (Page 95)

The region will embrace collaborative and proactive leadership delivering on the values and aspirations of the community. This will be achieved by the following:

- Effective resourcing and management of Local Government activities.
- Providing positive leadership within the sub-region.
- Becoming a customer focused community.
- Ensuring open and representative decision-making processes.
- Achieving community support for the region's strategic plans and growth planning.
- Ensuring a cross-organisational approach delivered through strategic partnerships.
- Focusing on delivering shared outcomes.
- Monitoring triggers in the Plan.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

Several key projects and initiatives have been identified for both Local and State Governments and will help to implement the Plan's vision. The Merredin Community Reference Group in conjunction with the Shire of Merredin have identified 5 priority projects and initiatives for the growth period of 2015 to 2020. They are:

- ***CBD Revitalisation - Redevelopment of Barrack and Bates Streets (Stage 1A)***
- ***Central East Aged Care Alliance – Merredin Land Assembly***
- ***Central East Aged Care Alliance – Independent Living Units Development (Stage 1)***
- ***Residential & Industrial Marketing***
- ***C.Y. O'Connor Institute Campus - Training Facility and Accommodation Expansion***

Refer to the Implementation Plan in Appendix 5 for more information on these priority projects and initiatives. These projects will be monitored on an on-going basis.





Introduction

The Purpose of ‘Growing Our Community’

The Central Eastern Wheatbelt sub-region comprises 10 Local Governments including the Shire of Merredin with the town of Merredin being the Regional Centre of the sub-region. This Plan focuses on the Shire of Merredin.

The Shire of Merredin is home to approximately 3,282¹ (2013 ERP of 3,353²) people of which 2,586³ live in the Merredin Townsite). This Plan sets the vision and guiding principles for the development of Merredin until 2050. The actions, projects and initiatives outlined within this document will guide the Plan’s aspirations to achieve growth. Implementing the strategies and projects in the Plan will attract investment and enable people to take advantage of the significant opportunities available throughout the region.

The Plan also acts as a framework to enable the sub-region to achieve sustainable economic growth, strengthen and build community capacity and shape the places in which people live, work and play in. Acknowledging and respecting the distinctive character of the region is integral and efforts to protect and enhance natural environments will be perused.

The Plan is an opportunity for improved communication and collaboration across stakeholders to work towards a shared vision and goals for the future.

Future economic growth and dynamism of Merredin’s key growth themes of agriculture, mining, retail, commerce, health and education will drive population growth, encouraging more people to choose to live and work within Merredin and across the sub-region. The Plan is designed to guide decisions on a wide range of issues such as transport, infrastructure planning, cultural heritage, land-use planning and environment and resource protection, in the interest of creating a clearer picture to support investment decisions and promoting economic prosperity.

The Plan does not endeavour to replace existing frameworks but works with them, providing growth direction to create and sustain attractive happy, healthy and safe communities that meet people’s needs and aspirations throughout their lives. Attracting new businesses and skilled workers to the sub-region and the regional centre is a key objective, which will play a major role in the economic success and growth of the sub-region.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Shire of Merredin Basic Community Profile

² Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2013. Estimated Resident Population (ERP)

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Merredin (Urban Centre Locality) Basic Community Profile

The Plan will ensure that Merredin and the surrounding communities will be the focus for quality community infrastructure and services and provide a vision to guide its implementation. This will not only support population growth but retain existing community members.

About this Document

‘Growing Our Community’ sets out the community’s vision for the sustained growth of Merredin. The Plan clearly integrates economic, community and environmental initiatives to establish economic growth drivers for the town and identifies key priority actions and projects to guide population growth and retention into the future.

The Plan is a non-statutory, affirmative action plan which is designed to provide a sound basis for future local infrastructure planning and investment decisions. The true strength of the Plan is that it has the flexibility to embrace the individual needs and aspirations of the community in an integrated way and therefore guide the preparation of more specialised planning and service delivery.

An Implementation Schedule has been included under each Guiding Principle and contains the actions for growth, including the key priorities and projects for the short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The timeframes referred to in the Plan are indicative as per Table 1. The projects and priorities will continue to be refined and reprioritised as the Plan is reviewed over the growth period.

Table 1: Timeframes

Short Term	2015 – 2020
Medium Term	2020 – 2030
Long Term	2030 – 2050

Context

Regional Centres Development Plan

With the population forecast to double in Western Australia by 2050, the State Government, through Royalties for Regions, established the Regional Centres Development Plan in 2011. This Plan encourages regional communities to accelerate their local planning processes, to ensure settlements are well prepared to take advantage of opportunities arising from future economic opportunities and population growth.

Merredin, as a Regional Centre for the Central Eastern Wheatbelt, was selected along with Narrogin for Wheatbelt South and Moora, Dalwallinu and Wongan Hills for the Central Midlands to have a Plan created on behalf of the Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC). Each sub-region was tasked with undertaking a growth planning process to analyse the driving forces, pressures, impacts and responses for growth and identify transformational projects. A round of Royalties for Regions funding was made available to the Project Team to support this process in addition to the development of an implementation strategy.

The State Government's vision for Regional Development:

Regional Western Australia will continue to be a key contributor to the nation's wellbeing. The future success of rural and regional areas will depend on attracting investors and visitors, encouraging new residents to settle, and enabling existing residents to remain.

The facilities and services in rural and regional areas of the State will provide good opportunities for accommodation and employment, high standards of health and education, and offer a lifestyle that is safe and enjoyable.

People living in regional Western Australia will have opportunities to be involved in local decision making to set the direction of their communities⁴.

⁴ Regional Development Council, 2011. Regional Development Policy Framework – An Action Agenda for Regional Development.

Approach

This Plan has been developed by LandCorp in partnership with the WDC. This Plan has come together using collaborative consulting where the WDC has been actively involved in its development by collecting data, strategic overview and stakeholder consultation. This approach is highly advantageous as it:

- Draws on the WDC's existing resources to support data collection and consultation tasks;
- Uses the WDC's knowledge of the region to assist with the Plan's development; and
- Utilises each agencies strengths in developing the Plan.

All the information contained within the Plan has been sourced from Local Government documents (see References), the Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy developed by RPS, through consultation with State Agencies and the Shire of Merredin and through meetings with the Merredin Community Reference Group which was made up of government, business and community stakeholders. This is demonstrated in Figure 1 below.

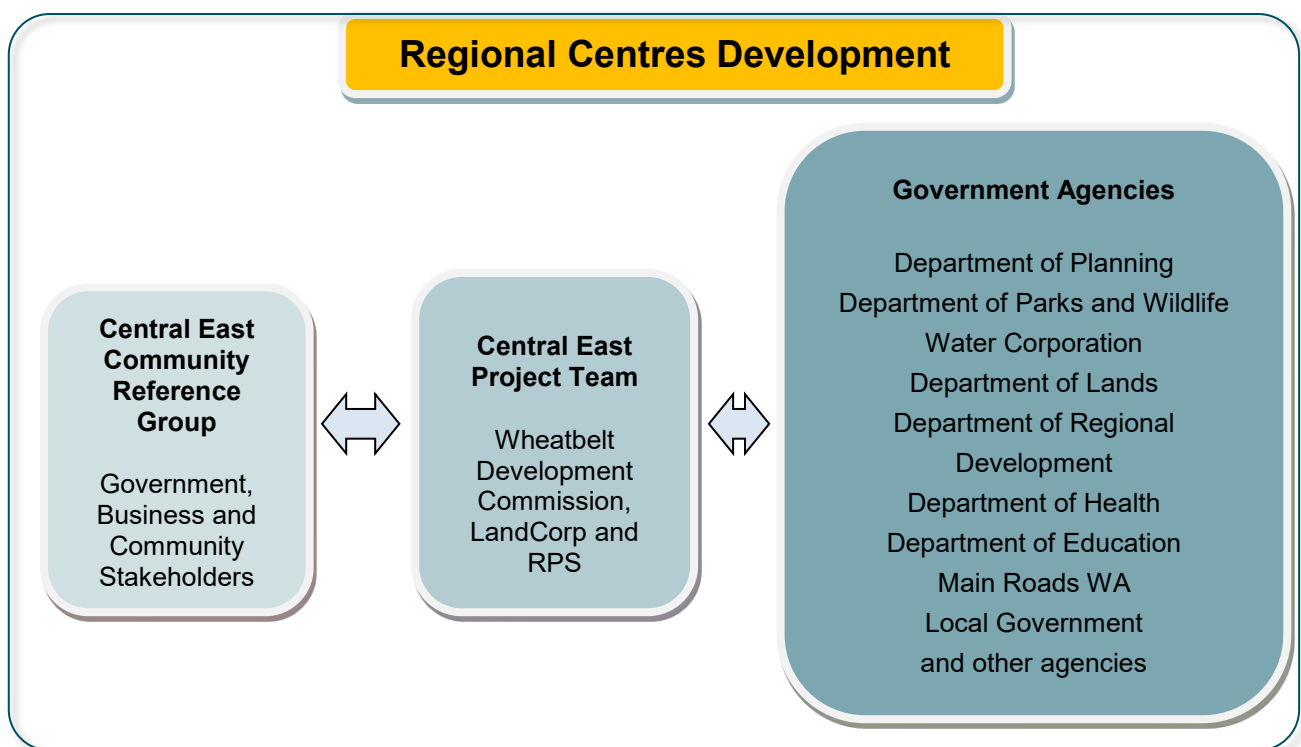


Figure 1: State and Local Agencies and organisations involved in the development of the Plan

Figure 2 demonstrates how this 'Growing our Community' Plan fits into the Western Australian State Planning and Regional Development Framework. The Plan is a non-statutory, sub-regional level document that will inform local, Regional and State Government priorities.

State Government agency input has been sought into the Growth Planning process, and agencies can now incorporate the Growth Plan vision and population scenarios into their regular planning and forecasting for the region.

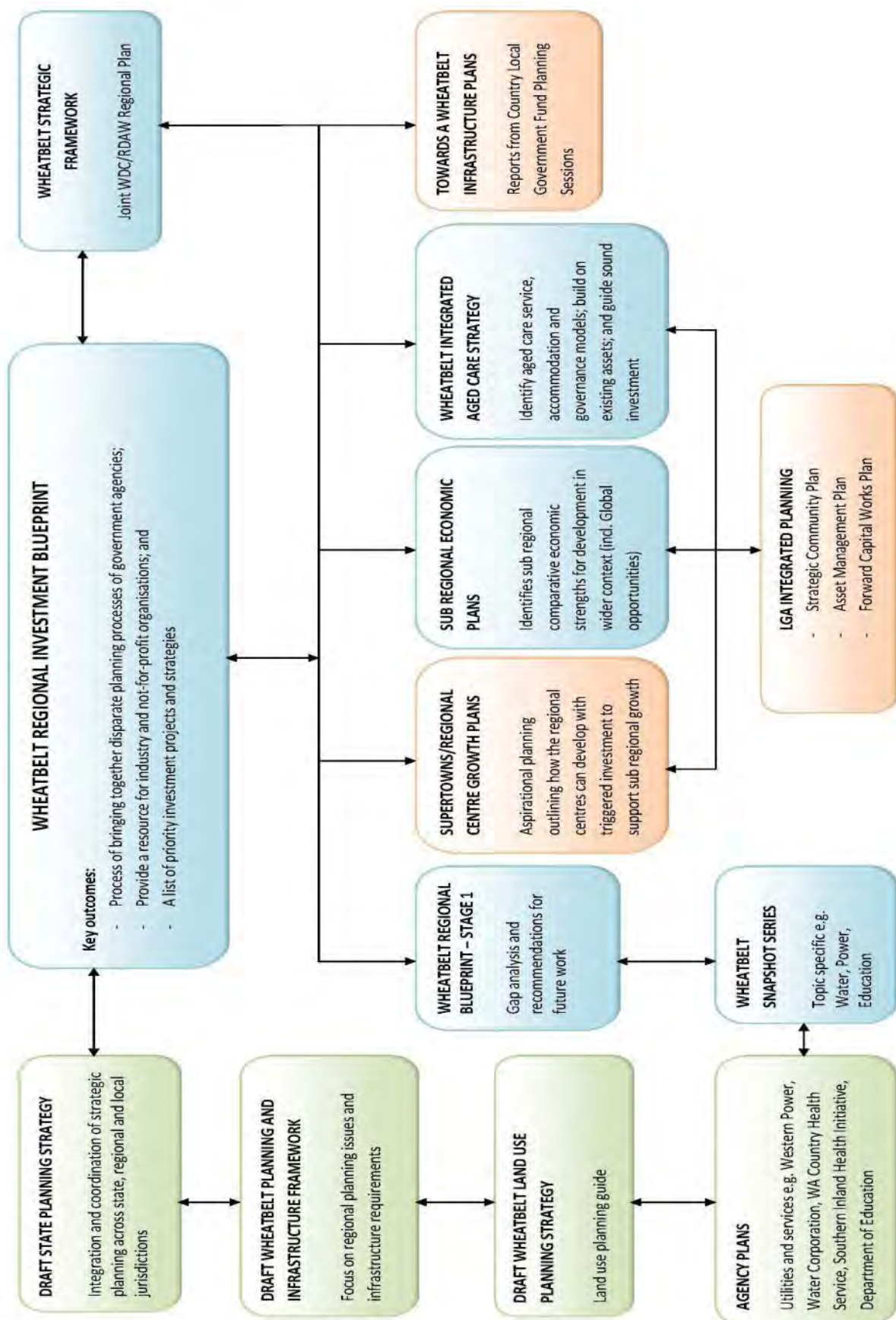


Figure 2: Strategic Framework Flow Chart

The Wheatbelt Region



Figure 3: The Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia

The Wheatbelt Region comprises an area of 154,862 square kilometres, more than twice the size of Tasmania. The region is home to over 75,000 people⁵, making it the third most populous region in the State. The Wheatbelt has a diverse population, with over 15% having been born overseas, and around 5% being Indigenous. Over 10% of the population are aged between 15 and 24 years old, with 13% aged 65 and over. The median age is approximately 37 years. The population is widely dispersed with only around 16,000 people located in the main service centres of Northam, Merredin, Moora and Narrogin⁶.

The region has well-developed transport links, with most major highways and rail routes to Perth passing through. The region has 35% of the State's roads and easy access to the Ports of Fremantle and Kwinana and regional ports at Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and Esperance⁶.

The region has extensive educational, health, recreational and cultural services and is home to the C.Y. O'Connor Institute and Muresk Education Campus. The region also offers affordable housing and business premises, including established industrial precincts ideal for manufacturing and new industry⁶.

⁵ Department of Regional Development, 2014. Wheatbelt: a Region in Profile

⁶ WDC. 2015. Wheatbelt Blueprint: A Vision for a Vibrant Future.

Central East Wheatbelt Sub-Region

The Central East Sub-Region is made up of 10 Local Government Authorities (11 when including Koorda from the Avon Sub-Region):

- Shire of Bruce Rock
- Shire of Kellerberrin
- Shire of Koorda (Avon Sub-Region)
- Shire of Merredin
- Shire of Mount Marshall
- Shire of Mukinbudin
- Shire of Narembeen
- Shire of Nungarin
- Shire of Trayning
- Shire of Westonia
- Shire of Yilgarn



Figure 4: The Central East Sub-Region

The Central East represents the heart of dryland broadacre grain production in the Wheatbelt. Home to 10,153⁷ people in 2011, the Central East is the largest sub-region in the Wheatbelt by land area. Its population is primarily concentrated in the major township of Merredin (approximately 32.3%) as well as Southern Cross and Kellerberrin, which act as service centres for the sub-regional economy⁷.

Koorda, which is officially part of the Avon sub-region, has been included in the Central East analysis in response to the recommendation of the Avon Sub-Regional Economic Strategy. It has also been included in the corresponding Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy.

Table 2: Distances to Major Centres from Merredin

Location	kms from Merredin ⁸
PERTH	260
NORTHAM	163
KALGOORLIE	335

⁷ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

⁸ MainRoads WA, 2014. Distance Book Edition 13

Merredin

The Shire of Merredin covers approximately 3,294km²⁹ and includes the towns of Hines Hill, Burracoppin, South Burracoppin, Goomarin, Korbel, Merredin, Muntadgin, Nangeenan, Nokanning, Tangedin, Nukarni and Norpa¹⁰. The Merredin townsite is situated approximately 260 kilometres (see Table 2) east of Perth and is the major commercial and retail centre in the Central East.



Figure 5: Merredin Townsite Aerial Map (Source: Landgate, 2012)

Key infrastructure including Great Eastern Highway, Eastern Goldfields Railway, C.Y. O'Connor Pipeline, power transmission & distribution lines as well as the Collgar Windfarm have provided Merredin with a solid base for growth as a sub-regional centre. In the presence of these assets, high quality social infrastructure has been established including aged care services, C.Y. O'Connor Institute, Merredin Aerodrome, Merredin Regional Hospital, Merredin Recreation and Community Leisure Centre, St Mary's Primary School and Merredin College¹⁰.

A diverse industrial, commercial, office and retail base has developed with shops, offices and small to medium enterprises located across the townsite providing goods and services to the local and sub-regional population.

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Shire of Merredin Basic Community Profile

¹⁰ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

Merredin's historic Cummins Theatre hosts numerous functions and events throughout the year. Other attractions include federation architecture, Merredin Railway Water Tower, Merredin Peak, Merredin Military Museum, Merredin Museum & Historical Society, picturesque wildflowers and granite rock features in the area.

Demographics

Table 3 below illustrates the demographic profile of the Merredin townsite, the Shire of Merredin, the Central East Sub-Region and Western Australia overall. The Shire of Merredin makes up 32.3% of the sub-regional population. Based on the latest Census (2011), the resident population within the Shire of Merredin is 3,282, with 52.9% male and 47.1% female. The median age within the Shire of Merredin is 36; this is significantly younger than the median age of the Wheatbelt region (42) but is consistent with Western Australia as a whole.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) "Regional Population Growth, Australia" indicates that from 2001 to 2007 the population has declined. Since 2007, the population has remained relatively steady and more recently begun to increase. Population modelling by the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) "WA Tomorrow (2012)" data indicates that the Shire of Merredin's population is predicted to decline by roughly 9% between the 2011 and 2021 period.

Table 3: Demographic Profile Of Merredin (Town)¹¹, Merredin (Shire)¹², Central East (including Koorda)¹³ & Western Australia¹⁴

	Merredin Townsite ¹¹	Shire Of Merredin ¹²	Central East Wheatbelt ¹³	Western Australia ¹⁴
People	2,586	3282	10153	2,239,170
Male	1,371	1737	5490	1,126,178
Female	1,215	1545	5643	1,112,992
Median Age	35	36	42	36
Families	623	831	2615	585,311
Average Children Per Family	1.9	2	2.0	1.9
Private Dwellings	1,297	1616	5372	960,717
Average People Per Household	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.6
Median Weekly Household Income	\$1,066.00	\$1,099.00	\$983.27	\$1,415.00
Median Monthly Mortgage Repayments	\$1,100.00	\$1,144.00	\$809.55	\$1,950.00
Median Weekly Rent	\$140.00	\$130.00	\$80.55	\$300.00
Average Motor Vehicles Per Dwelling	1.70	1.90	2.20	1.90
Children Aged 0-14 Years (%)	21.2	21.4	21.32	19.7

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Quickstats Merredin Townsite (Urban Centre Locality)

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Quickstats Shire of Merredin

¹³ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Quickstats Western Australia

Population

Age Breakdown

Children aged 0-14 make up the largest population group (21%) in the Shire of Merredin.¹⁵

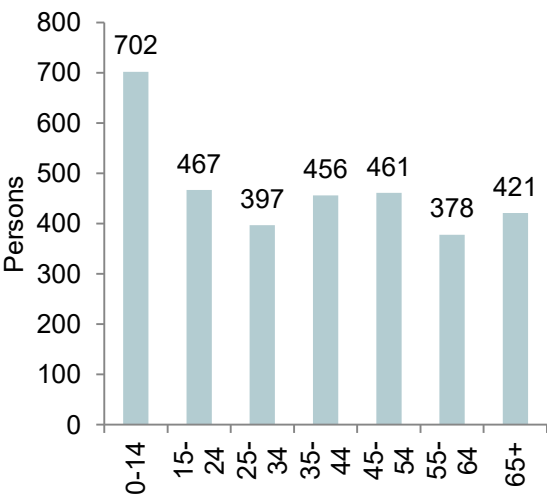


Figure 7: Age Breakdown (Shire of Merredin)

Family Type

In the Shire of Merredin, one in three households is couples with children. There is also a high proportion of single person households.¹⁵

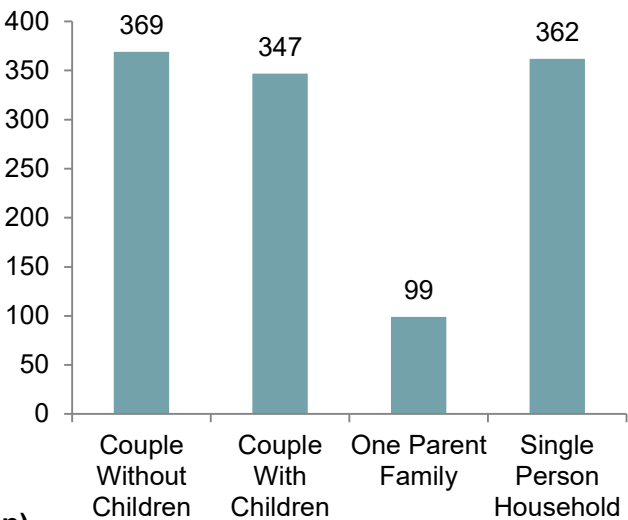


Figure 6: Family Type (Shire of Merredin)

Growth Scenarios

The utilisation of growth scenarios and population projections is an effective method of planning the priority actions, projects and interventions that are required to implement the Plan’s vision. Figure 8 (Page 24) outlines the population scenarios of the Central East and the Shire of Merredin. The projections for the Plan utilise annual average growth rates (AAGR) of 0.5% and 1% from 2011 to 2050 for both the Shire and the Central East. These projections utilise the latest ABS figures available from the 2011 Census¹⁵. Also shown in Figure 8 are the conservative figures modelled by the WAPC from 2011 to 2026 to provide comparison.

The population scenarios are based on aspirational rather than ‘Business as Usual’ growth rates with 1% population growth per annum required to meet the 2050 population target of 4,800 within the Shire of Merredin and 15,000 within the Central East. On a Shire and townsite level, the Shire will expect a 1% AAGR while the townsite will account for 1.2% of the Shire’s overall growth.

The Shire of Merredin and the wider community will need to take a positive approach to increase and achieve the population targets. Merredin has experienced slight population decline earlier in the

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Shire of Merredin Basic Community Profile

decade, with population growth occurring more recently. These variations need to be considered when planning for future growth. As Merredin is the regional centre of the Central East, there is also the need to take into account the sub-regional population for service delivery and business development.

Merredin Townsite

- Since 2001, the population of the Merredin Townsite has declined by -7.7% to 2,586¹⁶.
- A 0.7% AAGR will result in the Merredin Townsite reaching roughly 3,400 people by 2050, and at a 1.2% AAGR, 4,100 people will reside in the Merredin Townsite by 2050.

Shire of Merredin

- Since 2001, the population of the Shire of Merredin has declined by -9.6% from 3,630 to 3,282¹⁷.
- WAPC Band C (middle) projections indicate the population will decline to around 3,000 in 2026¹⁸.
- A 0.5% AAGR will result in the Shire of Merredin reaching roughly 4,000 people by 2050, and at a 1% AAGR, 4,800 people will reside in the Shire of Merredin by 2050.

Central East Sub-Region

- Since 2001 the population of the sub-region overall has declined by -9.7% (1,099 people) from 11,252 to 10,153 people¹⁹.
- WAPC Band C (middle) projections indicate the population of the sub-region will decline to around 8,780 in 2026²⁰.
- A 0.5% AAGR will result in the Central East Sub-Region reaching roughly 12,300 people by 2050, and at a 1% AAGR, 15,000 people will reside in the Sub-Region.
- In the 1% AAGR scenario, the Shire of Merredin by 2050 will be responsible for 32% of the sub-region's population, decreasing its current share by only 0.3%.

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Merredin (UCL) Time Series Profile

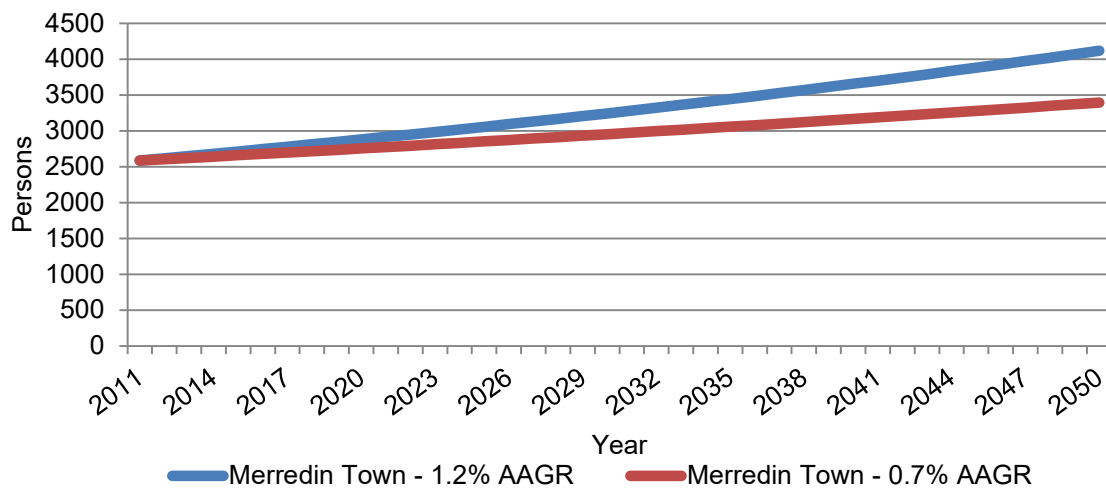
¹⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Shire of Merredin (S) Time Series Profile

¹⁸ Department of Planning & Western Australian Planning Commission, 2012. WA Tomorrow – Population Report Forecast Profile - Shire of Merredin

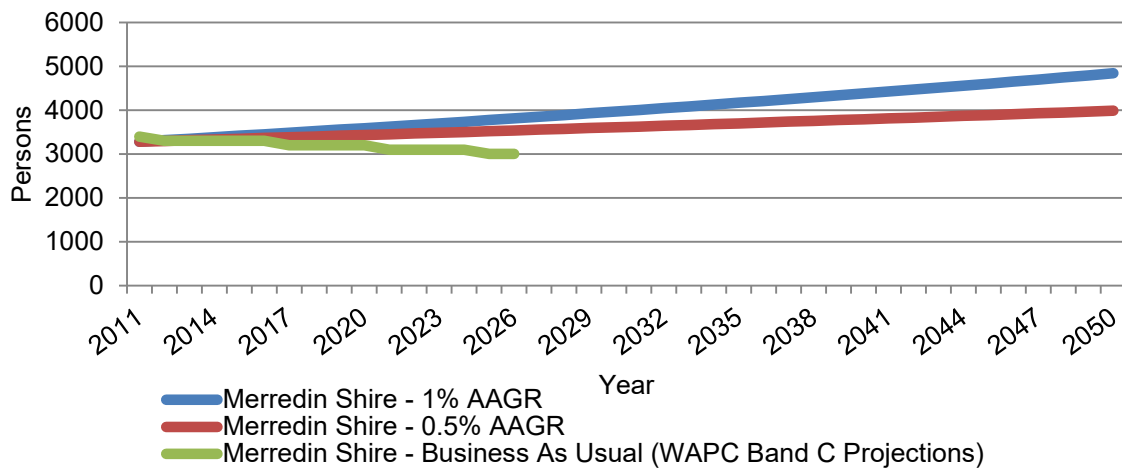
¹⁹ Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2011. Unpublished Collated ABS Time Series Profile Data (11 LGA's)

²⁰ Wheatbelt Development Commission. 2011. Unpublished Collated WAPC WA Tomorrow Data (11 LGA's)

Merredin Townsite Projection



Shire of Merredin Projection



Central East Sub-Region Projection

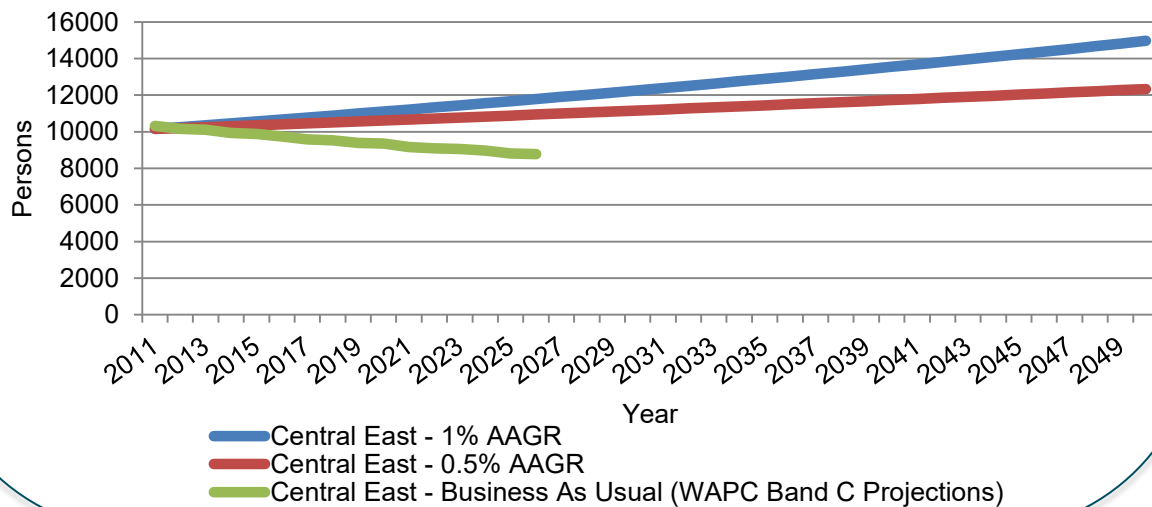


Figure 8: Population Projections (Source: WDC)

The town of Merredin has been modelled for a slight increase in the proportional share of the Shire's population over time. This indicates a 0.2% growth over the Shire's 1% AAGR rate at 1.2% per annum. As identified in Figure 9, this represents a trend consistent with existing structural changes within the agricultural sector to see the Merredin townsite increase from 79% in 2011 to an 85% share of the Shire's population in 2050. These figures are consistent with and support the projections identified within the Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy.

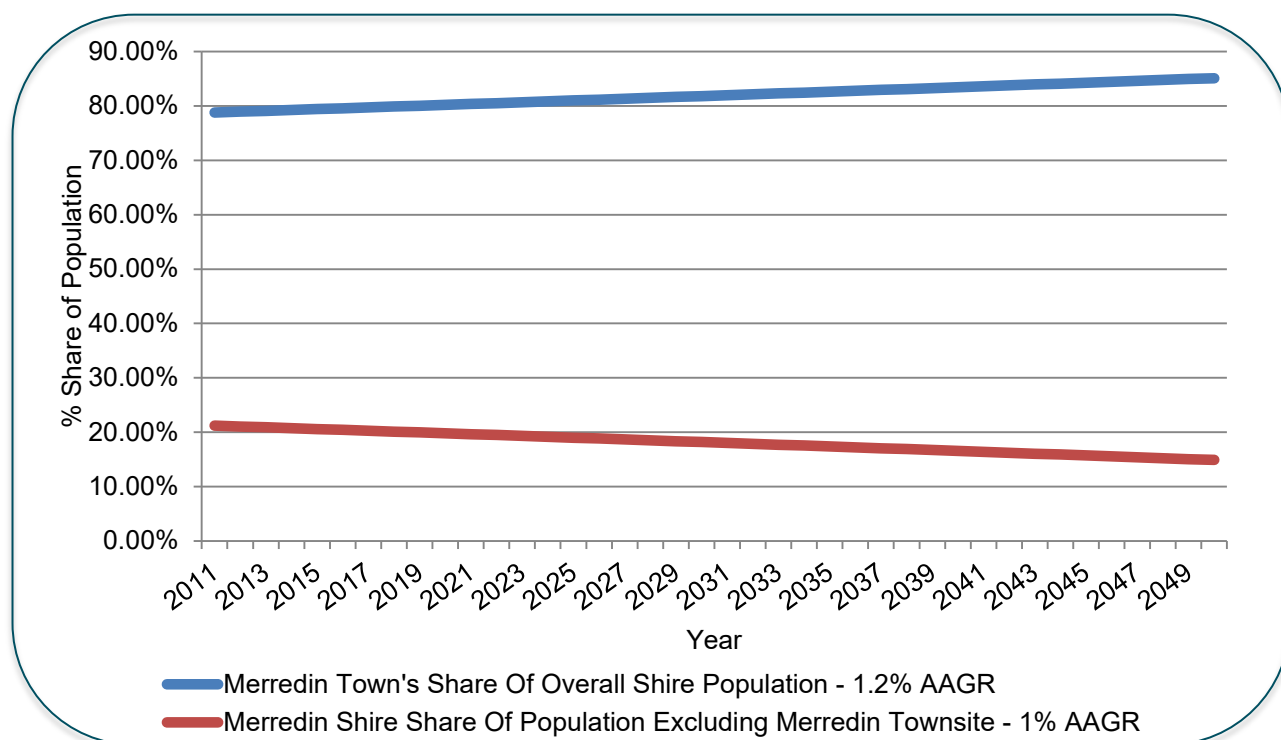


Figure 9: Proportional Share of Projected Population Growth (Source: WDC)

Employment

Outlined in the 2011 Census were the following employment statistics for the Shire of Merredin:

- Worked full-time: 65.3%²¹
- Worked part-time: 24.7%²¹
- Away from work: 5.7%²¹
- Unemployed: 4.2%²¹

Merredin's economy is underlined by an employment self-sufficiency rate of 96%²² (in 2011). This, coupled with a low unemployment rate of 4.2%²¹, indicates that the majority of residents work and reside in the Shire. The percentage of unemployed persons was lower than the Western Australia and Australia averages which were 4.7%²³ and 5.6%²⁴ respectively.

²¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Quickstats Shire of Merredin

²² RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Western Australia Basic Community Profile

The median weekly household income in the Shire of Merredin was \$1,099²⁵. While median weekly incomes of people within the Shire of Merredin are 11.7% above the sub-regional average, they are still significantly less than the Western Australian average of \$1,415²⁶. Median monthly mortgage repayments were \$1,144²⁵ and median weekly rental payments were \$130²⁵ per week. These are 41.3% and 61.4% higher than their respective sub-regional averages.

In contrast to Western Australia, Merredin's median weekly rent is lower than Western Australia overall, with the Western Australia median rent 56.7% greater than Merredin and median monthly mortgage repayments being 41.3% higher. The Shire of Merredin has a higher cost of living than the remainder of the sub-region but a lower cost of living than Western Australia overall.

Labour Force Size

As of 2011, the labour force in the Shire of Merredin was 925 people²⁷. This has seen a steady decline of -10.9% over the past 10 years.

Table 4: Size of Total Labour Force (Persons)

Location	2001	2006	2011	% change (2001-2011)
Shire of Merredin ²⁷	1039	942	925	-10.9%



²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Australia Basic Community Profile

²⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Shire of Merredin Basic Community Profile

²⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Western Australia Basic Community Profile

²⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Shire of Merredin (S) Time Series Profile

Education Levels

Amongst Merredin (town) residents aged 15 and over, 67% have no tertiary qualification, compared to 55% of all WA residents aged 15+. The most common tertiary qualification of Merredin residents is certificate level (19%); 5% have an advanced diploma or diploma; and 9% have a bachelor degree or higher^{28 29}.

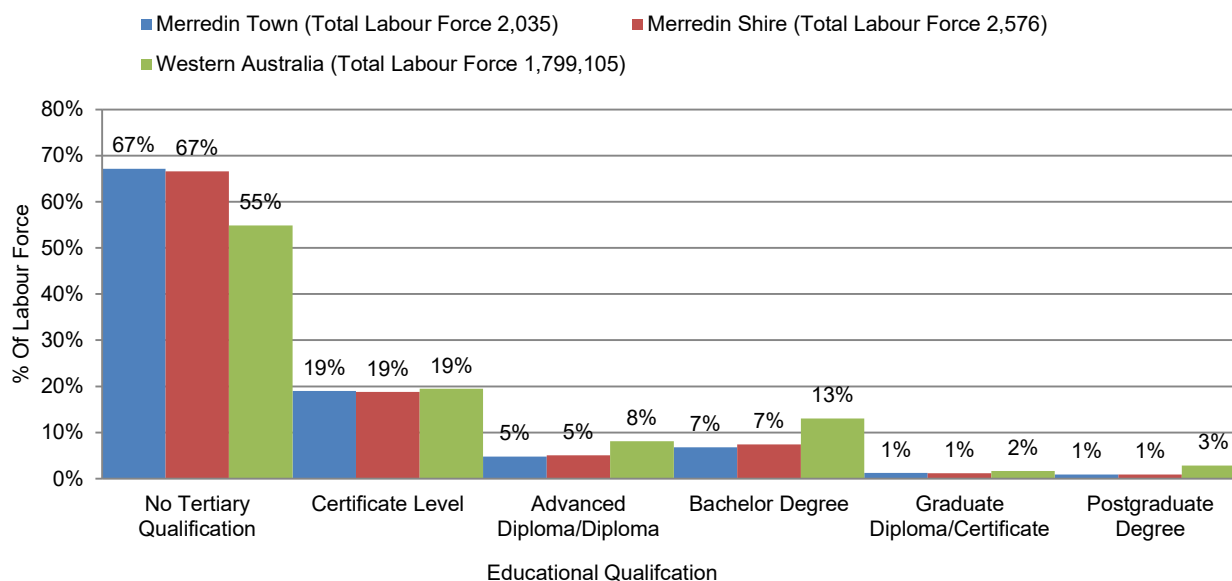


Figure 10: Levels of Educational Qualification - Merredin Shire/ Town Population vs Western Australia



²⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Western Australia Basic Community Profile

²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Merredin (S) Basic Community Profile & Merredin (UCL) Basic Community Profile

Employment Industries

Agriculture is Merredin's primary economic contributor, accounting for a total gross value of \$65.8m in the 2005-06 financial year (12% of the sub-region gross value of production) and \$51.0m in the 2010-11 financial year (18% of the sub-region gross value of production)³⁰. These returns occur from an agricultural land area of 342,818ha which represents 11% of the sub-regions agricultural land holdings.



Figure 11: Employment By Industry - Merredin S/T Population vs Western Australia

Farming and related industries make up the key industry of employment in the Shire. With regards to the Merredin Townsite, the most common industries of employment are retail, education/training and transport/postal/warehousing. Together, these three industries employ 33% of Merredin's working population^{31 32}. With the anticipated growth of the region, the Shire of Merredin believes the following industries could be key employers:

- Education and Training
- Health Services
- Transport and Logistics
- Government Services
- Agricultural & Mining Support Servicing
- Light Fabrication & Engineering

³⁰ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Western Australia Basic Community Profile

³² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Merredin (S) Basic Community Profile & Merredin (UCL) Basic Community Profile

Property

The Merredin property market has been characteristically slow in recent years. There is a distinct lack of diversity in the town's housing stock with most houses in the town being 3 bedroom separate homes built more than 30 years ago. However, at 79.9% (1,215 of 1,520 dwellings) Merredin's dwelling occupancy rate is quite high, well above the sub-regional average of 73.8%³³.

Residential Property Market

The median price of houses sold in Merredin reached \$185,000 in 2010 but has since fallen to \$160,000 in 2014³⁴. The median personal income for Merredin (\$41,537) is comparable to the sub-regional average (\$41,490); but below the Perth Metropolitan Region (\$53,864) and WA (\$53,227) averages³³. Accordingly, when compared with median house prices, Merredin's local housing market is very affordable, with a median multiple of 2.72 (sub-regional average 2.61, WA average 5.98)³³.

Other market statistics include:

- The number of properties listed for sale has increased over the last two years (both houses and vacant lots)³⁵.
- There are more than twice as many houses and lots currently listed for sale than have been sold annually in recent years.
- Accordingly, the time that a property typically remains on the market prior to selling is around one year for houses and two years for vacant lots³⁵.

Established House Sales

The number of established houses sold has remained low over the last five years, with an average of 35 homes sold annually (down from a peak of 126 sales in 2004). Considering the Shire had 1,520 dwellings as of 2011, this sales figure represents 2.6% per annum of housing stock in the Shire³³. Half of all the established properties sold in Merredin from 2000 to 2014 were on lots between 1,000-1,099m². The majority of sales were of homes more than 30 years old³⁴.

Figure 12 highlights a significant change in the number of sales during the 2003-2007 period. This is due to the development of Westonia's Edna May Gold Mine in the region, the construction of Collgar Windfarm and significant upgrades during the period to Great Eastern Highway.

³³ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

³⁴ Landgate, 2015. Established Residential Property Sales (to 3,000sqm) 2004-2014.

³⁵ RP Data, 2015. On The Market Report.

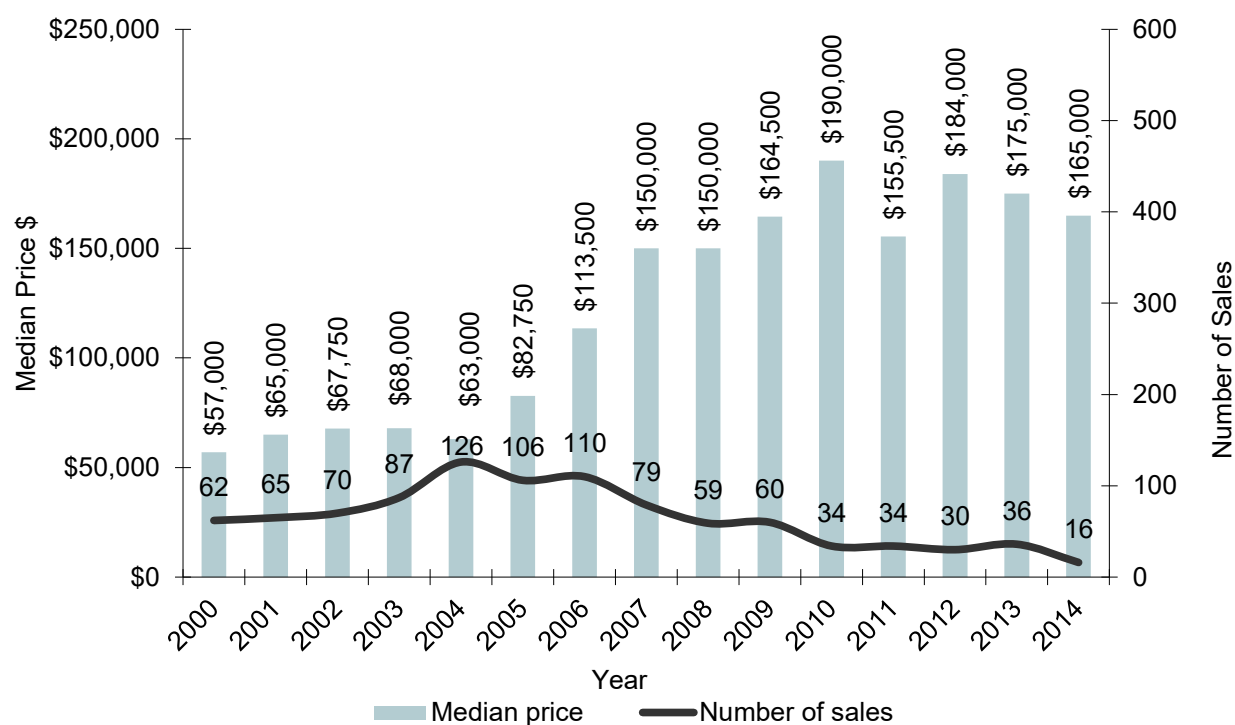


Figure 12: Established House Sales 2000-2014 (Source: Landgate)

Housing Stock

As at 2011 there was a total of 1,297 dwellings in Merredin. Of these homes, 967 were occupied, 248 unoccupied and 82 unclassified³⁶.

Dwelling Types

Nine in ten Merredin occupied private dwellings were separate houses (as at 2011). Just 1% were flats/units/apartments, and 7% were semi-detached. In comparison, 8% of all WA dwellings were flats/units/apartments, and 11% semi-detached³⁶.

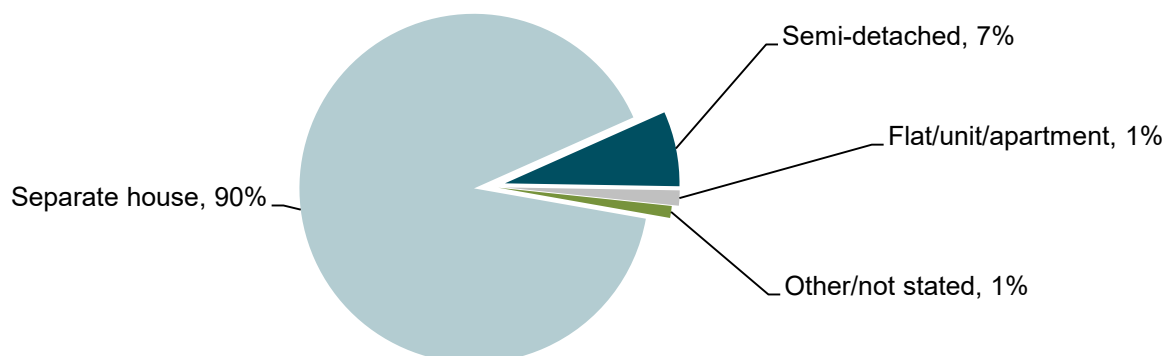


Figure 13: RP Data On Merredin's Housing Market (Source: RP Data)

³⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. Merredin (UCL) Basic Community Profile.

Number of Bedrooms

Three-bedroom separate houses are the most common housing type, making up half of all occupied dwellings in the town. The next most common occupied dwelling type was four-bedroom separate houses (24% of all occupied dwellings), followed by two-bedroom separate houses (11% of all occupied dwellings)³⁷.

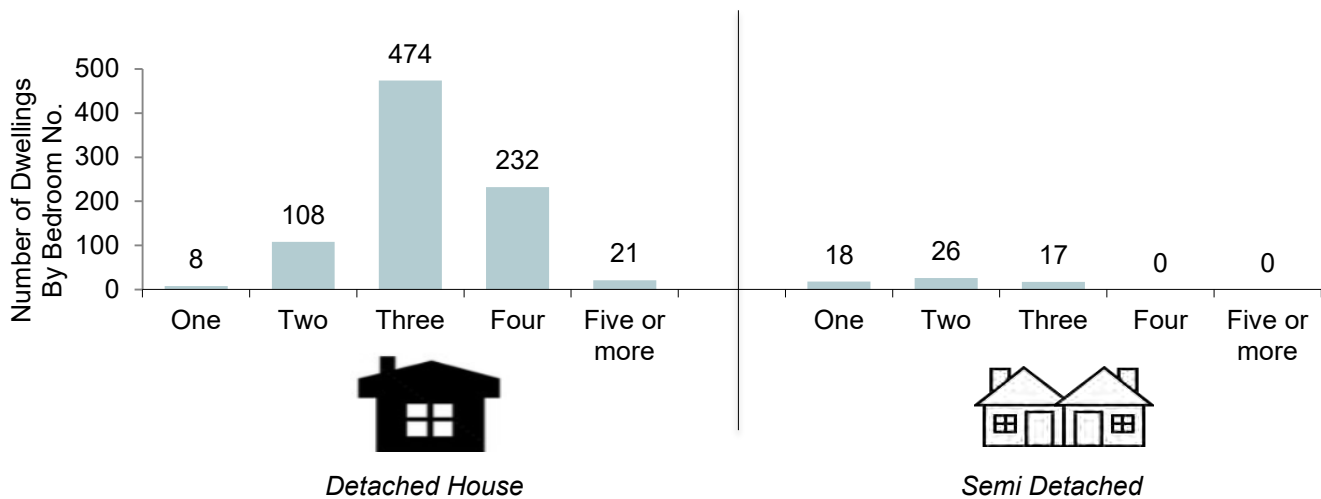


Figure 14: Merredin Dwelling Type Breakdown (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Dwelling Tenure

As at 2011, six in ten Merredin dwellings were owner-occupied (lower than the WA average of 68%). Private rentals made up just 14% of Merredin dwellings (lower than the WA average of 22%).^{37 38}

Employer-provided housing and public housing makes up a larger proportion of housing in Merredin (7% and 11% respectively) compared to the WA average (2% and 4% respectively).^{37 38}

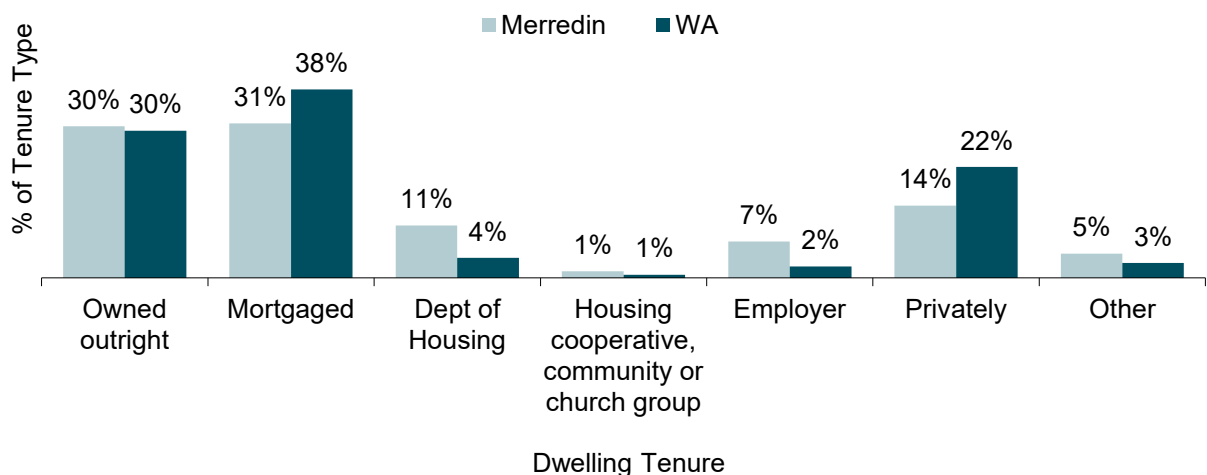


Figure 15: Dwelling Tenure in Merredin & Western Australia

³⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Shire of Merredin Basic Community Profile

³⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Western Australia Basic Community Profile

Lot Sizes

There is a distinct lack of diversity in sizes of residential blocks in the town.

The vast majority of residential dwellings are built on allotments of 1,000-1,099m², representative of the prevalence of traditional quarter acre blocks in the townsite (1,012m²).

Larger lots are more prevalent than smaller higher density lots.

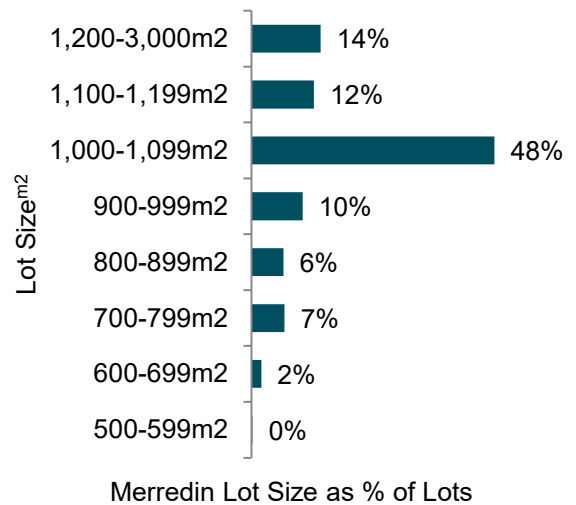


Figure 16: Breakdown of Merredin Lot Sizes (Source: Landgate)

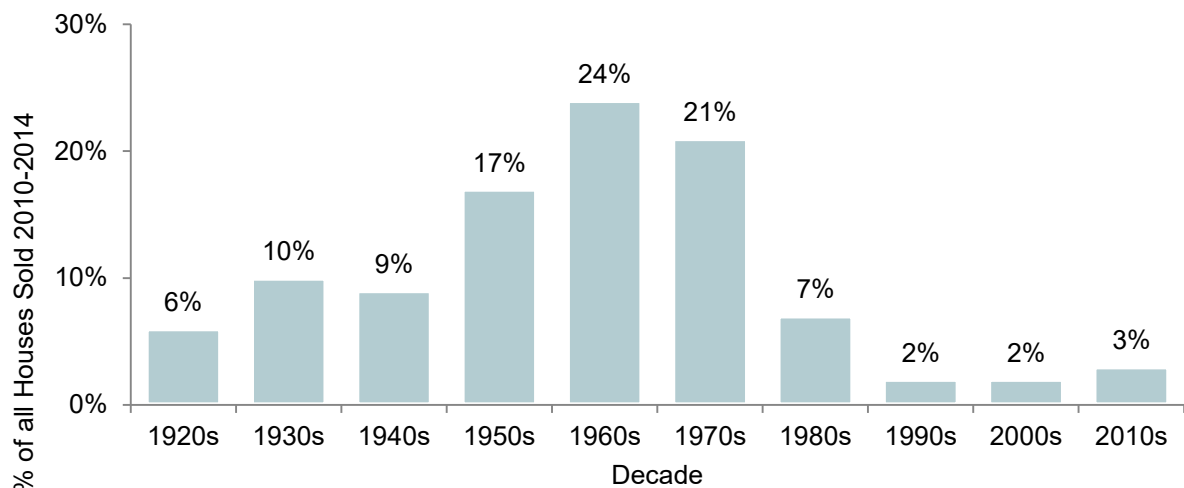


Figure 17: Housing Age By Year of Construction (Source: Landgate)



Figure 18: Examples of Typical Merredin Housing (Source: Landgate)

The majority of Merredin's housing stock is more than 30 years old. In total, 62% of homes sold in the last five years were built between 1950s-1970s, while 24% were built between 1920s-1940s. Just 13% were built since the 1980s. Most of the homes built between 1950s-1970s have two or three bedrooms, while most homes built between 1920s-1940s have two bedrooms³⁹.

³⁹ Landgate. 2015. Established Residential Property Sales (to 3,000sqm) 2004-2014.

Residential Land

There were 125 vacant residential lots sold in Merredin between 2000 and 2014 (an average of 8.3 lots sold per year)³⁹. The price per square metre has fluctuated year to year due to low turnover, but for lots sold in 2013 and 2014 it averaged \$36/m²³⁹.

The majority of residential land introduced to the market in the last two decades has been quarter acre block style parcels. Seven in ten vacant residential lots sold between 2000 and 2014 were over 1,000m²³⁹.

Table 5: Merredin Housing Data on Residential Land (Source: Landgate)

	YEAR										
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of sales	16	0	8	8	7	22	14	8	6	3	7
Avg price (\$/m²)	\$15	-	\$10	\$13	\$29	\$54	\$70	\$41	\$11	\$46	\$26
Median size (m²)	1,012	-	1,088	1,031	1,012	1,041	860	1,012	962	1,012	1,012
Median price	\$11k	-	\$12k	\$14k	\$30k	\$49k	\$46k	\$36k	\$10k	\$55k	\$36k

Industrial and Commercial Property Market

The industrial land market has experienced little movement recently with one vacant lot being sold in the general industrial area in 2013⁴⁰.

There are currently 6 lots for sale in the Light Industrial development on McKenzie Crescent ranging from 4,680-10,000m². These lots are also available to lease for business establishment opportunities. There is also one large light industrial lot on the market outside of the Light Industrial area for \$290,000 with an existing shed and house. As of September 2015, no further industrial subdivisions are proposed in the near future as land supply is considered to be sufficient for current and short term requirements.

Commercial properties currently on the market include retail shop space at 52 Barrack Street and 13 Bates Street, 82 Mitchell Street (tenanted) and vacant land zoned Highway Service on Todd Street.

⁴⁰ Landgate. 2015. Vacant Industrial Lot Sales (to 100,000sqm) 2004-2014.

Properties On The Market

Table 6: Properties on the Merredin Market (Source: RP Data On The Market Report)

	Houses			Vacant Residential Land		
	Sept 2013	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Sept 2013	Sept 2014	Sept 2015
No. for sale	69	77	83	9	11	12
Median price	\$219,000	\$199,000	\$191,000	\$48,900	\$46,500	\$52,500
Lowest price	\$98,000	\$85,000	\$75,000	\$33,000	\$20,000	\$17,500
Highest price	\$550,000	\$787,500	\$690,000	\$85,000	\$290,000	\$90,000

The number of residential properties listed for sale, both houses and vacant lots, has increased over the last two years. The median listing price of houses has fallen over than time. The vacant residential land currently on the market ranges from 727m² to 2,428m² with little correlation between block size and listing price (inconsistently ranging between \$17,500 and \$90,000)⁴¹.



⁴¹ RP Data. (2013, 2014, 2015). On The Market Report (All Properties In Merredin).

Global Drivers

Agriculture

The global market is projected to experience an increased demand for food, particularly from the developing countries where growing populations, higher incomes and urbanisation are driving greater per capita food consumptions. Per capita consumption is projected to expand most rapidly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, followed by Latin America and other Asian countries⁴².

Australia's competitive advantage in broadacre agricultural production positions sub-regions like the Central East well to reap the reward of structural uplifts in global agriculture commodity prices. Innovation and research being undertaken within the Central East will contribute to the strengthening of the agricultural industry, increase agricultural opportunities and present options to mitigate or reduce risk to farm enterprises⁴².

Mining & Supply Chains

The transformation of the Asian region into the economic powerhouse of the world is now an established trend, with Australia and the Central East well positioned to benefit from Asia's appetite for raw materials and energy in the medium to long term⁴². The Central East is predominantly a producer of iron ore, gold and construction materials.

Future opportunities continue to exist in these major commodities, with further growth potential in gypsum, uranium and other niche commodities found in the sub-region. The development of mining support services in the Central East will underpin further growth in the mining sector within the sub-region dependent on commodity prices. The industry will provide additional employment diversity and enhanced access to mining supply chains and ancillary support services⁴².

Ageing Population

In 2011, people aged 65 and over accounted for 12.8% of the Shire of Merredin's population and 15.0% of the Central East⁴². This is considerably above the average of 12.5% in Perth and 12.3% across Western Australia, highlighting the older population profile of the region⁴².

The local impacts of this global trend are already starting to reveal themselves with employment in the health care and social assistance recently overtaking retail as the largest employment sector in the WA economy⁴³. Locally, there has been 17% growth in employment in the Health and Social Assistance industry between 2001-2011 in Merredin⁴² and 30% increase across the Wheatbelt⁴⁴.

⁴² RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

⁴³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013. Labour Force Data, Australia, Detailed 6291.0

⁴⁴ Wheatbelt Development Commission, 2015. Wheatbelt Blueprint: A Vision for a Vibrant Future

Key Economic Opportunities

Three key areas of economic opportunity that will impact the future economic growth and dynamism of Merredin and the Central East have been identified. The analysis of these three themes complements the analysis undertaken in the Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy. The themes represent areas where the Central East has a distinct competitive advantage or where socio-demographic, investment or infrastructure-based drivers underpin current and future demand.

The key themes include:

- Broadacre Agriculture;
- Mining & Support Services; and
- Population Services.

Broadacre Agriculture

Broadacre agriculture is a major economic driver for Merredin and its hinterland. Merredin provides a pivotal role in agricultural R&D through the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, Merredin Office and its nearby Merredin Research Station. Merredin's strategic location in relation to freight networks has afforded it an advantage in servicing the sub-regional agricultural industry⁴⁵. This centralised location is also seen to be attractive to fabrication, engineering and freight and logistics companies.

A regional base for agricultural service related businesses has developed in Merredin; which includes farm machinery dealerships, fabricators, agribusiness and agricultural industry consultants. This presents the opportunity for Merredin to further develop its strategic position as an agricultural engineering and freight & logistics servicing centre and hub for the surrounding districts.

Mining & Support Services

Merredin is already providing mining support services to the sub-region. Engineering companies, fabricators and smaller ancillary industries provide mining support servicing to mining operations in the sub-region.⁴⁵ There is the potential for further development, particularly in heavy and light industry, dependent on global markets and commodity prices. Large affordable industrial lots provide the potential for securing heavy machinery, transport and logistics and mining based companies.

Existing power and water infrastructure as well as proximity to both interstate road and rail links give Merredin an advantage in the development of mining support services⁴⁵. Expansion of the mining industry in the Central East provides the opportunity for both mining and mining support service growth and the potential of facilitating expanded training opportunities through the Merredin C.Y. O'Connor Institute.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

Population Services

Merredin serves as the regional centre for the majority of health, education, government services, retail, high quality public amenities and recreational facilities. Merredin provides strategically important health and education services that are of regional significance, with the healthcare sector forming strategic ties with the sub-region and Kellerberrin with its Dryandra Residential Community Care establishment.⁴⁶ The healthcare industry provides strong employment growth potential, which will be required to adequately deliver services to an increasing proportion of those aged 65+ both within the Shire of Merredin as well as for the Central East.

Education establishments within Merredin such as Merredin College (K-12 school with boarding facilities), Merredin C.Y. O'Connor Institute and St Mary's Private School afford Merredin and the sub-region the ability to expand and strengthen the skill set of the labour force.⁴⁶ The education establishments provide Merredin with the ability to become a centre for educational pursuits and the development of innovation. The China Southern West Australian Flying College (CSWAFC) is a unique educational establishment, providing theoretical and practical training in the aviation industry.

There is a distinct emergence of a knowledge economy within Merredin. Evidence of this is identified through the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia at the Merredin Dryland Agricultural Research Facility. The development and enhancement of educational services and innovative training facilities will depend on essential upgrades to digital infrastructure and ICT capabilities. This will provide new opportunities for service delivery (commercial services, health and education), local tertiary training opportunities and growth within the region's emerging knowledge economy. Expanding digital infrastructure will also support the extension of social services and telecommuting potential.

Tourism will provide an important value adding role to the local economy by networking services to surrounding tourism sites. The expansion of tourism services and accommodation will enhance population servicing capabilities, as well as ensuring the tourism industry develops a sustainable economic base to value add to local businesses.



⁴⁶ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

Strategic Assets

Merredin has a range of strategic assets, including transport corridors, agricultural land, natural resources, educational facilities and health services. Many of these strategic assets provide the community and industry with opportunities and drivers for future growth. The key Strategic Assets are listed in Figure 19 below.

Interstate Rail Corridor	Sustainable Energy Supply & Distribution Infrastructure
Great Eastern Highway	Telecommunications Infrastructure
Education & Training Facilities	Commercial Enterprises
Merredin Regional Hospital & Allied Health Services	Wastewater infrastructure including water recycling/re-use
Merredin Aerodrome	Tourism Sites & Short Stay Accommodation Offerings
Broadacre Agricultural Land	C.Y O'Connor Water Pipeline
Churches	Regional Community & Leisure Centre
Natural Resources & Raw Materials	Aged Care - High Care & Independent Living Units
State Government Offices	Appropriately zoned land for development
Agriculture & Mining Service & Support Industries, Availability of Trades	Indian Pacific, Merredin Link & Prospector Passenger Rail Services
Strategic Grain Handling & Receival Terminal	Federation Architecture
Landfill & Recycling Centre	

Figure 19: Strategic Assets of the Shire of Merredin

Challenges and Strategies for Growth

Merredin will face a variety of challenges as the area grows, including uncertainty in the global financial market and the unknown requirements of natural resources overseas. This Plan considers how to meet these challenges and optimise strategies to assist in delivering growth, prosperity and community wellbeing for the town and sub-region.

The growth of the regional centre of Merredin will place pressure on transport networks, education, health, community, services and tourism infrastructure while also increasing pressure on the natural environment. These challenges require consolidated support by Local and State Government. Some of the key challenges and strategies for growth can be seen in Table 7 (Page 39).

Table 7: Summary Of Challenges & Opportunities For Growth

Economy	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and labour shortage. • Low unemployment rates – difficulty filling vacancies due to lack of suitable applicants and retaining labour force. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expansion of training programs delivered through C.Y. O'Connor Institute. • Promotion of the region and employment opportunities. • Collaboration with business and industry to develop stronger apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities. • Cross sector training to fill skill shortages. • Improve rental accommodation variation & quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to capture tourists and increase expenditure in the local economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a reason to stop. • Plan and promote local recreation and tourism through tourism planning. • Identify alternative markets such as business or environmental tourism. • Plan for increased accommodation. • Development of tourism linkages with the wider region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of financial downturns - local, state and abroad. • Sustainability of economy under threat (mono-economy). • Attracting private investors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify the economy into identified economic opportunities. • Expand the healthcare and healthcare service sector • Conduct research and development. • Provide strong education and training programs. • Attract private investment. • Promote the area to external private investors. • Facilitate the introduction and assistance with growth planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation of environmental impacts on agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and innovation to develop measures for adaptation. • Foster community understanding of agricultural practices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up/capitalisation costs in locating or building business enterprises (cost of infrastructure, BCA requirements). • Low return on investment compared to metropolitan areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of business incubator units to reduce initial investment. • Enhanced marketing program to identify opportunities in business growth/development in relocating. • Development and attraction of businesses requiring proximity and excellent access to markets (mining & support services due to the region's strong mining industry and transport sector).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition from the metropolitan area and online retail on local businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Digital & ICT training to access regional and global trade markets.

Communities	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of existing population with an emphasis on the 15-34 age groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop activities and facilities for youth. • Provide local educational and employment opportunities to maintain a strong labour force. • Improve education possibilities and links to local industry. • Develop strategies to attract younger generations back to the region after travel, university, training or when starting families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education quality and educational servicing – (perceptions of quality). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage in the development of childcare services and the expansion of the education precinct. • Provide opportunities for cross sector training and development of cultural programs and the arts. • Improve stakeholder and community liaison between educational institutions to improve public perception.

Communities (continued)

Challenges

- Attraction and retention of new residents.
- Providing quality housing, diversity of accommodation types and residential land of varying size.
- Service delivery.
- Development of a socially inclusive community.
- Equal employment opportunities.
- Indigenous disadvantage.
- Access to health services.

Strategies

- Promote quality of life with a focus on community.
- Promote amenity and access to essential services such as health.
- Promote recreational infrastructure and community amenities.
- Identification of new residential land.
- Encourage mixed use and higher density living.
- Promotion of private investment in the region to improve current housing stock.
- Provide suitably zoned land for future development.
- Planning for the development of digital service provision where appropriate to enable high quality service access.
- Provide high quality access to telecommunications and digital infrastructure.
- Focus on projects, facilities and services in areas such as health, education and environment that cater for all.
- Community engagement.
- Improve accessibility to childcare services and flexible working arrangements.
- Support 'closing the gap' initiatives.
- Develop educational support services such as Clontarf.
- Facilitate the identification and protection of sites of aboriginal heritage or significance.
- Further improve health services through capital investment and by implementing contemporary service delivery models.
- Attract and retain health professionals.
- Improve mental health and wellbeing services.
- Improve aged care service linkages between Kellerberrin and Merredin.

Built Form and Housing

Challenges

- Public open spaces lack cultural influences.
- High cost of headworks and infrastructure development in land assembly.
- Limited variation in housing stock.
- Limited low maintenance accommodation (professionals/tradespeople).
- Industrial land separated, requires clear identification and justification of function.
- Impact of floodplain on Merredin's development.

Strategies

- Participate in wider stakeholder engagement to enhance public open space areas to benefit different age cohorts and cultures.
- Merredin CBD Revitalisation project will provide a shared space for the public and private sectors to enhance the form and function of Merredin.
- Provide for the consolidation of residential areas.
- Utilise sustainable urban design practices to reduce resident and Shire costs (ongoing costs).
- Development of additional accommodation types and configurations to provide a wider profile of housing suitable to various age cohorts/lifestyles and occupations.
- Market industrial areas specific purposes related to power use, water use and lot sizes for industry development.
- Assess locations suitable for development and plan for their development accordingly.
- Identify infrastructure solutions to mitigate impacts on the townscape.

Infrastructure

Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise the benefit of passenger rail services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop tourism and accommodation options or improvements. Improved transfer links to rail station. Effective timetabling of rail services. Increase density in proximity to town centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development constraints (headworks, floodplain). Water pressure implications for firefighting purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for alternative development opportunities such as increased infill, mixed used and higher density living around the town centre. Development of sustainable infrastructure to reduce resource use or cost of water/power upgrades. Identify potential cost sharing exercises to reduce cost constraints on development of infrastructure. Conduct buffer planning as per planning requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity constraints related to ADSL/ADSL+2 telecommunications infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek opportunities to test new technologies and implement them (high speed broadband infrastructure).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited access to rail freight market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for the development of an intermodal terminal to facilitate rail-road transport.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of tier 3 grain network closure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise maintenance of local road network. Identify and mandate Great Eastern Highway corridor improvements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable access to metropolitan and regional electricity markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote renewable energy projects and supply. Upgrade high voltage transmission lines to the Perth metropolitan market.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further promote waste elimination, recycling and reuse opportunities. Expansion of waste management infrastructure. Implementation of regional waste plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing community & social infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for co-location and shared facilities and services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth outstrips infrastructure and service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good planning and monitoring of population requirements. Secure and develop infrastructure prior to new development. Good communication between local government and service providers. Effective project management to deliver new services on time.

Environment

Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change risks. Mitigate and reduce implications of climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to undertake risk assessments and planning. Support the use of sustainable technologies to reduce resource use/optimize resource use. Utilise renewable technologies to decrease costs to the community (ongoing) and increase savings (environmental/economic).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise community benefit from environmental assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and awareness of the environmental assets. Encourage sustainable developments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resource management. Balance land use and conservation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and understand the extent of local natural resources to protect them for future use or conservation. Protection and maintenance of native vegetation and wildlife habitats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased salinity/rising groundwater table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve townsite water management. Upgrade drainage basin to reduce salinity. Utilise saline water for non-potable users through treatment and water re-use.

Governance

Challenges

- Managing the expectations of the community.
- Reduce layers of agencies and organisation and increase co-operation.
- Poor perception of the community and Wheatbelt.
- Ensuring strong regional leadership in a growing and changing region (social/economic & environmental).

Strategies

- Be honest and transparent.
- Participation in day-to-day decision making.
- Deliver and implement projects.
- Increase stakeholder collaboration and community engagement to build strong & effective rapport.
- Foster and maintain a positive outlook in the whole community.
- Promote this Plan.
- Increase collaboration between Local and State Government
- Ensure strategic Local Government links are forged.
- Identify broad economic development and planning strategies for Merredin and the region.



Vision for Growth

A vision for the future of the Merredin has been developed for this Plan. The vision was formulated through the Merredin Community Reference Group in conjunction with the Shire of Merredin and the Wheatbelt Development Commission to draw together the aspirations of the community.

The Vision is:

‘Merredin will become a more innovative, diverse and attractive regional centre, actively engaged in building a diverse population and economic base, underpinned by sustainability principles.’

Factors in achieving the vision are:

- Position Merredin strongly as the regional centre for innovation, health, education retail and commerce in the Central East.
- To identify precincts, including zoning and regulatory requirements to cater for a projected increase in population from 3,353 in 2011⁴⁷ to a projected 4,000 people in 2031.
- Identify mechanisms that foster new and existing business and services to cater for emerging markets in the mining, industrial and agricultural sectors.
- Build on the Shire of Merredin’s strategic planning, applying further analysis to guide initiatives to improve the social and economic livelihood of the Central East’s residents.
- To maintain Merredin’s status as an affordable, liveable community.
- To market Merredin and the Central East and its opportunities in a positive light.

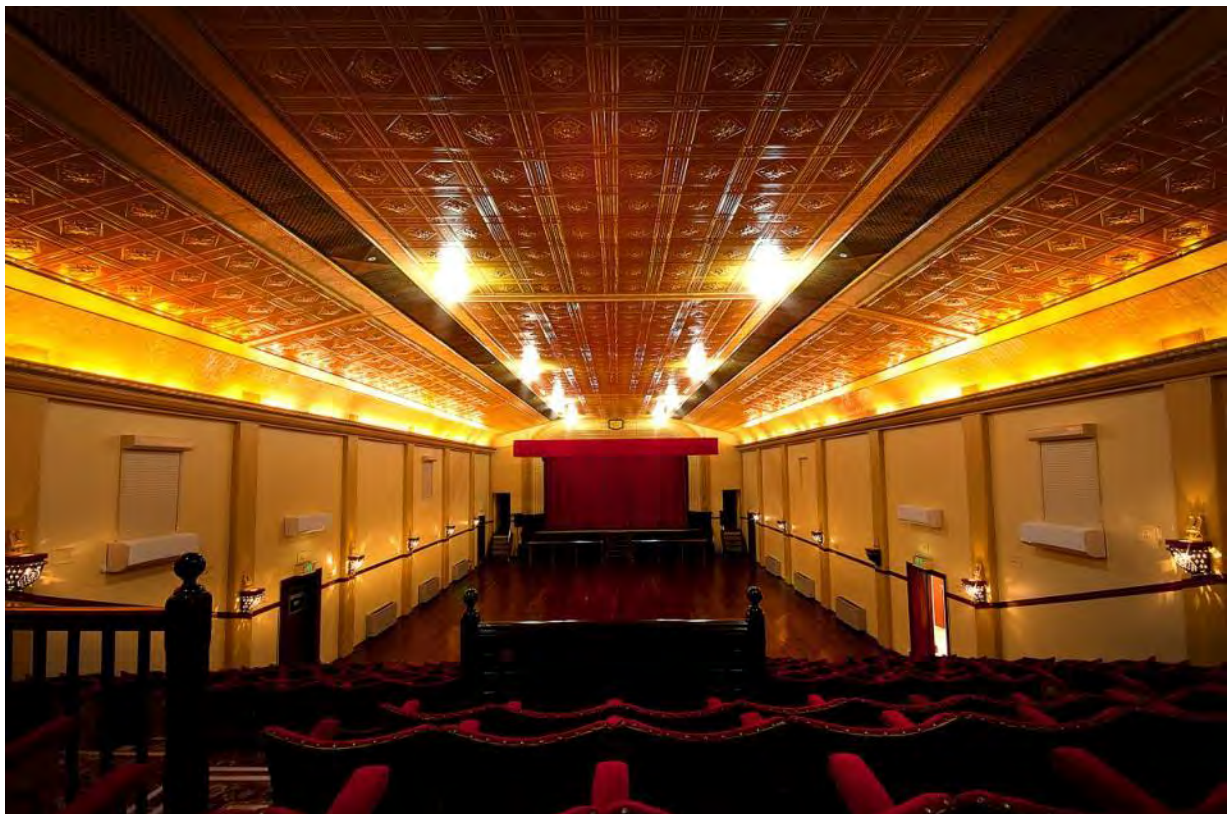
⁴⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. Shire of Merredin Basic Community Profile

Delivery of Merredin's vision is based upon the following guiding principles, many of which will promote growth, wellbeing, a sustainable future, improved land use practices and development for the area. The Plan's guiding principles are to:

- Create a Vibrant **Economy**
- Strengthen the **Community**
- Create sustainable **Built Form** and **Housing**
- Deliver successful **Infrastructure** Management
- Protect and Enhance the **Natural Environment**
- Ensure Successful **Governance**

For each guiding principle within this Plan, key issues and strategies are identified together with a list of key priorities comprising actions, projects and initiatives to promote growth for the Shire of Merredin and specifically the Merredin Townsite. Many of the key priorities meet the aspirations of all or most of the guiding principles.

The key priorities are listed in Appendix 5 of this document along with Implementation Schedules that list all identified actions, projects and initiatives required. There will also be a process in place to monitor and review the Plan to ensure its usefulness in future planning and the development of economic and population growth.



Growing as a Region

Merredin and its surrounding hinterland is well positioned to take advantage of growth within a number of industries including mining, mining services, agriculture, agricultural services, health, education, transport and logistics, retail, tourism and professional & government services. The Greater Merredin catchment area (Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Nungarin, Narembeen and Westonia) is a strong, diverse and spatially interconnected community. It is appropriate for the Plan to guide future growth and strategic investment to further develop the population and economic scale of Merredin and its surrounding hinterland.

The growth of Merredin as the sub-regional centre of the Central East is critical to ensure the effective co-ordination and delivery of regionally significant goods and services that enable and enhance population growth and economic development of the region. The regional transport networks existing between communities provide vital links for nearby communities to Merredin, enabling further economic growth.

It is imperative to support, strengthen and build upon the strategic infrastructure assets of Merredin, including the regionally significant west-east passenger transport and freight linkages of Great Eastern Highway and the Interstate railway line. A regional approach to problems, challenges, and opportunities associated with this growth can effectively deliver co-ordinated service delivery, increased efficiency of operations and greater economies of scale.

Further work will be undertaken during the next review of the Plan to ensure enhanced collaboration with the Local Government and WDC, and co-ordination of regionally significant economic drivers, actions, projects and initiatives.

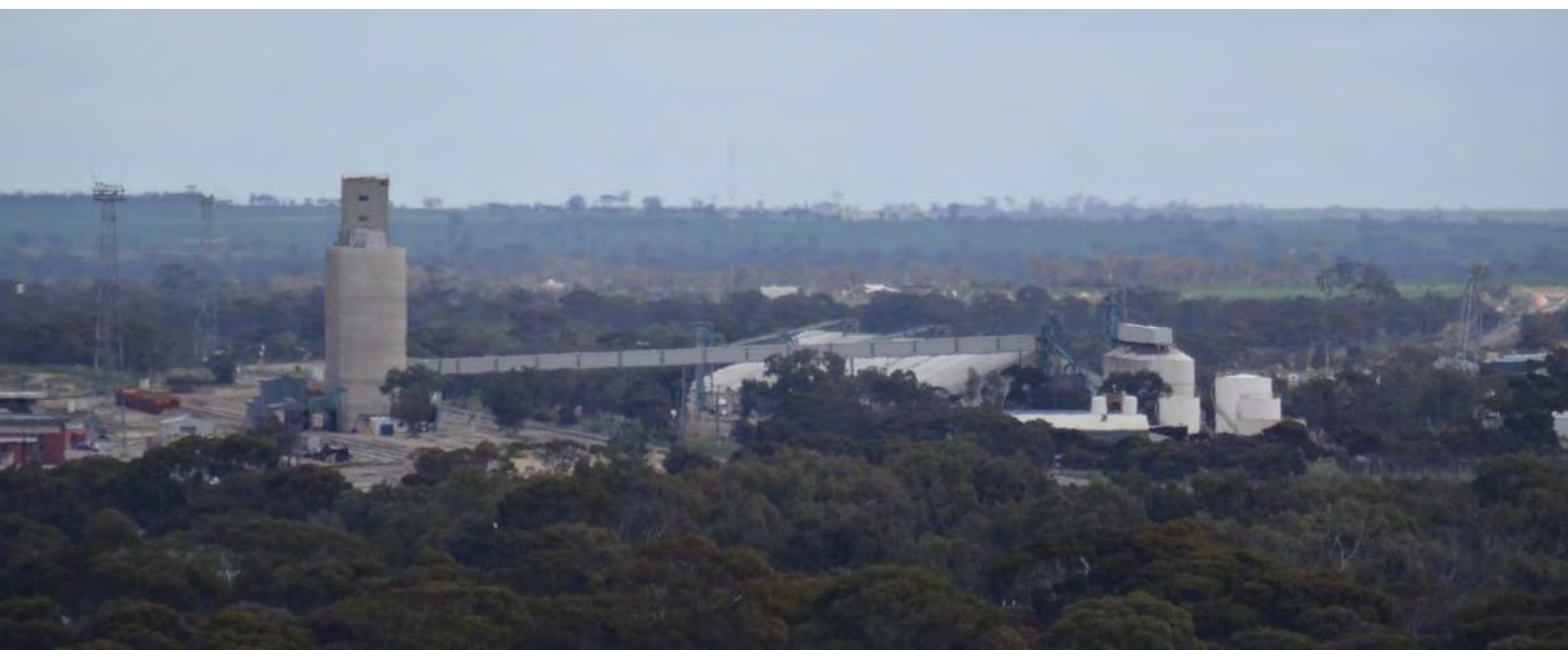
Capacity for Growth

The Shire of Merredin has a Local Planning Scheme and Local Planning Strategy. The Local Planning Scheme provides the statutory guidance for development including development provisions, permitted uses and compliance matters. The scheme maps provide the zonings for the land, which in turn indicate the type of uses that may be possible in each particular area.

Enabling future growth will require an adequate supply of suitably zoned land with the diversity to support a variety of land uses and housing densities. A townscape Precinct Plan for Merredin has been developed and is included at Appendix 2. This provides a plan for future expansion corridors for residential land, business, and industry development to deliver capacity for growth. This collaborative planning mirrors considerations of the Shire of Merredin's Local Planning Scheme (No.6) and Strategy and builds on stakeholder input and discussion to provide for the future development of Merredin.

As at 2015, Merredin's zoned and serviced residential land will meet short-medium term demand. The Merredin Shire has already considered residential demand⁴⁸, with prioritised land developments being outlined in the Precinct Plan for short-medium term development. There is also appropriately zoned land for rural residential purposes. Discussions with stakeholders and infrastructure providers have indicated a potential for further rural residential land to the north of the townsite in the medium-long term⁴⁹. This will be contingent on the resolution and determination of buffer requirements for the future operation of Merredin's waste facility and demand for this residential product.

Land suitable for development and zoned for industrial purposes is catered for through two existing industrial areas in the town. General industrial lots are located to the west of the town while the Light Industrial lots are located to the east of town. Their differentiation relates to lot size, type of industry and available infrastructure (see Guiding Principle 4 - Infrastructure).



The existing supply of retail and commercial land in Merredin will meet demand in the short-medium term. Increased demand is likely to be triggered by the Merredin CBD Revitalisation projects, requiring the redevelopment of buildings/land adjacent to the CBD area and small commercial service areas in the townsite. Additional retail/commercial land is unlikely to be required until the medium-long term.

Development Opportunities

The expansion of Merredin as the regional centre to accommodate future growth will be dependent on a number of factors, primarily the capacity of available infrastructure as well as suitable parcels of land for

⁴⁸ Shire of Merredin. 2012. Town Development Plan

⁴⁹ Shire of Merredin. 2007. Local Planning Strategy

development. Merredin is relatively unconstrained in terms of land uses, with the townsite surrounds zoned General Farming and Reserves⁵⁰. Small parcels of Crown Land exist within the townsite, however these do not negatively impact on potential growth corridors for the town (Crown & Infrastructure Reserves).

Appendix 2 comprises a Precinct Plan identifying key precincts for the strategic concentration of growth by land use.

Indicative Infrastructure Requirements To 2050

Figure 20 demonstrates some identified infrastructure requirements programmed or required during the growth period to 2050. These timeframes and requirements are indicative only and are dependent on further investigation and consultation with infrastructure and utilities providers.

There are currently gaps in the infrastructure planning required for the Plan’s population thresholds, highlighting the importance of a co-ordinated, regional approach to infrastructure planning for growth. The indicative timeframes for programmed infrastructure planning and projects will likely need to be brought forward if increased demand associated with population growth occurs. Government agencies should commence forward planning for the Plan’s population scenarios in the short-term.

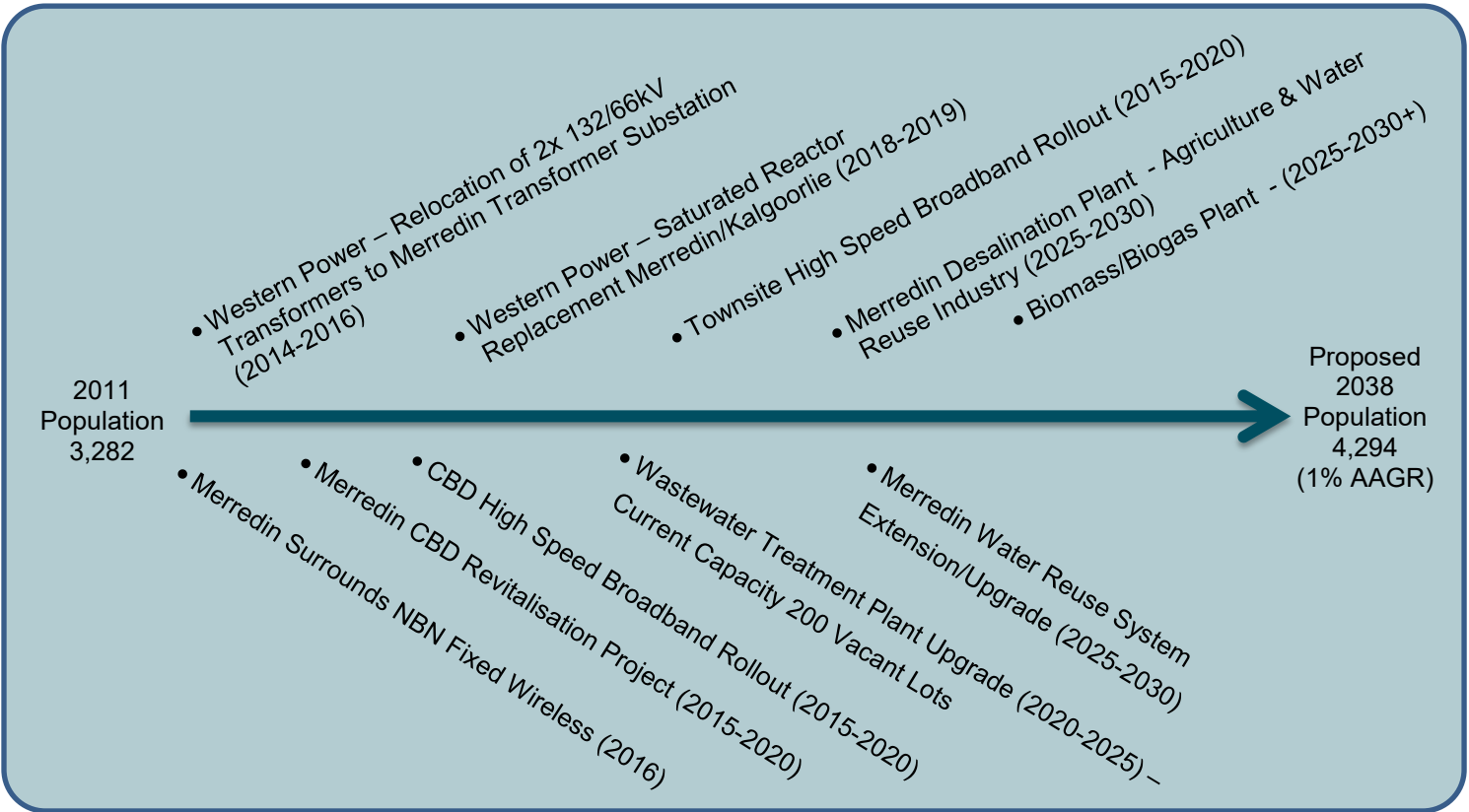


Figure 20: Planned Infrastructure Projects

⁵⁰ Shire of Merredin. 2010. Local Planning Scheme No.6 Maps



Economy

Guiding Principle I – Create a Vibrant Economy

The region will comprise diverse and thriving business, industry and service hubs where innovative opportunities are actively pursued and fostered. This will be achieved by:

- Being proactive in attracting new business to the region and encouraging existing businesses to grow.
- Improving the level and range of local employment opportunities.
- Attracting and retaining knowledge and investment, people and skills.
- Creating a supportive business environment.
- Ensuring sustainable growth supported by innovative industry.

Economic Drivers for Merredin

Economic forces and policy changes at international, national and state level are impacting businesses in the region, providing both challenges and opportunities. This plan seeks to assist in developing a more diverse and robust economy, whilst maintaining and enhancing key regional economic assets.

Merredin is the Central East's major 'retail and commercial hub', being dependent on both the local community and wider region's activities to drive the local economy. The presence of large retailers, commercial businesses, major banks, trades, health services, government and non-government organisations attract people to Merredin providing economic inflows to businesses. To ensure future economic growth, Merredin should foster and pursue the following economic drivers and opportunities identified:

- Industry (Transport, Agriculture & Mining)
- Retail
- Education
- Health

These economic drivers have been identified through the Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy (CESES). They encompass the economic opportunities of Broadacre Agriculture, Mining & Support Services and Population Services which were identified as key drivers for Merredin⁵¹. The CESES is strategically based and developed collaboratively by RPS Consulting and WDC.

⁵¹ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

Key Priorities to Grow the Economy

Error! Reference source not found.Table 8 (Page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) summarises how Merredin can achieve economic growth and provides an overview of the key economic issues, opportunities and actions. An Implementation Schedule and complete project list (Appendix 5) outline the key priority actions, projects and initiatives to grow the Central East economy. The actions are a combination of Local and State Government priorities which should be undertaken or implemented to facilitate economic growth.

Industry (Transport, Agriculture and Mining)

Economic opportunities within the transport, agricultural and mining sectors deliver a tiered approach to the economic development of the centre. Existing industries are primarily focused on freight & logistics, fabrication and engineering as well as light industrial and agricultural servicing. Businesses supporting the agricultural and mining industries are expected to see further economic development and growth. This will be enabled by increasing demand for food and mineral resources within the Asia-Pacific Region and the increasing wealth of their emerging middle class consumers⁵².

Transport

Merredin is strategically located, with transport networks forming a 'hub and spoke' settlement layout within the region. Major transport linkages including road and rail links provide inter-regional connections for local and global trade. These regional road and rail linkages provide significant economic advantages to Merredin with regards to further development of the existing freight and logistics industry.



Further development of the industry will be dependent on the provision of appropriately sized and accessible zoned & serviced land as well as marketing to metropolitan based fleets which operate within the region. Attracting regional transport operations will spur economic development and have broader economic implications through increased competition within the sector. This will also enhance utilisation of existing transport infrastructure.

⁵² RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

Maintaining an effective transport system is necessary to support existing economic activity in the region. Great Eastern Highway is the most important route through Merredin, being the State Route from Perth to Kalgoorlie and the Eastern States⁵³. Ongoing maintenance and upgrades of Great Eastern Highway and road train infrastructure will enable economic benefits for the transport sector and Merredin as a whole.

Key actions that will encourage growth are:

- Support and enhance the region's transport and logistics sector through the development of the "Merredin Townsite Freight Haulage Strategy" and the "Sub-Regional Transport Strategy".
- Identify the upgrade of local freight routes and ensure that upgrades to Great Eastern Highway are considered a high priority for the effective and efficient movement of freight.
- Identify the development potential of a road train assembly yard to support the transport and logistics industry in Merredin and enhance the sub-region's regional operations (Road Train Assembly Yard Development).
- Development of additional land for businesses when appropriate (Merredin Light Industrial Area, Merredin General Industrial Area Land Assembly & Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly).

Agriculture



Broadacre agriculture involving grains, oilseed, legumes and livestock production (wool and meat) will continue to underpin Merredin's economy with a focus on export-led growth⁵³. Productivity enhancements in farm efficiency, crop yield and quality improvements are being led by research and innovation in farm equipment and optimised plant species to match environmental conditions⁵³.

The Department of Agriculture & Food WA Merredin Office, through its Dryland Agricultural Research Institute, will provide opportunities to increase research and development with the potential to deliver cost savings, efficiency improvements and improve the value of economic outputs to local farms⁵³. The emergence of private innovation groups will be integral to ensuring a balanced public/private industry focus on research and development in the region. This is crucial in ensuring ongoing local research and development for the Central East agricultural region. Commercialisation of any such outcomes could increase the growth/efficiencies of the agricultural industry.

⁵³ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

The support of the existing industry base will be crucial to the future growth of agriculture in the growth plan area for the development of additional agricultural industries. Exemplar businesses such as Landmark, Elders, Merredin Rural Supplies, Agricultural Implements Merredin (AIM), Hutton & Northey and Farmpower all have a presence in Merredin and could benefit and add value to new innovative agricultural practices.



Key actions that will encourage growth are:

- Attract, retain and support businesses which further enhance the region's competitive advantage in broadacre agriculture.
- Develop a "Central East Agricultural Development Strategy" to engage government and the private sector in a co-ordinated strategy to enhance agricultural production/efficiency.
- Investigate the development of intensive agriculture (horticulture/aquaculture) system through the "Intensive Agriculture Pilot Project". This will be enhanced by water reuse projects including the "Merredin Desalination Plant" project.
- Support the expansion of research and development activities by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA Merredin Office.
- Attract private investment and industry support for the development of a "Biomass/Biogas Plant" to provide cheap energy to peak energy users and additional value add to the local agricultural sector (biomass collection & sale).
- Support the development of cross sector education in mining/agriculture courses.
- Development of additional land for businesses when appropriate (Merredin Light Industrial Area, Merredin General Industrial Area Land Assembly & Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly).
- Ensure ongoing support and engagement with agricultural improvement groups in the region (Merredin & Districts Farm Improvement Group, Far East Agricultural Research Group & Kellerberrin Production Group). There may be the potential for the development of a wider industry group in the region to represent the sector and its growers.

Mining

The mining industry presents significant economic growth opportunities in the medium to longer term. Within the Central East, mining represents almost 60% of the Gross Regional Product (GRP)⁵³. Long term growth opportunities are identified in the development of additional support servicing in Merredin (dependent on commodity prices)⁵³. Examples include Karni Engineering which provides specialist drilling rig customisation services and Hutton & Northey which provides some servicing of fleet vehicles. The development of these companies relies on a wide market reach, niche products and a diversified industry base to reduce financial exposure in downturns.



Key actions that will encourage growth are:

- Continue to support the development of transport routes surrounding Merredin which provide accessibility to a number of significant markets, the most notable within the sub-region being the Yilgarn Iron Province.
- Attract, retain and support businesses which further enhance the region's competitive advantage in mining.
- Investigate the potential development of off-grid sources such as small scale renewables/biomass/biogas operations to provide peak demand users with alternative affordable energy sources.
- Supporting the development of cross sector education in mining/agriculture courses.
- Development of additional land for businesses when appropriate (Merredin Light Industrial Area, Merredin General Industrial Area Land Assembly & Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly).

Retail

Retail in Merredin consists of small specialty retailers, large retailers, food outlets and fuel stations. While traditional retail has been facing growing competition from online sales and trade, there are opportunities to increase the digital capacity and capabilities of local businesses to recapture market share of local and sub-regional retail expenditure. Commercial services within Merredin are predominantly focused on agricultural, government and business services sectors. Agricultural related services such as banks, accountants as well as agribusinesses will act as the base of commercial services to build upon.

Negative market traction away from Merredin retailers could be reversed in the medium to long term through marketing available products, increasing competition on both traditional and online storefronts with regional competitors as well as ensuring price competitiveness with other retailers. Businesses will need to adapt and incorporate innovative technologies to drive growth and to operate in the global marketplace. Access to efficient and cost effective freight will help to drive down price pressures reflected in distance to key logistics centres and the product origin of the good or service.

To enhance retail and commerce within the existing town centre footprint, upgrades to buildings or the development of additional retail structures will help promote business development. Development of additional retail floor space will be required as the population increases in the medium to long term.

Key actions that will encourage growth are:

- The revitalisation of Merredin Central Business District through the “Merredin CBD Revitalisation Project (Stages 1-4)”.
- The development of a co-located office precinct for businesses and government.
- Signage to draw traffic into the CBD off Great Eastern Highway (Merredin Entrance Signage).
- Supporting the development of a group or officer to engage with and help to develop Merredin businesses and other enterprises.
- Improving broadband and telecommunications infrastructure (CBD High Speed Broadband Rollout) to support digital uptake and capacity of local businesses through education and training (Digital Technology Training & E-Commerce Development).
- Support the development of large anchor tenants where appropriate, with consideration to attracting Great Eastern Highway traffic into the CBD.

Housing

Population growth will depend on the provision of a variety of housing stock to accommodate different lifestyles, ages and personal preferences. Housing is discussed in more detail within Guiding Principle 2 and 3. Merredin has a limited variety of housing suitable for young professionals and tradespeople,

with the predominant housing being 3x1, 3x2 and 4x2 houses (rental stock and housing stock for purchase) as well as vacant lots for construction. Providing alternative housing types will be important in increasing the population as well as relieving demand on family homes for other potential residents. Providing a mix of housing types will ensure that townsite growth is not constrained. Merredin has a number of vacant homes for rent, purchase as well as blocks for constructing additional housing stock (see Property section of the Plan).

Key actions that will encourage growth are:

- The development of high density accommodation in proximity to the Merredin CBD (CBD Townhouse/Unit Development (Worker/Professional Accommodation)).
- The expansion of rural residential areas when appropriate to attract and promote young families into the town and retirees (Rural Residential Expansion (North Merredin)).

Education

Education and training within Merredin provides additional growth opportunities for the local economy. Merredin College (K-12), St Mary's Merredin (K-7), C.Y. O'Connor Institute and China Southern West Australian Flying College (CSWAFC Merredin Campus) are significant sources of employment within the local economy.



The education sector will require continual investment to ensure that quality education options are provided to influence the attraction and retention of families and to provide the future workforce with high quality skill-sets.

Investment into Primary and Secondary education is integral in facilitating the attraction and retention of families. Enhancing access to regional student accommodation underpins the delivery of this outcome. Continued investment in Merredin College and its residential boarding facilities will provide further growth opportunities, enhancing regional student access, increasing student numbers and allowing for increased staffing and service delivery. The development of cross sector industry partnerships in the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeship qualifications for the agricultural, mining and commercial sector will provide C.Y. O'Connor Institute with opportunities for growth. Developing

partnerships between these industries will help to ensure that young people are able to access skills training locally rather than in Perth or other regions for up-skilling or re-training.

An additional educational institution which provides economic benefits to Merredin is the China Southern West Australian Flying College's (CSWAFC) Merredin Campus. The CSWAFC provides Commercial Pilot License training for students involving both practical and theoretical aviation education⁵⁴ with an estimated 50 staff and 144 students currently based in Merredin⁵⁵. CSWAFC students and staff are located in Merredin either on a permanent or temporary basis and provide economic benefits to Merredin by utilising its retail, commercial services and public services. Encouraging further growth and extension of this Campus could result in growth of the aviation sector, including potential development of ancillary aviation services.

Strong educational institutions and programs identified within Merredin will ensure that skill gaps can be filled, unemployment levels are reduced and the participation rate and incomes of people within the economy are increased, enabling greater quality of life and life choices for residents.

Key actions to consider are:

- The construction of additional capacity at Merredin Residential College for Merredin College (regional student access) (Merredin College Extension (100+ beds)).
- Facilitate the expansion of the C.Y. O'Connor Institute Campus, both capacity for education and training as well as accommodation options for regional students to board (C.Y. O'Connor Institute Campus Expansion (Training Facility & Accommodation)). Additionally, expand local educational opportunities in cross sector programs such as disability care/healthcare and mining/agriculture industries (Cross Sector Skill Training Program (Agriculture & Mining - Health & Disability Care)).
- Development of additional childcare service to provide enhanced educational opportunities and enable equal employment opportunities to parents.
- Development of youth engagement and education programs to enhance skills training and early workforce/life skills development.

Health

Merredin is a key health service centre within the Central East. Merredin supports and is supported by Kellerberrin, due to the regional significance of Kellerberrin's aged care services (Dryandra Residential & Community Care) as well as networking and health worker linkages between the two centres. Merredin will continue to provide significant health services to the growth plan area and the region.

Planned upgrades to Merredin Regional Hospital will provide additional capacity and technological capabilities for the provision of healthcare services in Merredin. The increasing entrenchment of virtual

⁵⁴ CSWAFC. 2015. Website: Training Bases - <http://www.cswafc.com.au/trainingbases.html>.

⁵⁵ WDC. 2014. CSWAFC Unpublished Interview Notes.

health and tele-health services will provide capabilities for specialists to service the region cost effectively as well as reducing waiting and diagnosis times.

An increasingly ageing '55+ and over' population demographic, a growing regional and global trend, will require increased home carers and other health professionals⁵⁶. This will enable Merredin to expand its aged care industry due to its central location, existing service base and strategic transport network. Kellerberrin is expected to see growth in demand for high care services due to its existing service provision in the sector, which will provide economic development for Merredin through increased service access and demand for health professionals.

Health services could be further developed in Merredin to service a significant component of the sub-region's population, providing employment opportunities in the sector and economic development opportunities.

Key actions to consider are:

- The delivery of independent living units (ILUs) for Merredin's component of the Central East Aged Care Alliance project (CEACA Merredin ILU Development Stages 1-2 & Land Assembly).
- Delivery of improved healthcare services through the "Southern Inland Health Initiative - Capital Works Program - Merredin Hospital.
- The potential relocation of St Johns Ambulance Sub-Centre within the health precinct. This aligns with the development of a co-located healthcare precinct.



⁵⁶ WDC. 2012. Central East Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Regional Solution/s.

Table 8: Achieving A Vibrant Economy

Guiding Principle 1 – Create a Vibrant Economy

Goal: Merredin will comprise diverse and thriving business, industry and service hubs where innovative opportunities are actively pursued and fostered. This will be achieved by the following:

- Being proactive in attracting new business to the region and encouraging existing businesses to grow.
- Improving the level and range of local employment opportunities.
- Attracting and retaining knowledge and investment, people and skills.
- Supporting business environments.
- Ensuring sustainable growth supported by innovative industry.

Key Economic Issues

- Shortage of labour and skilled workers
- Ability to attract and retain labour force.
- Shortage of rental accommodation (variation in size & quality).
- Ensuring availability of appropriately zoned and serviced land for development.
- Negative perception of Merredin community/business environment.
- Exodus of small retailers due to online retail and metropolitan influences.
- Impact of climate change and structural changes in the agricultural industry.
- Low return on investment compared to metropolitan areas.
- Start-up/capitalisation costs in locating or building business enterprises (cost of infrastructure, BCA requirements).
- Sustainability of economy threatened by emphasis on mono economy (agriculture).
- Lack of sufficient private investment into buildings, businesses and infrastructure.

Key Economic Opportunities

- Development/attraction of mining & support service companies to the Central East mining region.
- Diversification of economy into identified economic opportunities to stabilise economy.
- Improvements to existing agricultural production through technology & innovation and improved farm management.
- Primary, secondary and tertiary education opportunities enabling local training and workforce development.
- Digital and Information Communications & Technology (ICT) development and training to access global markets and increase technology uptake.
- Expansion of healthcare and healthcare delivery.
- Development of aged housing and independent living units to build on existing servicing capacity in the aged care and health sector.
- Infill and higher density living in the town centre (revitalisation).
- Build on the strong transport and logistics sector and associated infrastructure.
- Small and medium enterprise development and business retention and expansion.
- Developing pathways for public and private investment (investment funds, government funding, and other investors).
- Highway servicing.
- Development of tourism linkages with the wider region.

Action/Activity/Project:

- Mining Support Service & Potable/Non-Potable Water Re-Use Industry Development - Business Incubator Development
- Sub-Regional Transport Strategy
- Merredin Townsite Freight Haulage Strategy
- Central East Agricultural Development Strategy
- Intensive Agriculture Pilot Project

Communities

Guiding Principle 2 - Strengthen the Community

The Western World's 65+ population is surging and this has become more prevalent with the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation (1946 to 1964)⁵⁷. The growth of this age cohort as a result of a decline in mortality and fertility levels, reflects global health advancements and the world's total fertility rate (TFR) falling from 5 children per woman in 1950-55 to 2.5 children per woman in 2010-15⁵⁸. The ageing population is placing pressure on communities both socially and economically and in particular labour force participation rates, health and social services.

Community Drivers

The proportion of West Australians aged 65+ is currently 12.3% and this age cohort is growing. In line with this demographic trend, demand for health-related services and employment opportunities across this sector is expected to increase⁵⁷. Merredin and Kellerberrin are strategic centres for the delivery of aged care services⁵⁷. Meanwhile, a broad regional trend of high numbers of those in the 0-15 cohort represents child health and youth service requirements⁵⁷. Meeting changing demographics requires consideration of all population cohorts in accommodating service access and delivering reform. This enables wider community benefits from opportunities arising from changes to the population profile.

The Growth Plan due diligence and stakeholder engagement process identified six key community drivers and opportunities. They encompass the sectors of:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Recreation
- Culture & Arts
- Housing & Accommodation
- Education & Training
- Aboriginal Community

Each of the key community drivers is explored in greater detail in this section.

Key Priorities to Strengthen the Community

Table 9 (Page 66) summarises how Merredin will strengthen the community and also contains an overview of the key community issues, opportunities and actions. An Implementation Schedule and complete project list can be found in Appendix 5 outlining the key priority actions, projects and initiatives for Merredin. The actions are a combination of Local and State Government priorities which should be undertaken or implemented to facilitate growth.

⁵⁷ RPS, 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

⁵⁸ United Nations, 2013. World Population Ageing 2013 (Accessed 5th November 2014)

Health and Wellbeing

Merredin has a number of regionally significant health services. Merredin Regional Hospital provides accident and emergency, pathology laboratory testing, acute care, residential aged care (Berringa Lodge Facility), mental health services and other essential services to the town and neighbouring communities⁵⁹. Ancillary medical services include two medical centres and specialist health services (WACHS Eastern Districts Primary Health Services, an optician, chiropractor, podiatrist and chemist). Access to services of a comparable standard and reliability of those provided within metropolitan areas is a key concern for regional communities, their residents and visitors⁶⁰.

Contrasting age cohorts require services that complement their current life stage. The standard and variety of essential and specialist health services are an influencing factor on a person's decision to live in the regions. The development of accessible and high quality health services will enable resident attraction. Quality services will also assist in retaining the current population as they age in place and their healthcare needs change. State agencies will need to conduct ongoing planning to ensure a suitable standard of service is maintained.

Key healthcare considerations will be upgrading healthcare infrastructure (SIHI Capital Works Program – Merredin Hospital), aged care support (CEACA Merredin ILU Development) and dementia care services, staffing levels, mental health service access and the attraction of additional volunteers to services such as St John's Ambulance and Home and Community Care (HACC). The Shire of Merredin should continue to take a proactive advocacy role in supporting the provision of medical facilities and services which meet the needs of the local and broader sub-regional community.

Aged Care

As a member of the Central East Aged Care Alliance (CEACA), Merredin has undertaken strategic planning into aged care and aged servicing/service delivery reform for the sub-region. Research and analysis conducted as part of the Central East Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Solutions report has identified aged care as a key priority for communities in the Central East⁶⁰. The increasing proportion of people in the 55+ age cohort presents social challenges and economic opportunities for the Wheatbelt. This will include service delivery reform, dementia care, residential care as well as independent living unit (ILUs) developments to enable residents to 'age in place'. A key project for Merredin is the construction of an estimated 73 ILUs adjacent to the existing Merrittville Retirement Village (Bates Street) and through the redevelopment of the former North Merredin Primary School site due to its proximity to Merredin's CBD (CEACA Merredin ILU Development).

⁵⁹ Department of Health. 2015. Website: Consumer Health Services Directory: Merredin Hospital - http://www.health.wa.gov.au/services/detail.cfm?Unit_ID=118

⁶⁰ WDC. 2012. Central East Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Regional Solution/s

A social and economic imperative for the Shire of Merredin will be to liaise and engage with the Shire of Kellerberrin and CEACA members in the planning, development and provision of aged care and health services within the region. Kellerberrin is a strategic aged care centre in the Central East due to the Dryandra Residential & Community Care facility, while Merredin as a centre of regionally significant health services and specialists provides synergies for social and economic development. Ongoing regional planning in health servicing and the aged care sector will help to achieve increased demand for health services and aged facilities in the region⁶¹.

Recreation

To enable residents and visitors to enjoy healthy active lifestyles and sustain a strong sense of community, it is important to support initiatives relating to recreation, volunteering and sporting activities. The Merredin Regional Community & Leisure Centre (MRCLC) is a significant asset to the local and regional community, with the facility providing high quality indoor courts for netball and basketball, outdoor synthetic turf for hockey and tennis, synthetic bowling greens, well-kept football oval and other essential and specialist recreation services ⁵⁷. This co-located facility provides significant recreational opportunities for Merredin, enabling the retention and attraction of existing and prospective residents.



Located in proximity to the MRCLC is the Merredin Squash & Fitness Centre, providing gym services and squash court access. Aquatic recreation is located to the south of Merredin at the town's swimming pool. Recreational areas such as Roy Little Park and Apex Park are strategic assets for recreation. Population growth will enable more sustainable sport and recreational opportunities to be established. An integral component of this will be to strengthen community volunteerism and engagement in sport and recreation.

Ongoing support of sport and recreation by the Shire, community engagement and support within sporting clubs as well as strong volunteerism will ensure sport and recreational opportunities are available to all current and future residents. This will enable healthy, active lifestyles and sustain strong communities.

⁶¹ WDC. 2012. Central East Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Regional Solution/s

To attract and retain residents, Merredin should look at a number of possible projects such as the rejuvenation of local playgrounds and parks, promotion of recreational activities other than core sports and improved management of facilities and events (Parks/Gardens/Public Amenity Upgrades project).

Culture and Arts

Culture and the arts are important factors in the attraction and retention of residents. The sector provides economic opportunities in the creative economy, expanding social opportunities to the local community. The Cummins Theatre is a heritage listed theatre venue providing a place to showcase creative and artistic events in the centre of Merredin. This includes national and regional touring groups, programs and shows to be held for the local and regional community to access. This is a highly valued asset to Merredin in providing an avenue for cultural development and expression.



Cultural development can enable future growth and cohesion in the region, providing learning experiences in its history and people. This is made possible by the restoration and promotion of historical locations within the region, creating places where local artists can display their work and holding cultural events where the local community can come together. To ensure the local community feel valued and connected, there is a need to encourage the development of a diverse, socially inclusive, vibrant, happy and accepting community.

These initiatives are already underway in Merredin with the Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre hosting community events such as Destination Merredin as well as the monthly Merredin Markets (initiative of the Community Resource Centre) providing a friendly communal atmosphere attracting both locals and tourists alike. The Merredin & Districts Agricultural Society run an annual event, known as the Merredin Show, attracting many local and regional residents incorporating business showcases, recreational activities and competitions.

Housing and Accommodation

For sustainable population growth, a sufficient and a diverse range of housing options are required. People's decisions to relocate to Merredin will depend on several key factors, including:

- Affordability
- Quality & Age Of Homes
- Variety Of Housing Stock
- Level Of Home Maintenance

As identified in the Property Section (Page 30), Merredin is dominated by large single dwelling homes which, while suitable for families, are considered an inefficient use for other demographics. The development of additional housing options including units/duplexes/apartments – higher density living, will increase housing variety for different age cohorts and demographics (CBD Townhouse/Unit Development (Worker/Professional Accommodation)).

For those considering relocating to Merredin, a number of rental properties which offer variety in the price, age of the home, level of maintenance required and size of the property will be important factors. Similarly, for those considering purchasing property in Merredin, it will be important for housing to be available that meets the person's life stage, personal preferences and budget as well as housing features and variety previously mentioned. A projected population increase will require planning to ensure that public housing is adequately dispersed, alternative options in design are provided and that sustainable and universally designed housing is available for current and future residents.

Growth of the over 55+ cohort will place further pressure on the housing market. The CEACA initiatives identify the potential to undertake universal housing design within the development of independent living units⁶² to accommodate changing lifestyles and enable planning for co-located community services and facilities (CEACA Merredin ILU Development).

Due to Merredin's proximity to the Yilgarn Iron Province and Westonia's Edna May Gold Mine, there is increased demand for a range of housing types. Increasing rental property availability and quality will enable the attraction of families and workers related to this industry who currently FIFO or DIDO from outside the region. To support existing industries and the community, increased short term and affordable longer term accommodation for visiting workers and other personnel will be required. Meeting the demand for accommodation is paramount in combatting availability, affordability, social exclusion and attraction and retention issues in the region.

Holiday and short term accommodation in the town is heavily utilised by service and construction workers; the result of this being low vacancy rates in Merredin's caravan park and motels. As an RV

⁶² RPS. 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

friendly town, Merredin is investigating potential areas to enable tourists to visit and stay in serviced areas to ensure there is access to tourism services. Currently there is excess demand and limited supply of accommodation in existing hotels/motels during the week, however demand drops off on weekends. Identifying gaps in accommodation provision will ensure that existing sites are used effectively during non-peak periods. Ensuring an adequate supply of serviced land, quality housing stock, rental accommodation as well as accommodation to meet demand will ensure that there is capacity for growth and population attraction in the Shire of Merredin.

Education and Training

As the regional centre of the Central East, Merredin has a number of strategic and ancillary educational facilities providing high quality services to the local and regional population. To retain the current population and attract additional families to relocate to Merredin, further improvements will need to be made to educational facilities and service provision models. Merredin's education facilities for primary, secondary and vocational learning should continue to be improved, ensuring quality educational pursuits are provided.



Continuing to shape Merredin as an education hub in the Central East will be important as the population grows, particularly with children entering high school earlier and the trend of local children attending secondary schooling in Perth. In order to retain the current population and attract families to Merredin, an extension and improvement of educational facilities and resources is required.

Planning should be undertaken to assess the size and location of different facilities, quality of teaching, courses offered and the resources available within a regional context. The town's education precinct has been identified and future growth requirements have been considered accordingly.

Primary and Secondary Education

Merredin has long day and home based childcare services available. These services are often subject to waiting lists. Service delivery reform and the expansion of these services will be required to cater for future population growth. The implementation of the Wheatbelt Children Services Plan in Merredin and

its hinterland will be integral to developing and enhancing child education outcomes. In regards to primary and secondary education, Merredin has two major schools which have both experienced increased student enrolments in recent years. In private education institutions, Saint Mary's Primary school provides education for K-7 students with 182 students enrolled.⁶³ Public education is provided at Merredin College, a K-12 institution of 563 students.⁶³

Merredin Residential College is an externally located boarding facility catering exclusively to Merredin College students. While the facility has recently been granted funding to expand the capacity from 48 to 72 beds⁶⁴ this upgrade will not satisfy the demand of the current registration waiting list and will continue to be insufficient with the future projected demand for boarding places at the College. Expansion of educational institutions in line with population growth and forecasting will enable Merredin to adequately service its local and regional population in the future.

Tertiary and Specialised Education and Training

Merredin has strategic tertiary and specialised education facilities which will enable further educational opportunities through population growth. The Merredin C.Y. O'Connor Institute provides higher education through apprentice/traineeship courses and vocational education programs. Its location in proximity to Merredin College provides opportunities for enhanced education and training for students seeking training in trades or apprenticeships. While having experienced a decline in numbers due to seasonal factors and industry trends, the Merredin campus is strategically located for mining and agricultural sector activity in the region to see future growth in student enrolments.

Ensuring strong ties between C.Y. O'Connor Institute and Merredin College will enable increased utilisation of existing resources and enable expansion of courses available to the emerging workforce. The Trade Training Centre houses large purpose-built workshops equipped with industry standard tools, machinery and safety equipment focused on skills training in the areas of automotive, building, construction and engineering. In partnership with C. Y. O'Connor Institute, the Trade Training Centre delivers nationally recognised training qualifications. Building capacity for tertiary education may enable the return and retention of the important youth/young adult age cohort in the community.

The China Southern West Australian Flying College (CSWAFC) Merredin Campus provides theoretical and practical aviation training, a secondary campus to the Jandakot branch of CSWAFC in a joint venture between China Southern Airlines and CAE Global Academy.⁶⁵ Training is performed with Grob G115C2 single engine aircraft in Merredin to enable cadets to receive their Commercial Pilots License.⁶⁵

⁶³ RPS. 2015. Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy: Local Government Profiles - Merredin

⁶⁴ Department of Regional Development. 2015. Residential College Upgrades.
<http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/projects/Education/Pages/Residential-College-upgrades.aspx>

⁶⁵ WDC. 2014. CSWAFC Unpublished Interview Notes.

Continued support from the Shire of Merredin and the local community may enable CSWAFC to expand its operations in Merredin as a result of further growth in the aviation industry abroad ⁶⁶ and increased congestion and airspace constraints at Jandakot Airport ⁶⁵. Ongoing engagement is necessary to ensure that there are development opportunities to enable additional students to study at the Merredin campus and that growth constraints are resolved to enable expansion and further educational opportunities and growth.

Aboriginal Community

It is vital to ensure history and heritage is protected in planning townsite expansion as this forms part of the character of the town. In order to achieve the population growth objectives it will be necessary to develop new and existing areas with appropriate care to ensure sites of historical significance and heritage sites are not adversely affected. Of particular importance is acknowledging and maintaining the history of the Aboriginal community within the region. According to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the following Aboriginal and Heritage sites have been identified⁶⁷:

- 0 Registered Aboriginal sites.
- 1 Heritage Site (Talgermine Rock, approximately 15km north east of Merredin town).

While there are a limited number of sites within the Shire, this may be a result of sites being unreported and only known through local knowledge. Consultation with Aboriginal groups and leaders within the community will ensure that sites are acknowledged and identified for future reference in the growth of the town site, ensuring they are protected from encroaching land uses.

Acknowledging Aboriginal heritage is of great importance but dealing with the current issues in the region also requires thorough planning. Reducing segregation within the community and increasing Aboriginal representation in decision making on the growth of the region is vital. One initiative that may address some of these issues is developing and strengthening local Aboriginal groups that represent multiple families. These groups can set priorities, develop projects and engage with decision makers.

Other key initiatives that require planning include addressing housing requirements for the Aboriginal community; improving Aboriginal attendance levels in primary and secondary education and developing initiatives to increase employment opportunities for aboriginal members of the community while recognising cultural considerations. It is also important that Aboriginal Liaison Officer roles are developed and maintained for areas such as education and law and order. This will help to facilitate broader economic and social development and a more inclusive community.

⁶⁶ Boeing. 2015. Current Market Outlook Infographic.

⁶⁷ Department of Aboriginal Affairs. 2015. Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System

Table 9: Achieving A Strong Community

Guiding Principle 2 – Strengthen the *Community*

Goal: *The region will comprise relaxed, family friendly communities with healthy lifestyles and a wealth of activities for all. This will be achieved by the following:*

- Creating a healthy, active, safe and informed community.
- Encouraging community participation and involvement.
- Creating affordable and accessible services that meet community expectations.
- Founding a high quality of life for the people of Merredin.
- Enjoying a diverse range of social, recreational and volunteer opportunities.
- Respecting diversity and being inclusive of all peoples.
- Celebrating Merredin's rich cultural heritage.
- Building on the Central East's emerging arts and cultural following.

Key Community Issues

- Access to housing and a diversity of housing accommodation for family compositions.
- Equal employment opportunities are stymied through a lack of access to childcare services and flexible work arrangements.
- The retention of the 15-34+ demographic, young tradespersons, professionals and specialists (skilled workforce development).
- Protection and upkeep of sites of Aboriginal heritage within the region for conservation, cultural and tourism purposes.
- Residential boarding capacity constraints (Merredin College).
- Perception of training and education services.
- Improvement to education and training facilities to reduce student migration.
- Methods to increase participation in sport and recreation and volunteering.
- Limited access to quality telecommunication services (high speed broadband).
- Managing community expectations in the planning and delivery of community services.
- Service quality and infrastructure demand in the region (Health, ICT, Education & Services).

Action/Activity/Project:

- Industrial & Residential Marketing
- Footpaths Renewal & Extension
- Parks/Gardens/Public Open Space & Public Amenity Upgrades
- Digital Technology Training & E-Commerce Development
- Merredin College Extension (100+ beds)
- C.Y. O'Connor Institute Campus Expansion (Training Facility & Accommodation)
- Cross Sector Skill Training Program (Agriculture & Mining - Health & Disability Care)

Key Community Opportunities

- Increased demand for social, recreation and health services through population growth.
- Improvement to Merredin's health precinct.
- Ongoing provision of education programs (C.Y. O'Connor Institute, CSWAFC) and services (Merredin Residential College).
- Increased childcare development (equal employment opportunities and education).
- Expansion of educational precinct.
- Planning and provision for youth & ageing population - community and health services.
- Cross sector training to provide a complementary agricultural and mining skills base in the region.
- Accommodation options.
- Provisions to enable the continued support of the arts, cultural programs and events.
- Planning for the development of digital service provision and quality telecommunications access.
- Expand recreational assets in the community to ensure an even distribution of public open space.
- Quality of public housing and provision of alternative accommodation sizes and types.
- Identification and protection of sites of aboriginal heritage or significance.

- Kindergarten/Childcare Development (Co-Located Education Precinct)
- Youth Development & Engagement Program - Youth Centre/Youth Services Development
- Southern Inland Health Initiative - Capital Works Program - Merredin Hospital
- St John's Ambulance - Sub Centre Upgrade
- Co-Located Medical Precinct Development (Ancillary Services & Government (Health Offices) Development
- CEACA Merredin ILU Development (Stage 1)
- CEACA Merredin ILU Development (Stage 2)
- Over 55s Lifestyle Village Development Feasibility Strategy

Built Form and Housing

Guiding Principle 3 – Create Sustainable Built Form and Housing

Despite its population size and expansive geographic area, Western Australia, like many other areas in developed countries is highly urbanised. Growth pressures along Western Australia's Swan Coastal Plain characterised by low density greenfield developments, requires sound planning. Regions outside of the coastal plan area should be considered as part of the State's strategy to accommodate long-term growth projections.

The introduction of the Royalties for Regions Regional Centres Development Plan (SuperTowns) by the Western Australian Liberal-National Government in 2011 has provided this opportunity. The Program has enabled a number of communities, including Jurien Bay and Northam, to plan and prepare for the future where they can take advantage of the opportunities created by WA's population growth which is predicted to more than double to 4.9m people by 2050⁶⁸.

Built Form and Housing Drivers for Merredin

Although not part of the SuperTowns program, the Central Eastern Wheatbelt and particularly Merredin are viewed as integral areas for future population growth. This Plan, modelled on the SuperTowns process, will help guide the planning and built form development to house the projected population growth.

The Growth Plan due diligence and stakeholder engagement process identified five key built form and housing drivers and opportunities. They encompass the sectors of:

- Public Space
- Town Site Development
- Rural Living Development
- Commercial and Retail
- Industrial

Each of the key built form and housing drivers is explored in greater detail in this section.

Key Priorities to Create Sustainable Built Form and Housing

Table 10 (Page 74) summarises how Merredin will create sustainable built form and housing solutions and provides an overview of the key built form issues, opportunities and actions. An Implementation Schedule and complete project list (Appendix 5) outlines the key priority actions, projects and initiatives. The actions are a combination of Local and State Government priorities which will be undertaken or implemented to facilitate growth.

⁶⁸ Regional Development Council, 2011. Regional Development Policy Framework – An Action Agenda for Regional Development

Public Space



To attract and retain residents in Merredin, public open spaces need to be appropriately planned and developed. A critical issue for the town-site is the disproportionate availability of recreational public open space. To the north of the railway, the community has excellent access to both active and passive recreational areas, while to the south of the railway there is a lack of publicly accessible open space for recreational purposes (excluding school grounds). Developing and improving areas where the community can come together will help build a happy and thriving region where new people would want to come to live. Key initiatives to reinvigorate Merredin's public spaces include:

- The installation of community art/murals to provide focal points;
- Improved local parks and play equipment;
- The revitalisation of the CBD and encouragement of walkability into and around the CBD;
- The revitalisation and improvement of parkland and open space recreational areas to the north and south of the townsite;
- Identification and marking of cycle paths;
- Improved public lighting for safety and amenity;
- Improved picnic areas for the Railway Dam and access to Merredin Peak;
- Liaison with WA Police Merredin, St Mary's College and Merredin College on the development of youth spaces;
- Development and promotion of community gardens; and
- Further development and support for community events/concerts (Merredin Markets, Gala Night, Cummins Theatre).

There is a need to promote accessible services along with well-designed, functional and high quality residential, commercial, industrial and recreational spaces. The development of sustainable transport networks, including the promotion of alternative means of transport, will provide more options for the region, and in some cases, improve the health of the communities. Initiatives such as dedicated cycle paths, aged friendly pathways and the facilitation of public space enhancement for walkability within Merredin will help in making the region more attractive to prospective residents, as well increasing physical activity levels and mental wellbeing.

Town Site Development

Merredin has been developed in a typical grid pattern with a defined Central Business District situated on Barrack Street. The layout has emerged from ribbon commercial development along Barrack Street and the residential area on Todd Street (Railway Houses Precinct) in response to the interstate railway⁶⁹. The development of Great Eastern Highway and regional transport corridors (Merredin-Nungarin Road, Narembeen Road and Bruce Rock-Merredin Road) has further encouraged residential, commercial and industrial development along these alignments. As a result the town has a well-defined Central Business District, expanded residential areas to the north and south and industrial areas to the west (general industry) and east (light industry & showroom commercial).

Merredin has a number of different building and architectural styles utilised within the urban fabric, illustrating distinct phases of development during the last 100 years and accordingly there are a number of heritage listed buildings⁷⁰:

- Agricultural Bank Manager House
- Agricultural Bank
- Cummins Theatre
- Merredin Post Office
- Merredin Post Office Residence
- Merredin District Hospital
- Merredin Rotary Clock Tower
- Merredin Fire Station Complex
- Railway House (Precinct & Separate Houses)

It is imperative that these structures are protected, and heritage planning takes into consideration their potential reutilisation for modern purposes such as offices, homes and community facilities without compromising their heritage value to the community.

⁶⁹ State Library of Western Australia (Record of Department of Lands & Surveys W.A). 1927. Cadastre of Merredin Townsite. http://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1939997_1

⁷⁰ State Heritage Council & Stage Heritage Office of Western Australia. 2015. Inherit Inquiry System. <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/public>

According to the Shire of Merredin's Local Planning Scheme, the density coding of the majority of the townsite is R10/R30⁷¹. R10 is consistent with the average site area per dwelling of 1,000m² while R30 reflects an average of 300m² per dwelling⁷². This identifies the potential for battleaxe lot subdivisions, general subdivision and unit/duplex development.

Given significant costs associated with servicing greenfield residential lots, consideration should be given to the consolidation of the townsite through infill subdivision, where existing servicing provides the ability to achieve a greater return on investment. As the town is already zoned for higher density⁷¹, development incentives may be required to motivate investment and development in proximity to the town centre; however this will need to be reviewed in accordance with the economic outcomes of such a program.

Ensuring that there is a mix of available residential, rural residential and mixed-use lots as well as supporting residential subdivision will ensure that an adequate supply of appropriately priced land will provide growth potential in the medium-long term. There is an adequate supply of residential land within the town for current needs and recent outline development planning provides the preliminary plans for future land release consideration⁷³.

Merredin features well defined industrial areas; with general industry, transport and logistics companies, manufacturers/heavy fabrication and engineering located west of the townsite past the CBH facilities. This provides a buffer between the residential area of the townsite and industry. Located to the east of the townsite is a mix of commercial showroom areas and light industrial businesses. There is an adequate supply of lots within both industrial estates to meet short to medium term demand.

Rural Living Development

While representing a niche market in Merredin, demand for rural residential land has been increasing. As the townsite is bordered by broadacre agriculture, there would be limited short term impacts on the agricultural sector in acquiring agricultural land for rural residential purposes seeing that such an acquisition would be a minimal percentage of the total area of the Shire. As the surrounds are cleared and in freehold ownership, the remnant constraint to development would be the cost efficiency of providing services. Rural residential and rural smallholding lots should be planned in proximity to the townsite adjacent to existing service corridors (power and water).

There is an adequate supply for appropriately zoned rural residential land to meet short term demand. The Shire of Merredin's Local Planning Strategy references two preferred locations for future rural

⁷¹ Shire of Merredin. 2010. Local Planning Scheme No.6 Maps

⁷² Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC). 2013. State Planning Policy 3.1: Residential Design Codes

⁷³ Shire of Merredin. 2012. Town Development Plan

residential development to meet the demands of the medium and long term growth.⁷⁴ The area bound by Merredin-Nungarin Road to the west, Goldfields Road to the south and Chandler-Merredin Road is a prime location for rural residential development, due to existing services (water and power) being located in close proximity. Additionally, the site is adjacent to the old Merredin townsite and other established rural residential properties.



Commercial and Retail

Commercial space within Merredin is mainly contained within the CBD. Office space is constrained, with government departments, agencies and commercial offices utilising available structures for office purposes. Buildings are available which may alleviate demand on office space, however upgrades may be required and structures need to be retrofitted to enable alternative office uses. Through retrofitting existing buildings for office purposes, office space development can be deferred in the short-medium term. The deployment of the high speed broadband through the Merredin CBD Revitalisation Project would provide a significant productivity enhancement and demand for these office spaces (CBD High Speed Broadband Rollout).

In order to promote further commercial development within this area, the development of additional showroom commercial lots (for sales, ancillary services and agriculture service companies) will be required as demand increases. An economic imperative for Merredin in the short to medium term will be to develop suitable areas in line with forecast demand (Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly).

⁷⁴ Shire of Merredin. 2007. Local Planning Strategy

Merredin CBD Revitalisation

The Merredin CBD is well defined, with shops fronting the major thoroughfares, Barrack and Bates Street. A number of commercial services, government offices and agricultural related services are located on the surrounding roads. While retail space is available on Barrack Street, the quality of these spaces and lack of modern retail fit-outs have resulted in a tired commercial area.



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A priority project identified by the community and the Shire is the Merredin CBD Revitalisation Project. It is envisaged that the project will provide the trigger for the enhancement of local businesses through the redevelopment and revitalisation of the broader public space. As of July 2015, there are a number of retail shopfronts for sale or available for lease, indicating that additional lots may not need to be developed in the medium-long term. However, upgrades or enhancements to existing retail stock may be required to incentivise business attraction, development or relocation to Merredin.

To see growth in the region in years to come, opportunities to support the creation of additional office and retail/commercial space within the CBD will need to be identified. The introduction of mixed use development in proximity to the town centre would assist this greatly, as would the development of high speed broadband services (CBD High Speed Broadband Rollout).

Industrial

Merredin features two distinct industrial areas, light industrial to the east of town and general industrial to the west. As with residential land, industrial land attracts a high servicing cost, while the market price is considerably less. Business incubator units may be necessary in order to promote economic development by supporting start up industrial or industrial service businesses.

Light Industrial

Merredin's light industrial area is composed of commercial and light industrial lots housing a number of light industrial units, fabricators and agricultural service companies. To develop this area, further zoning will be required, potentially including sites east of Mary Street and further east of the Mackenzie Street development to provide an adequate townsite buffer. It is unlikely that additional lots will be required until the medium-long term (Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly).

General Industrial



Merredin's general industrial area comprises the Co-Operative Bulk Handling Merredin Facility (Merredin CBH), wastewater treatment plant, Merredin Transformer Substation and general industrial businesses. This industrial area is not designed for noxious industries; rather it is designed to take advantage of key freight connections within the area, the buffer provided by CBH to the townsite (noise/dust), available utilities and large industrial lots.



A number of transport and logistics companies, large fabricators and small scale manufacturers have located here for this reason.

There is the potential to expand this industrial area. An adequate supply of large, competitively priced industrial lots would allow Merredin to take advantage

of its strategic location, infrastructure assets and high quality business environment particularly in the development of mining support services. Based on lot availability, it is likely that general industry lots will need to be developed to support demand in the medium-long term future (Merredin General Industrial Area – Land Assembly).

Table 10: Achieving Sustainable Built Form and Housing

Guiding Principle 3 – Create Sustainable <i>Built Form and Housing</i>	
Goal: <i>The built form and housing will capture the character and setting of the region; connecting people and places and integrating sustainable infrastructure that meets the needs of the growing community and economy. This will be achieved by the following:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating active and vibrant spaces. ▪ Developing well connected and liveable communities. ▪ Encouraging design elements to celebrate communities. ▪ Supporting sustainable building and infrastructure design. 	
Key Built Form and Housing Issues	Key Built Form and Housing Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public open spaces lack cultural influences. ▪ Restrictive reutilisation potential and refurbishment costs of heritage listed places. ▪ High cost of headworks and infrastructure development. ▪ Limited push for urban consolidation and higher density living (duplex/battle axe/units). ▪ Lack of professionals and young workers accommodation (units/apartments – low maintenance homes/lots) within the region. ▪ Floodplain impacts on residential areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The revitalisation of the Merredin CBD will improve business activity and amenity through infrastructure and business investment. ▪ Future consolidation in residential areas (battle axe lots/subdivision). ▪ Utilise sustainable urban design practices to reduce resident and Shire costs (ongoing costs). ▪ Future rural residential development to complement lifestyle changes. ▪ Improvement and variation of the housing stock. ▪ Redevelopment of underutilised land-uses. ▪ Marketing industry relocation benefits of the light industrial and general industrial precincts.
Action/Activity/Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Merredin Entrance Signage ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 1a: Barrack St & Bates St Redevelopment ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 1b: CBD Carpark & Parklands Redevelopment ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 2a: Mitchell St Redevelopment ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 2b: Government Offices & Corporate Office Development ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 3: Fifth St & Queen St Redevelopment ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 4a: Duff St & Coronation St Redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CBD Revitalisation - Stage 4b: Library Relocation ▪ Urban Renewal - Public Housing ▪ Rural Residential Expansion (North Merredin) ▪ CBD Townhouse/Unit Development (Worker/Professional Accommodation) ▪ Merredin Pump Station Revitalisation Project - Building Restoration

Infrastructure

Guiding Principle 4 – Deliver Successful Infrastructure Management

Ageing infrastructure, climate change, population pressures, cost of development and infrastructure replacement are influential factors driving government planning and market investment. Parallel to this are the high expectations Australians have placed on having access to reliable, quality infrastructure, where governments are seen as accountable to fulfil these expectations⁷⁵. With water, energy, transport and telecommunications identified as Australia's key economic infrastructure assets and networks by Infrastructure Australia, it is integral that the community and government have a high level of confidence that this infrastructure is meeting the needs of business, households and individuals⁷⁶.

Infrastructure Drivers for Merredin

All planning activity should consider the short and long-term infrastructure needs for Merredin to ensure community expectations and commitment by government can be met. Merredin will need to work closely with utility providers and agencies to ensure the Plan's population scenarios are incorporated into their own plans.

The Growth Plan due diligence and stakeholder engagement process has identified nine key infrastructure drivers and opportunities. They encompass the sectors of:

- Infrastructure Planning
- Waste Management
- Transport
- Telecommunications
- Energy
- Water
- Wastewater
- Drainage
- Community Infrastructure.

Each of the key infrastructure drivers is explored in greater detail in this section.

Key Priorities to Deliver Successful Infrastructure Management

Table 13 (Page 89) summarises how Merredin will deliver successful infrastructure management and provides an overview of the key infrastructure issues, opportunities and actions. An Implementation Schedule and complete project list (Appendix 5) outlines the key priority actions, projects and initiatives. The actions are a combination of Local and State Government priorities which should be undertaken or implemented to facilitate growth.

⁷⁵ Infrastructure Australia, 2013 State of Play Report, Australia's Key Economic Infrastructure Sectors.

⁷⁶ Infrastructure Australia, 2013 State of Play Report, Australia's Key Economic Infrastructure Sectors.

Infrastructure Planning

Infrastructure planning and implementation is essential to reduce constraints and enable growth. Merredin will need to consult with government departments and agencies, local organisations and committees to identify infrastructure requirements. Some of this information has been collated to form up infrastructure requirements for the population scenarios; however agencies should be encouraged to incorporate the Plan's population scenarios into their forward planning and indicate further infrastructure considerations that are required to enable ongoing economic development.

Waste Management

Merredin manages and operates the Merredin Landfill and Resource Recovery Site, which is an approved and licensed Class II putrescible landfill site⁷⁷. Situated 5km north-east of the townsite on Chandler Road, the facility receives all solid and putrescible waste generated in the Shire and provides for the collection and processing of recyclable materials. It is estimated to have a lifespan of approximately 25 years following an upgrade undertaken in 2010⁷⁷.

Improvements in managing waste products will be required into the future. Initiatives that encourage the community to generate minimal waste, use less packaging and recycle more should be implemented to reduce demand for further development of waste disposal sites. The development of salvage/community arts re-use programs may enable increased product life for items and reduce waste going to landfill. Merredin residents and businesses have access to green bins with pickup each week (general household waste); yellow bins each fortnight (recyclables only) and bulk waste can be disposed of at the Merredin Landfill for a fee. Waste services provided to Merredin are delivered through Avon Waste.

To enable future rural residential development in Merredin, planning to mitigate the potential impact of waste disposal sites and the development of appropriate buffers surrounding this land use requires identification. This can be done by ensuring that future expansion of the waste facility can be undertaken in response to growth in industry and population without impacting adjoining landholdings and the growth of the rural residential area.

Transport

Merredin acts as a hub for transportation within the Central East, and a thoroughfare for road and rail freight travelling from Perth to the Eastern States. Currently, transport within the Shire comprises of road, rail (passenger and freight) and air infrastructure and services. To facilitate strong economic growth and improved community wellbeing, access to inter and intra-regional goods and services is crucial. The safety and reliability of these transport networks is paramount to the effective and efficient economic and social functioning of Merredin and the broader sub-region.

⁷⁷ Department of Environment and Conservation. 2011. Amendment to License L8513/2010/1-Merredin Chandler Road Landfill

Road

Merredin is situated on the State Highway Network, with Great Eastern Highway providing a major economic enabler through freight transport into and out of the region. Additionally, the Highway provides access to the other Wheatbelt sub-regions, the Perth Metropolitan Region, Kalgoorlie and the Eastern States. Indicated in Figure 21, Merredin is uniquely positioned as a key road transport centre, acting as a hub within the region making it an attractive location for transport and logistics companies and other ancillary services/businesses that depend upon the transport sector.

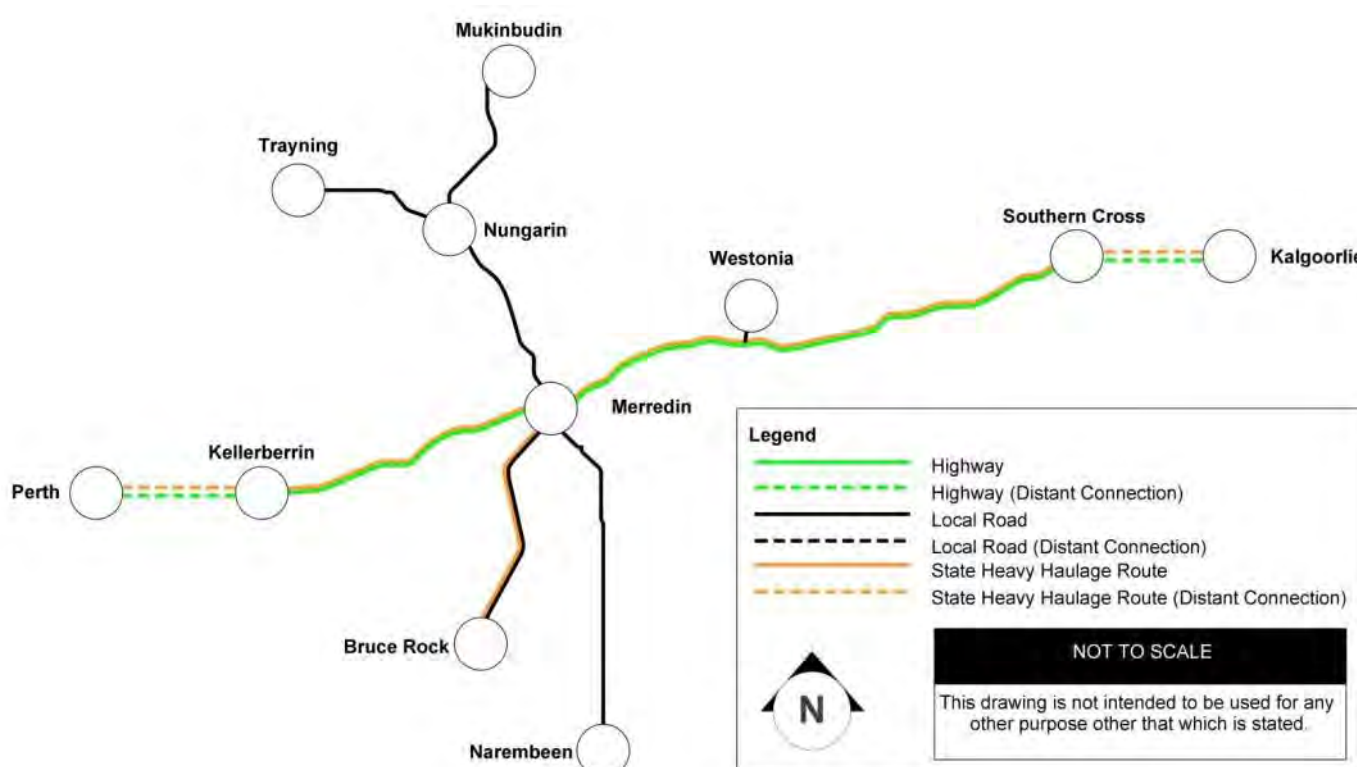


Figure 21: Major Road Transport Linkages (Connectivity To Merredin)

Ensuring that road networks (State & Local roads) are maintained to a high standard will enable Merredin to build on its regional advantage; further developing the transport and logistics sector through a safe and reliable transportation network. Goods transported in Merredin and the broader Central East includes grain, livestock, fuel, fertiliser, salt, general freight, mining equipment/machinery, agricultural machinery, basic raw materials, mining chemicals and other goods.

Roads within the Shire also cater to a considerable amount of light vehicle traffic. As Great Eastern Highway is a strategic inter and intra-regional road, it is imperative for Merredin to liaise with Main Roads on the continued maintenance and upgrade of this route. This will ensure that Merredin can prioritise works on its local and regional distributor roads to provide effective and efficient corridors for freight. The major arterial road network converging on Merredin is identified in Table 11.

Table 11: Strategic Roads in Proximity to Merredin (Road Hierarchy & RAV Rating)

Road ⁷⁸	Responsibility ⁷⁸	RAV Rating ⁷⁹	Road Hierarchy ⁷⁸
Great Eastern Highway	National Highway 94 – State Road	RAV7	Primary Distributor
Bruce Rock-Merredin Road	State Road	RAV6	Primary Distributor
Merredin-Nungarin Road	State Road	RAV6	Primary Distributor
Merredin-Narembeen Road	State Road	RAV7 Conditional Sections	Regional Distributor
Chandler Road	Local Road	RAV7 Conditional Road	Local Distributor

These major arterial roads are all sealed bitumen roads. Many other roads in the Shire are of older construction or are antiquated in terms of road engineering standards and the modern freight task. The Shire of Merredin has 565km of sealed roads and 816km of unsealed roads⁸⁰, many of varying widths (3m-7m on average) and variations in the quality of construction. Maintenance and upkeep of local and regional road networks places a heavy financial burden on Local Governments, however this investment is necessary in enabling and promoting economic development and growth in the region.

The closure of the tier 3 rail lines has increased road transport and exacerbated negative externalities on the road network, specifically the increased rate of deterioration in the road base and road surface deformation – reducing asset life. This is an important consideration in planning future investment into the road transport network. The development of a townsite freight strategy to handle the grain freight and general freight task is recommended to ensure safety and network reliability for all users (Merredin Transport Strategy).

This planning should build on regional freight strategies and studies to develop appropriate network and asset management strategies and will enable the prioritisation of upgrades to sealed and un-sealed routes to provide safe and effective transport corridors (Sub-Regional Transport Strategy). Such a strategy should be developed in coordination with CBH, Local Governments and regional representatives of both the agricultural and transport industry within the short term to reduce impacts on road users and to ensure that all forms of freight can be transported in a safe and efficient manner.



⁷⁸ MainRoads WA. 2014. Road Information Mapping System

⁷⁹ MainRoads WA. 2014. Restricted Access Vehicle Mapping System

⁸⁰ WALGA. 2012. The Western Australian Local Government Directory

Air

No commercial aviation services are available at Merredin Aerodrome. The Merredin Aerodrome consists of 2 sealed asphalt strips of 1290m and 900m respectively, a control tower, fire control equipment, hangars, classrooms and housing⁸¹. Pilot activated lighting (PAL) is also available on the main runway⁸¹. The airport is an important diversification of Merredin's economy, with it being owned and operated by China Southern West Australian Flying College (CSW AFC) as



a training facility for China Southern Airlines through a lease arrangement for pilot training. This facility operates as an ancillary training facility to CSW AFC's main operations base at Jandakot Airport in Perth. Although the aerodrome is leased by China Southern Airlines, the RFDS and private users still have access in the case of emergency or prior contact with the operator.

Consultation with CSW AFC and the Shire of Merredin will be important in identifying any accommodation demand within the townsite, including expansion plans and potential avenues for economic development. By ensuring the longevity of CSW AFC's training operations in Merredin, greater economic growth may be provided through increased numbers of students and staff operating locally, as well as potential opportunities arising from the increasing capabilities of the local aviation sector.

Rail



Similar to the layout of the road network, the regional rail network converges on Merredin, with three narrow gauge rail lines (tier 3 lines) terminating at Merredin's CBH strategic grain receival facility and a standard gauge railway line bisecting the townsite. The line traverses through Merredin on the Perth to Kalgoorlie segment of the interstate railway line which links Perth to the Eastern States.

⁸¹ WDC. 2014. Wheatbelt Snapshot Series: Aviation

This line is essential to the effective and efficient movement of inter and intra-regional freight. Based on advice from Brookfield Rail, Merredin on average has 868 trains per month traversing through the town on the standard gauge rail line. Trains are operational throughout the year and transport grain (CBH), iron ore (Mineral Resources Limited), intermodal freight and passengers (Indian Pacific, MerredinLink & Prospector). 80% of the State's freight from the Eastern States is carried on this network as well (containerised freight), its destination being the Perth Marshalling Yards⁸².

The State Government owns the rail infrastructure which is leased by Brookfield Rail under a long-term exclusive commercial lease agreement which extends to 2049⁸³. The CBH group utilises these railway lines, with access provided through commercial access arrangements, in which CBH owns and operates its locomotives and rolling stock to handle the grain freight task.

Recommendations of the 2009 Strategic Grain Network Report, prepared for the Freight and Logistics Council of WA, categorised rail lines by freight volumes and indicated that tier 3 lines deemed non-competitive with road based transport which required significant investment were recommended to be closed and replaced with road freight movements⁸⁴. These lines have been placed into care and maintenance due to safety concerns and major investment requirements as of June 30th 2014⁸⁵ (current as of September 2015). Tier 3 grain freight lines are indicated in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Tier Rail Grain Routes (Length, CBH Receival Sites & Freight Purpose)

Line	Length (km) ⁸⁶	No. Of Receival Sites (Primary, Secondary & Surge) ⁸⁷	Freight Purpose
Kondinin-Merredin	140km	7 CBH Receival Sites (as of 4 th Sep 2015)	Grain Freight
Bullaring-Merredin	134km	6 CBH Receival Sites (as of 4 th Sep 2015)	Grain Freight
Trayning-Merredin	73km	4 CBH Receival Sites (as of 4 th Sep 2015)	Grain Freight

In the short-medium term, the development of a regional freight strategy which includes examination of the Merredin townsite and existing infrastructure will be necessary to enable the Shire of Merredin, the State Government and Brookfield Rail to determine the necessary investment priorities, including road and rail, and engage CBH to manage its facilities in-line with the recommendations of the local and regional freight strategy. This will focus on the safe and effective movement of grain freight, through intermodal grain freight infrastructure (road and rail combination).

⁸² Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC). 2015. Wheatbelt Blueprint: A Vision for a Vibrant Future.

⁸³ Office of the Auditor General. 2013. Management of the Rail Freight Network Lease: Twelve Years Down the Track

⁸⁴ Department of Transport. 2009. Strategic Grain Network Report

⁸⁵ Brookfield Rail. 2014. Media Statement 01/07/2014: Brookfield Rail Open To Co-Operative Deal and Investment of Its Capital Into Tier 3 Rail

⁸⁶ Brookfield Rail. 2014. Brookfield Rail Network Map

⁸⁷ CBH. 2014. Receival Site Map

A potential long term project for Merredin's rail infrastructure would be the development of an intermodal freight terminal facility and road train assembly yard in Merredin enabling incoming freight from interstate to be sorted into regional bound and Perth bound freight. This would provide economic efficiencies, reducing delays and congestion related to moving freight back out of Perth to reach the intended destination. Investment into the project would build upon the existing freight and logistics industry, increasing economic development and promoting further infrastructure investment in the associated road and rail infrastructure in and surrounding Merredin.



Public Transport

Unlike other regional centres in the northern and southern Wheatbelt, Merredin is served with passenger rail services rather than bus services. The Public Transport Authority operates the Prospector passenger rail service from Perth to Kalgoorlie and the MerredinLink passenger rail service from East Perth to Merredin. No TransWA bus services are accessible from Merredin.

Increasing public transport patronage will be a key priority for Merredin to underpin the viability of the current services. The development of a bus service which provides a small regional transport service that feeds into the catchment area of Merredin and its rail services could assist to ensuring that existing rail services are well utilised and retained. Preliminary planning for infrastructure and servicing of nearby communities will require a regional strategic approach, with the Shire of Merredin working with surrounding Local Governments to align bus services to bring in additional public transport and aged residents to existing rail services. This should be a short-medium term priority for the Shire.

In terms of local transportation options, Merredin College students within the townsite are able to access a school bus service. This is provided due to Great Eastern Highway and the interstate rail line being considered a safety risk, as well as the extensive grid layout of the townsite which limits walkability from the north to the south of the townsite where Merredin College is located. This provides students located to the northern and south western boundary of the townsite with efficient and effective access to Merredin College. The Shire of Merredin should liaise with Merredin College to ensure that this service is provided on an ongoing basis and marketed to prospective families considering relocating to Merredin.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications infrastructure within the Wheatbelt varies greatly. In contrast to smaller towns and localities in the Wheatbelt, Merredin has above average access to telecommunications services and infrastructure. ADSL, ADSL+2 fixed line services are available while 3G & 4G mobile broadband and voice services are also accessible. Dial Before You Dig Plans obtained from Telstra indicate that fixed line services are delivered through the copper telecommunications network, to the majority of lots in the townsite. The copper network has reliability issues under certain circumstances (weather events).

While Merredin has ports available to meet demand currently, a previous shortfall in port availability identifies that ICT infrastructure is seeing increased demand. As of 5th July 2015, Merredin's surrounds are expected to receive fixed wireless NBN services, with the nomination of the site and submission of the proposal to the Merredin Shire of an NBN tower located on the Merredin-Nungarin Road. Further investigations and consultation will be required on potential high speed broadband rollout within the townsite, including potential rollout of high speed broadband services within the Merredin CBD Revitalisation Project (CBD High Speed Broadband Rollout).

Telecommunications infrastructure is essential for education, training and business services. The development of a strong digital economy in Merredin will help to underpin further growth in the retail and commercial services sector. Infrastructure upgrades will also enable the region to benefit from access to regional and global markets. In order to promote the further utilisation of digital services, the development and extension of educational programs such as those offered by the Merredin Community Resource Centre will be required to enable people to improve their literacy in the utilisation of digital technologies.

Mobile phone and internet services are delivered through a 3G/4G telecommunications tower located in Merredin's CBD, while digital television and radio repeater services are broadcast via a tower in the south west of the townsite. The development of 4G mobile infrastructure in 2015 has expanded network capacity and reduced network load, however ongoing planning for servicing voice and data demand will be essential.



Energy

Merredin is in a unique position in contrast to other regions in the Wheatbelt with significant power generation occurring locally. According to UWA's research on "Site Options for Concentrated Solar Power Generation in the Wheatbelt", Merredin and the broader Central East have the capability for concentrated solar power generation (molten salt)⁸⁸ and conventional solar production. Additionally, Merredin has already been identified as a suitable location for wind power, evident by the Collgar Windfarm Pty Ltd investment of \$750million for 111 Vestas V90 turbines to deliver a production potential of 206MW⁸⁹.



The transmission network has limited potential for increased power generation due to a lack of capacity available in the network, limiting further renewables development. Without upgrades to current lines or additional investment into off grid led development or new transmission lines, the renewable industry in Merredin will be limited.

Merredin has well developed connectivity to major transmission lines, consisting of 66kV, 132kV and 220kV lines⁹⁰. Merredin Townsite is connected by a 132kV line and a 33kV line, with an interconnection between the 132kV and 220kV line⁹⁰. Appendix 3.0 – Western Power Solutions shows that the East Country Transmission Network is connected via 132 kV lines to the Northern Terminal and Guildford Load Areas, as well as 220 kV lines to the Muja and Eastern Goldfields Load Areas and a 66 kV line to the Cannington Load Area.

⁸⁸ WDC & UWA. 2010. Site Options for Concentrated Solar Power Generation in the Wheatbelt

⁸⁹ Collgar Windfarm. 2015. Website: About Us. <http://www.collgarwindfarm.com.au/about-us/>

⁹⁰ Western Power. 2015. Annual Planning Report 2014-2015

The bulk of the supply to Merredin and the greater Eastern Goldfield's Load Area is supplied via the 220kV line which supplies power for residential, industrial and mining loads⁹⁰. The Eastern Goldfields Load Area network as a result of its reliance on this single connection for the majority of its power means the network is operated to an N-0 standard, which presents a reduced level of energy security⁹¹. Merredin's main substations are the 132/66kV and 220kV substations to the east of the townsite, with the 132kV and 220kV lines operating parallel to each other through an interconnection⁹¹.

According to reporting by Western Power, Merredin was forecast to reach substation capacity at the 132/66kV substation in 2013/2014⁹¹. Western Power within its asset management planning has indicated that the relocation of two 132/66kV transformers from the Cannington substation during the 2014/2015 period to the Merredin substation to improve Merredin's network reliability⁹¹. Additionally, saturated reactors, a component to maintain the security and load voltage of the network are deteriorating at the Merredin and West Kalgoorlie terminals. As such, their replacement is required by 2018/2019 to address poor asset condition and provide for increased power demand in the area⁹¹.

As discussed in the Built Form and Housing Section, Merredin's Light Industrial area is constrained in terms of high power user industries, whereas the local transmission network in Merredin's General Industrial Area has the capability to handle peak load users and peak load events from energy intensive equipment. This is due to the capacity of existing feeder lines and local transformers.

It will be important for Merredin to outline and market these industrial areas to ensure that businesses relocating to Merredin can appropriately locate themselves based on their power requirements. Additionally, the development of off grid power generation, including biomass/biogas and solar/wind energy, will help to reduce peak demand by high energy users (Biomass/Biogas Plant & Small Scale Solar/Wind Plant).

In the future, as development progresses throughout Merredin, further consultation with Western Power will be required to confirm infrastructure capacity and any associated upgrades that will be required to enable economic development and population growth.

Merredin is not connected to the ATCO Gas reticulation network and no high pressure gas pipelines are located in proximity to Merredin. As such, there is no gas reticulation network and gas is supplied using cylinders. There are no plans to introduce reticulated natural gas into the town in the short term future.

⁹¹ Western Power. 2015. Annual Planning Report 2014-2015

Water

A reliable and safe water supply is critical to support population and economic growth. Climate change impacts (e.g. decreasing rainfall, increased storm events and more intense rainfall during the summer season) mean that effective water planning and increased water efficiency will be important for the sustainable economic development and growth of Merredin.



Merredin is supplied directly from the Goldfields Agricultural Water Supply (GAWS) providing a reliable and secure water supply, and is one of the strategic pumping sites for the main conduit. Water distribution pipelines to the surrounding region branch off from Merredin, including lines from Merredin to Bruce Rock, Merredin to northern Nungarin and Merredin to Mukinbudin.

No capacity constraints exist in the short-long term on the main line, with substantial capacity in the conduit available for economic development and population growth⁹². Minor reticulation upgrades for Merredin may be required in the short-medium term as individual development proposals progress. In terms of sites not connected to the scheme water reticulation network, on-site or on-farm infrastructure provides water supplies within these areas.

⁹² Water Corporation. 2014. Unpublished Interview Notes

Further consultation with the Water Corporation will be required to confirm infrastructure capacity and any associated upgrades required for economic development and population growth. An average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 1% should be utilised for modelling in future planning studies and infrastructure coordination to ensure capacity is available to meet the population projection for Merredin by 2050.

The water table below the Merredin townsite varies, however testing has identified that it is in proximity to the surface and is saline. Due to the salinity of groundwater under the townsite and no identified nearby aquifer resources, there is limited potential to supplement existing water supply sources as desalination would be required to deliver potable water. Desalination technologies, as they become more cost effective, may be utilised in the future subject to demand and cost of this system in contrast to traditional water services (Merredin Desalination Plant). Information regarding the location of suitable groundwater sources is currently limited and requires further investigation in consultation with the Department of Water and the local community (Aquifer/Groundwater Abstraction Study).

The use of treated wastewater on public spaces should be supported to reduce the reliance on water supplied from the Goldfields Agricultural Water Supply Scheme (Water Re-Use Reticulation Upgrades). Community education promoting waterwise solutions (e.g. the use of grey water, installing rain water tanks, planting a waterwise garden) could result in water savings leading to increased capacity in the network.

Wastewater

Merredin's wastewater system consists of sewerage mains that lead into an aerobic treatment system utilising evaporation basins. The majority of Merredin's residential areas are served by reticulated sewage mains. Merredin's Wastewater Treatment Plant located adjacent to the Western Industrial Area is at approximately 85% of its treatment capacity (June, 2014)⁹², which translates to capacity for an additional 200 connections prior to an upgrade. Based on the population projections and calculating anticipated family compositions as the population grows, it is anticipated that demand will exceed supply between 2020 and 2025.

The wastewater treatment plant is located in proximity to a drainage reserve and the General Industrial area. As such, there are no major impacts associated with residential or commercial land uses. Appropriate planning of buffers in relation to residential and rural residential development will need to take into account this infrastructure. Ensuring there is available land to accommodate the expansion of the facility and the buffer is also required.

Merredin's location in an ancient floodplain means that the water table underneath the townsite is naturally higher. Land clearing has further exacerbated this process, and has resulted in increased salinity and potential implications for the townsite. This water is currently abstracted to artificially lower the water table, offering the potential for its treatment for non-potable water for utilisation in parks, reserves and for industry. This forms a priority project for total water re-use in the townsite, enabling

economic development and population growth opportunities through the reutilisation of water for industry development and improved attractiveness of community amenities.

To promote sustainability of the Merredin townsite, the harvest, treatment and reuse of wastewater, should be considered. The Shire of Merredin has begun developing a sustainable built form, being accredited as a Waterwise Council and re-using 100% of treated wastewater. Detailed investigation into a “third pipe” system for non-potable water has not been undertaken in this phase but it is recommended that this is pursued for greenfield developments in the future along with the assessment of the viability of other water recycling options.

Drainage

Merredin is located on the valley floor of an ancient drainage basin, and has in the past been affected by flooding and major flood events. The last major flood event was in 1979 which effected the west and north of the townsite⁹³. The Department of Water has developed a 100 Year ARI (Average Interval of Risk) for flooding in the townsite⁹⁴. To mitigate the potential risk of flood, the Shire of Merredin has constructed a number of major lined drainage culverts throughout the vulnerable flooding area. In lieu of this, future development will need to be sympathetic to the topography of Merredin, ensuring that the impact of flooding is mitigated.



The Plan has taken drainage patterns and the general hydrology of the townsite into account, ensuring that infrastructure and further development of the built form is located within growth corridors not subject to flooding, or where drainage infrastructure will provide cost effective development. As the Merredin CBD is situated within the valley floor, Merredin has identified this as an issue and

engaged with engineers and hydrological engineers to ensure that the CBD Revitalisation Project is capable of handling water volumes in flood events. Limited retrofitting of existing drainage features and infrastructure was identified as a result of investigations into the project.

⁹³ Shire of Merredin. 2007. Local Planning Strategy

⁹⁴ Landgate. 2015. SLIP Subscription Layer Access – DoW ARI Map

Community Infrastructure

Merredin has a number of high quality community services and facilities provided by both the public and non-government sector. Significant investment is required to provide and maintain an equitable range and level of services for the local community. Key services that need to be investigated to see if they are fulfilling the needs of the community are the Merredin Police Force, St John's Ambulance Service and some State government support services.

Merredin Aerodrome; Merredin Regional Community Recreation & Leisure Centre; Cemetery; Child Care Centre; Churches/Places Of Worship; Cummins Theatre; Parks; Library; Merredin Swimming Pool; Museums; Merredin Courthouse; Fire Station; Police Station; St John's Ambulance Depot; Railway Station; Post Office; School Bus Services; Community Garden; Walking Trails; State Government District Offices & Depots; Local Government Administration Centre & Depots; Community Resource Centre; Fuel Stations; Golf Course; Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre; Tourist Parking & Info Areas.

Figure 22: Community Infrastructure

Table 13: Achieving Successful Infrastructure Management

Guiding Principle 4 – Deliver successful Infrastructure management

Goal: Pursue the delivery of timely, sustainable, integrated and high quality modern infrastructure to meet the social, economic and environmental needs that will create well connected, liveable communities with sustainable employment opportunities. This will be achieved by the following:

- Enhancing Merredin's appeal for lifestyle and business development.
- Encouraging energy efficiency and sustainability.
- Adopting a whole-of-government approach towards infrastructure provision to meet the current and future needs for growth.
- Providing quality regional infrastructure to facilitate appropriate population growth.
- Improving investment in regional infrastructure to ensure greater prosperity, productivity and growth.
- Supporting public-private partnerships and other arrangements to deliver efficient and timely infrastructure projects.

Key Infrastructure Issues

- Insufficient marketing of public transport and transport planning to increase passenger rail utilisation.
- Rising groundwater table increasing potential development of townsite salinity.
- High cost of headworks and infrastructure development, upgrades.
- Floodplain constraint and impact of saline groundwater table increase on townsite.
- Capacity constraints in townsites power network (particularly in industrial areas).
- Limited water pressure placing significant costs on structures over 500m² (fire hydrant requirements).
- Implications of grain-freight and general freight on townsite transport networks – (Tier 3 Grain Freight).
- Lack of co-operation and development of interagency planning from infrastructure providers for infrastructure development.

Key Infrastructure Opportunities

- High speed broadband/telecommunications development.
- Planning around the utilisation of key transport infrastructure and ongoing maintenance.
- Development of shared utility infrastructure in industrial estates to reduce setup costs (fire hydrant infrastructure & transformer infrastructure).
- Ancillary service development in conjunction with Merredin Aerodrome.
- Investigate potential intermodal terminal development.
- Development of sustainable infrastructure and related services (renewables and water re-use systems).
- Prioritisation of local road network maintenance.
- Promote renewables development and upgrades of network distribution infrastructure.
- Identify and mandate major transport corridor improvements (Great Eastern Highway).
- Develop rapport with service providers to conduct planning with agencies to deliver coordinated infrastructure upgrades.
- Promotion of waste elimination/water reuse opportunities - use of treated wastewater to reduce reliance on water supplies.

Action/Activity/Project:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly ▪ Merredin General Industrial Area - Land Assembly ▪ Merredin Light Industrial Area - Land Assembly ▪ Road Train Assembly Yard Development ▪ CBD High Speed Broadband Rollout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Townsite High Speed Broadband Rollout ▪ Townsite Dewatering System Extension ▪ Merredin Desalination Plant ▪ Water Re-Use Reticulation Upgrades ▪ Merredin Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade ▪ Biomass/Biogas Plant ▪ Small Scale Solar/Wind Plant ▪ CEACA Merredin Land Assembly |
|--|---|

Environment

Guiding Principle 5 - Protect and Enhance the **Natural Environment**

The environmental values and natural resources of the region need to be protected for the benefit of current and future generations while providing appropriate development opportunities⁹⁵. This can be achieved by:

- Maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, addressing risk areas.
- Achieving environmentally sustainable and economically viable management of waste.
- Ensuring the development of sustainable town sites, integrating natural elements and connecting the community to the environment.
- Ensuring responsible access, use and enjoyment of the natural environment.
- Having a strong connection with the environment.

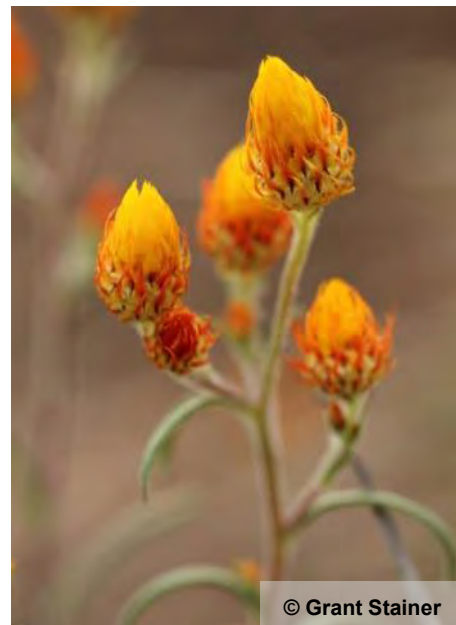
Natural Environment Drivers for Merredin

Merredin and the Central East are not removed from the potential impacts of climate change. Increased seasonal volatility such as extreme weather events and declining winter rainfall are already impacting industry and the community. Conducting planning, mitigation and intervention strategies will be integral to reducing the costs of climate change impacts on the society and the economy⁹⁵.

Three key environmental drivers and opportunities have been identified by the Project Team. They encompass the sectors of:

- Managing Resources
- Current Environmental Challenges
- Future Environmental Challenges

Each of the key environmental drivers is explored in greater detail in this section.



⁹⁵ Department of Environment Regulation. 2012. Adapting to our Changing Climate

Key Priorities to Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment

Table 14 (Page 94) summarises how Merredin will protect and enhance the natural environment along with an overview of the key infrastructure issues, opportunities and actions. An Implementation Schedule and complete project list (Appendix 5) outlines the key priority actions, projects and initiatives. The actions are a combination of Local and State Government priorities which should be undertaken or implemented to facilitate growth.

Managing Resources

The community of Merredin recognises that the environmental aspects of the area make up a significant part of the heritage, values and identity. Merredin Peak and the town's surrounding reserves and parklands provide a number of conservation, recreation and tourism opportunities, many of which are not fully recognised.



To assist in attracting new residents and tourists to the region, the natural resources should be used to market the area. Where appropriate, promotion of natural amenities and landscapes for conservation as economic drivers and visitor destinations should be seen as a tool for growth. Accordingly, an additional tourism/accommodation site has been proposed in proximity to Merredin Peak and the Railway Dam tourism sites (development opportunity: country lifestyle accommodation, caravan park, bush chalet development).

Merredin's environment provides unique opportunities, with the topography and wind conditions being suitable to take advantage of wind power for alternative energy production. This is a major asset to Merredin and the broader Wheatbelt. Although it is not widely appreciated as being advantageous to the Merredin community, the suitability of the landscape for alternative energy generation in such close proximity to the power grid is an asset that needs to be maximised in the future where possible, for both the local and wider communities' social and economic benefit.

Current Environmental Challenges

Conservation and land management within and surrounding Merredin will be important in ensuring that recreation, amenity and environmental values of the townsite are improved. This will ensure strong

social and physical environmental linkages to improve the lifestyle and spirit of Merredin and residents within Central East. It should be ensured that these elements are captured in marketing, branding, tourism and recreation opportunities within Merredin. Merredin's location in an ancient floodplain and groundwater salinity will need to be targeted to ensure that the environment is protected from any negative externalities through mitigation strategies.



Understanding the implications of climate change will aid the Shire of Merredin, its businesses and the community to target infrastructure investment. Key to this will be the utilisation of energy and water efficient technology and water re-use to mitigate impacts of climate change through site layout and design, engineering and the implementation of sustainable technologies. The Shire of Merredin has already begun developing a sustainable built form, being accredited as a Waterwise Council and re-using 100% of treated wastewater. Continued water re-use and the introduction of water sensitive urban design will help to reduce water use or increase the efficiency of its use in a drying climate, such as waterwise plantings in Shire owned parks and gardens⁹⁶.

Future Environmental Challenges

An increase in traffic volumes related to the use of roads, railways and the airport in and surrounding Merredin is likely to place pressure on the environment through generation of emissions (noise, dust and odour). This may impact existing remnant vegetation, significant natural features and increase power and water consumption within the region.

Strategies to offset environmental losses or plan for their conservation and management require adequate planning to ensure the protection of strategic natural resources. Similarly, the adoption of technologies that reduce power and water demand will be important in providing a sustainable built environment and economy.

⁹⁶ Department of Water. 2008. Better Urban Water Management

Management of saline groundwater within the Merredin townsite is essential to mitigate potential economic and environmental impacts on the town. Currently water is abstracted from bores within the town's boundaries and is pumped to evaporation dams to reduce the groundwater level. Through the utilisation of existing technology, there is the potential to mitigate the environmental impacts of saline/brackish water and increase economic and social opportunities; in which abstracted saline water may be desalinated for public purposes (water re-use for parks and gardens) or treated to levels for non-potable water use in industry. This may provide net benefits to both the natural and built environment of Merredin by reducing the infiltration of saline water into reserves, parks, gardens and damaging building foundations.



Additional environmental management issues include threats from climate change, including increasing unseasonal weather and storm events, with a hotter, drier climate increasing environmental risks. These include fire prone, heavily vegetated reserves and their proximity to developed industrial and residential land as well as flood prone areas from significant storm events within areas identified from Merredin's 1979 floods. Planning for climate change and climatic extremes and their potential impact on Merredin, the agricultural sector and other key industries will be vital. There needs to be a commitment in ensuring that future land use and development does not exacerbate the impacts or increase the risk or cost to the community and local economy resulting from adverse climate change.

Table 14: Protecting the Natural Environment

Guiding Principle 5 – <i>Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment</i>	
Goal: <i>The environmental values and natural resources of the region need to be protected for the benefit of current and future generations while providing appropriate development opportunities. This will be achieved by the following:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, addressing risk areas. ▪ Achieving environmentally sustainable and economically viable management of waste. ▪ Ensuring the sustainable development of Merredin, integrating natural elements and connecting the community to the environment. ▪ Ensuring responsible access, use and enjoyment of the natural environment. ▪ Having a strong connection with the environment. 	
Key Natural Environment Issues	Key Natural Environment Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management and utilisation of parks and reserves for various recreational pursuits. ▪ Balanced land use and conservation (agriculture, urban development and environment). ▪ Climate change risks including increased droughts, storms and flooding. ▪ Reduced rainfall in the region and impacts on water table, environment and industry. ▪ Potential for increased townsite salinity due to high groundwater levels resulting from clearing of native vegetation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of natural resources extent to ensure protection. ▪ Supporting the use of sustainable technology. ▪ Improved townsite water management. ▪ Protection of the natural heritage. ▪ Greening of the built environment. ▪ Protection and maintenance of native vegetation and wildlife habitats. ▪ Upgrades to drainage basin to reduce salinity. ▪ Buffers for industry and infrastructure to ensure future land uses are enhanced/protected. ▪ Utilisation of saline water for non-potable users through treatment and water reuse.
Action/Activity/Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aquifer/Groundwater Abstraction Study 	



Governance

Guiding Principle 6 – Ensure Successful Governance

The Western Australian Liberal-National Governments' Royalties for Regions policy has been the driving force to ensure a focus on Western Australia's regions. The Royalties for Regions program has set aside 25% of mining royalties per year (capped at \$1 billion) to fund infrastructure and services across regional communities. To maximise benefits from this program, greater integration and coordination at both the regional and local level is required to take advantage of this opportunity. Royalties for Regions has established the State Government's commitment to building stronger regional communities and investment that enhances economic growth. To ensure this commitment becomes a reality, greater integration and coordination at both the regional and local level is required to enable the regions to take ownership of this opportunity and drive this agenda.

Governance Drivers for Merredin

Strong leadership is essential for Merredin to engage in Western Australia's opportunity for growth. Due to historical development of the sub-region, Merredin has naturally acquired a level of responsibility in the region as the regional centre of the Central East. Solid governance structures and processes that also align with the economic strengths of the Central East and the determination to drive economic and population growth will ensure the whole sub-region benefits from this Plan.

The Growth Plan due diligence and stakeholder engagement process identified three key governance drivers and opportunities. They encompass the sectors of:

- Regional Leadership
- Delivery of the Plan
- Implementation and Monitoring

Each of the key governance drivers is explored in greater detail in this section.

Key Priorities to Ensure Successful Governance

Table 15 (Page 100) summarises how Merredin will ensure successful governance along with an overview of the key governance issues, opportunities and actions. An Implementation Schedule and complete project list (Appendix 5) outlines the key priority actions, projects and initiatives for Merredin which may have wider reaching regional benefit. The actions are a combination of Local and State Government priorities which should be undertaken or implemented to facilitate growth.

Regional Leadership

As a Regional Centre for the Central East, Merredin should assume a regional leadership role for the sub-region. It is important that Merredin portray a positive “can do” message on behalf of the sub region to attract investment and market this area as a place to live, work and invest. Such leadership can create a positive message from the entire sub region on the assumption that investment should be targeted where there is opportunity.

Employment statistics that were collected by the University of WA, in conjunction with the WDC, explore the relationship between communities and their regional centre and have found three forms of leadership roles that a Regional Centre displays within their respective Wheatbelt sub-region:

- Regional Centre *As of Right*
- Regional Centre *As of Action*
- Regional Centre *As of Responsibility*

As seen in Figure 23 and Figure 24 Merredin has been found to currently be a ‘Regional Centre *As of Responsibility*’. That is, much of the traditional economic and employment diversity in Merredin has been related to the economic output of the sub region and the sub regional population’s use of this centre. Recent enhancement of Merredin’s education facilities to service the sub region, together with similar proposed health system upgrades, all demonstrate that Merredin has a responsibility to take into account regional needs when planning for its growth.

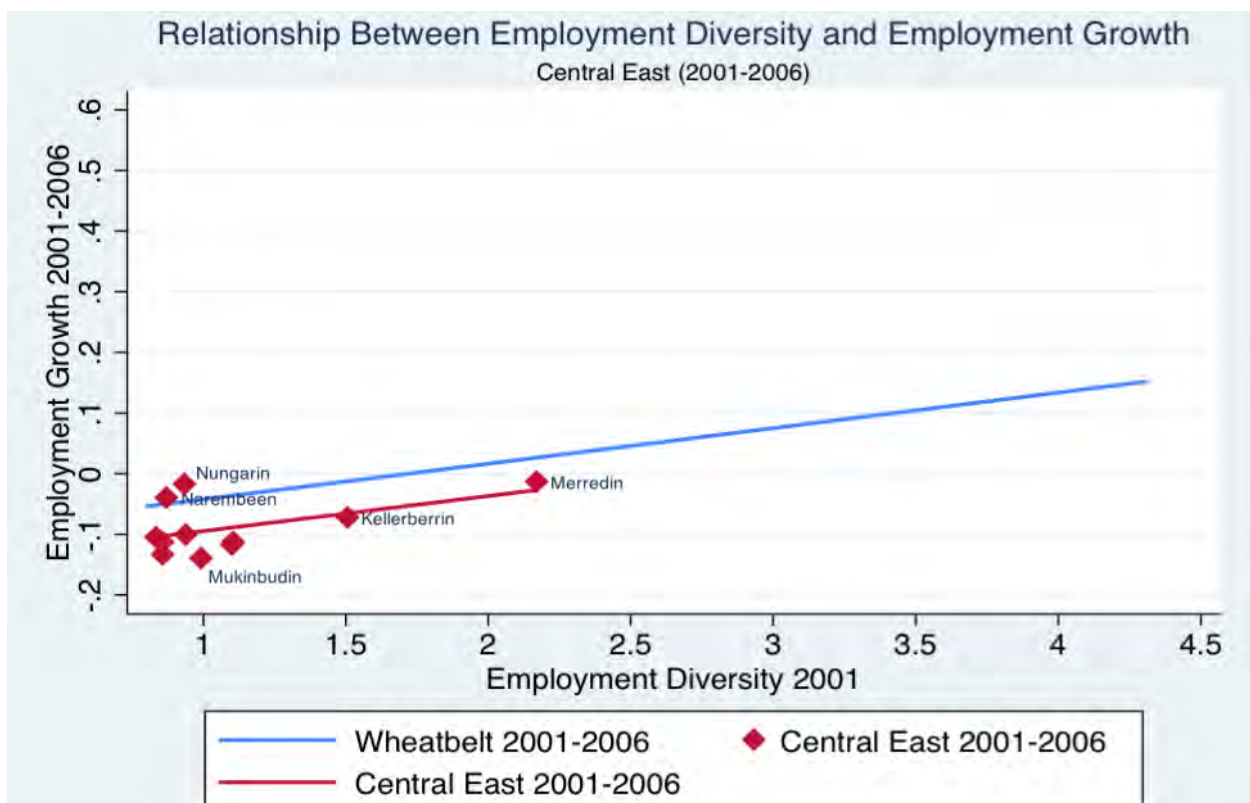


Figure 23: Relationship Between Employment Diversity & Employment Growth (2001-2006)

The statistics indicate that while Merredin features a relatively diverse economy, Merredin's employment diversity has been decreasing between the 01-06 and 06-11 periods as the employment diversity of Bruce Rock and Kellerberrin has increased. Merredin is the designated regional centre of the sub-region. However, there is the emergence of secondary centres in the sub-region which will eventually compete with the primary centre. Strong positive leadership from the regional centre leading to engagement between these respective Local Governments is required.

Merredin and its surrounding local governments have shown increasing regional collaboration; evidenced by their combined workings towards the funding of the Central East Aged Care Alliance's foundational regional project (CEACA Senior Housing Project - Stage 1 Land Assembly and Servicing). Over time this can be expanded to allow sub centres of specialisation (eg Kellerberrin as a sub centre for residential aged care and disabled service delivery). It can also include more sub-regional service delivery planning to ensure the centre provides for the needs of its hinterland.

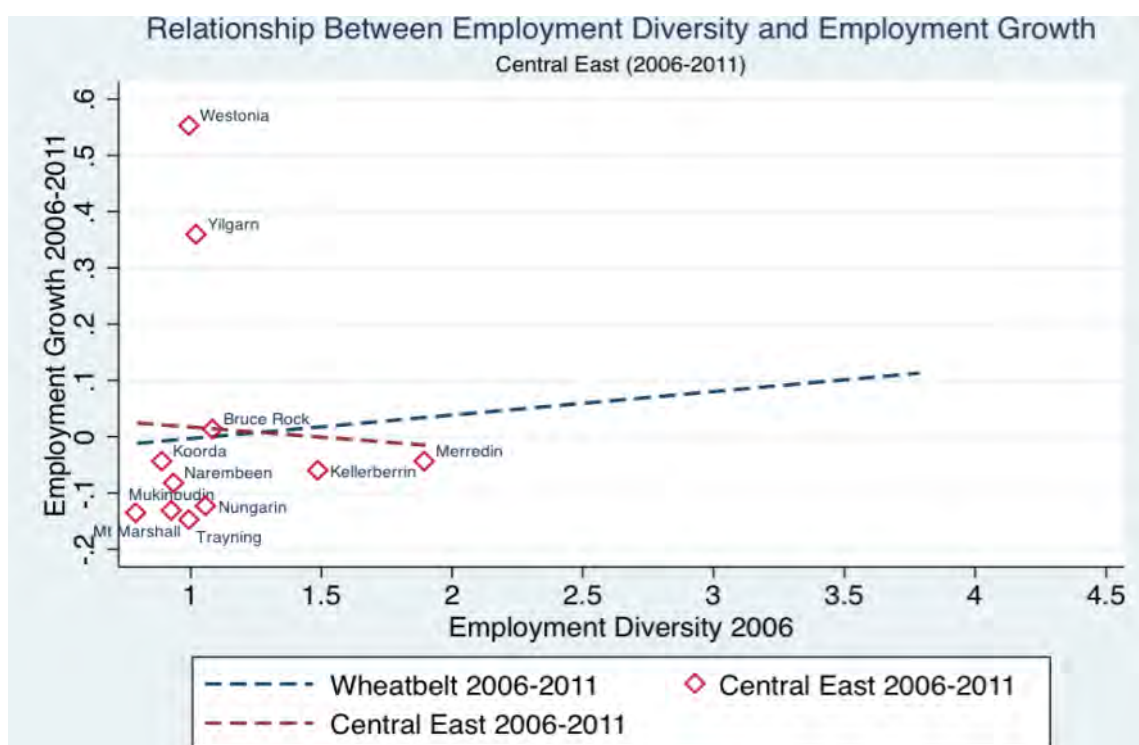


Figure 24: Relationship Between Employment Diversity & Employment Growth (2006-2011)

Delivery of the Plan

Various key actions are required to successfully deliver the vision, guiding principles, actions, projects and initiatives of this Plan. The implementation schedules that form part of each guiding principle, sets out the actions, projects and initiatives required by Merredin to take them on the path to growth, prosperity and wellbeing, including the key priorities listed within this document. This is led with assistance from State government agencies.

The key to successful delivery of this Plan and ensuring successful governance for the area into the future will be the:

- Strong partnerships between State and Local government and also the private sector
- Ownership of the Plan by the Shire of Merredin;
- Creative methods of developing Shire, community and business unity in priority projects;
- Positive attitude towards achieving the required goals – delivering on actions, project and initiatives; and
- Constant review of the required goals and aspirations and their adaptation depending on changing circumstances.

The Shire of Merredin should collaborate on a local and sub-regional level to share its vision and aspirations with other communities and stakeholders in the region.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Plan will be a living and adaptable document that can respond to new data and information, changes in the economy and new State, regional and local plans and strategies. The Merredin Shire and the Wheatbelt Development Commission will regularly monitor the performance of the Plan and undertake a review of the document on a joint basis within 5 years (2020).

The review of the Plan will audit the success of the document in achieving the vision and planning directions for Merredin and will review changed circumstances and/or altered community aspirations and needs. This provision for regular review will ensure that the Plan remains relevant and continues to effectively shape development within the Town and Shires over the next 10 to 15 years, and possibly beyond.

The Plan may also be reviewed within the proposed 5-year review periods at the discretion of Shire. This may be in response to any major changes or other unforeseen circumstances or community-identified needs. All modifications to the document will be undertaken jointly and on a consultative basis.

In the future, the Plan should be reviewed whenever any significant new information comes to hand from sources such as the Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint, as well as State Government land and population audits. This will be vital to guide future industry and investment attraction strategies and provide detailed direction on how to develop the region's key economic drivers. This data will refine population growth scenarios to enable effective and responsive planning for infrastructure and services by government agencies, non-government organisations and the private sector.

The Shire of Merredin should be encouraged to develop and review regional population scenarios for identifying performance indicators to monitor the progress of the Plan's implementation and to ensure positive impacts for the communities of the region.

In the medium term, a central point of contact such as an Economic Development Officer for the sub-region may be required to work in partnership with the Shire of Merredin. The role of the Officer would be to:

- Proactively seek economic development and business growth opportunities;
- Monitor and drive opportunities in the sub region; and
- Develop Business Cases for priority projects.

Document implementation includes:

- Reviewing and monitoring triggers for key projects;
- Pursuing developments in areas identified as economic drivers and opportunities for the sub-region by the Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy; and
- Approaching businesses, community groups based on recommendations.

It should be noted that the priority of projects is expected to change over time. Private investments, changing Government policy, demographic changes and the economic conditions in the sub region can all impact current priorities. Also new projects can be added through the review process. Major changes in the vision and key drivers would require extensive consultation and substantial review of the document. However, priority project changes and additions can be included at any time with agreement between the Shire and the project stakeholders.



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Table 15: Achieving Successful Governance

Guiding Principle 6 – Ensure successful <i>Governance</i>	
Goal: <i>The region will embrace collaborative and proactive leadership delivering on the values and aspirations of the community. This will be achieved by the following:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective resourcing and management of Local Government activities. ▪ Providing positive leadership within the sub-region. ▪ Becoming a customer focused community. ▪ Ensuring open and representative decision-making processes. ▪ Achieving community support for the region's strategic plans and growth planning. ▪ Ensuring a cross-organisational approach delivered through strategic partnerships. ▪ Focusing on delivering shared outcomes. ▪ Monitoring triggers in the Plan. 	
Key Governance Issues	Key Governance Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of local Chamber of Commerce & Industry. ▪ Poor perception of Merredin business environment and community. ▪ Local Government co-operation. ▪ Layers of agencies and organisations ▪ Interagency co-operation. ▪ Regional leadership in growing the region and as the regional centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase collaboration between Local Government and State Agencies. ▪ Implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the Plan. ▪ Development of economic opportunities for Merredin and the broader sub-region. ▪ Promoting the regional centre and the sub-region in a more positive view may enable growth and attraction of residents/industry or retention of existing ones. ▪ Promote transparency to deliver greater public participation in decision making.
Action/Activity/Project:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Merredin Development Group 	

Acronyms

SoM: Shire of Merredin

(S): Shire

AAGR: Annual Average Growth Rate

ABS: Australian Bureau of Statistics

ARI: Average Risk Interval

BCA: Building Code of Australia

CBD: Central Business District

CBH: Co-operative Bulk Handling Corporation

CEACA: Central East Aged Care Alliance

CESES: Central East Sub-Regional Economic
Strategy

CSWAFC: China Southern West Australian
Flying College

DAA: Department of Aboriginal Affairs

DAFWA: Department of Agriculture and Food
Western Australia

DER: Department of Environment Regulation

DIDO: Drive In, Drive Out

DoE: Department of Education

DoH: Department of Housing

DoL: Department of Lands

DoP: Department of Planning

DoW: Department of Water

DPaW: Department Parks and Wildlife

DRD: Department of Regional Development

ERP: Estimated Resident Population

FIFO: Fly In, Fly Out

FTTH: Fibre To The Home

FTTN: Fibre To The Node

GEH: Great Eastern Highway

HACC: Home and Community Care

ILU: Independent Living Unit

LC: LandCorp

LED: Light Emitting Diode

MCRG: Merredin Community Reference Group

MEDIS: Merredin Economic Development and
Implementation Strategy

MRCLC: Merredin Regional Community &
Leisure Centre

MRWA: Main Roads Western Australia

NBN: National Broadband Network

ODP: Outline Development Plan

PTA: Public Transport Authority

RDA: Regional Development Australia

RDC: Regional Development Commission

RDCo: Regional Development Council

RDGP: Regional Centres Development Plan

RfR: Royalties for Regions

SIHI: Southern Inland Health Initiative

SWALSC: South West Aboriginal Land and
Sea Council

(T): Town

TBC: To Be Confirmed

TFR: Total Fertility Rate

UCL: Urban Centre Locality

WA: Western Australia

WAPC: Western Australian Planning
Commission

WDC: Wheatbelt Development Commission

WEROC: Wheatbelt Eastern Regional
Organisation of Councils

Glossary of Terms

Economic Development - Economic development is a broad term that generally refers to the sustained, concerted effort of policymakers and communities to promote standard of living and economic health in a specific area. Such effort can involve multiple areas including development of human capital, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, health, safety and literacy, among other initiatives.

Economic Growth - The increase in the productive capacity of the economy over the Growth Period. This includes an improvement in the quality of life of our communities through an increased share of jobs and prosperity.

Economic Development Plan - The Plan is a non-statutory strategic planning document that builds on existing statutory plans to set the direction for economic growth and community population expansion in Merredin. The strategy builds on existing Shire of Merredin (SoM) statutory requirements to develop integrated strategic planning frameworks.

The Plan is aligned with the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme N° 6 and considers the Town Development Plan (2012). It is also aligned to the 'Merredin 2022' Community Plan (2012).

The Plan has been prepared using a similar framework to that which was used for the nine SuperTowns; addressing the key focus areas identified within the Regional Centres Development Plan Framework.

Growth Period – The Plan is concerned with the period up to 2050.

Guiding Principle – An overarching goal or aspiration identified within this Plan to set the direction and values for growth within our communities.

Short Term – In this Plan, short term denotes the period 2015-2020.

Medium Term – In this Plan, medium term denotes the period 2020-2030.

Long Term – In this Plan, long term denotes the period 2030-2050.

Stakeholder – Partner organisations consisting of Local Governments, State Government agencies, industry and community bodies who are engaged to develop and implement the guiding principles, actions, projects and initiatives of this Plan.

Merredin Project Team – The Merredin Community Reference Group, LandCorp, the Wheatbelt Development Commission, Shire of Merredin and the lead agencies who will implement the Plan's vision and initiatives.

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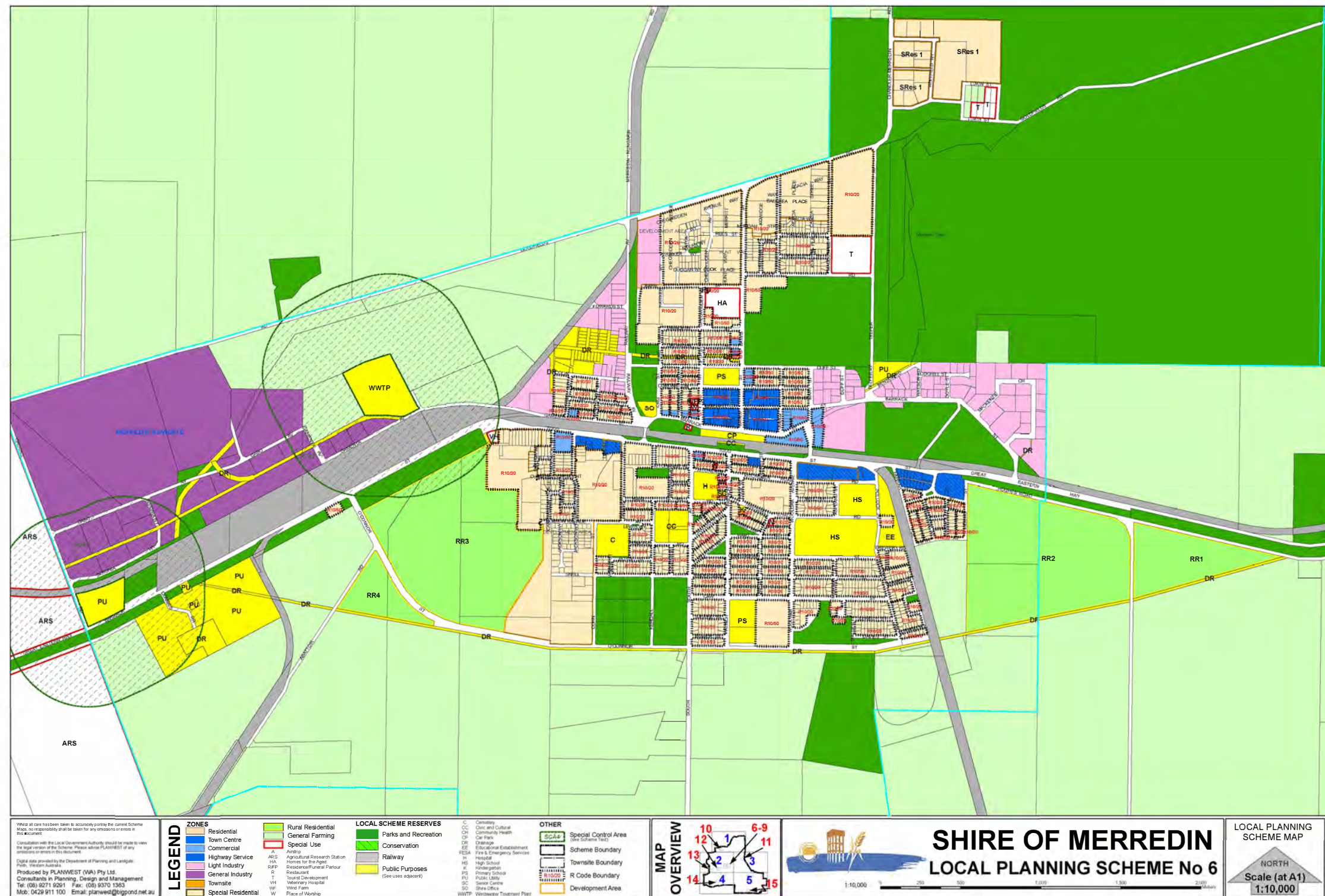
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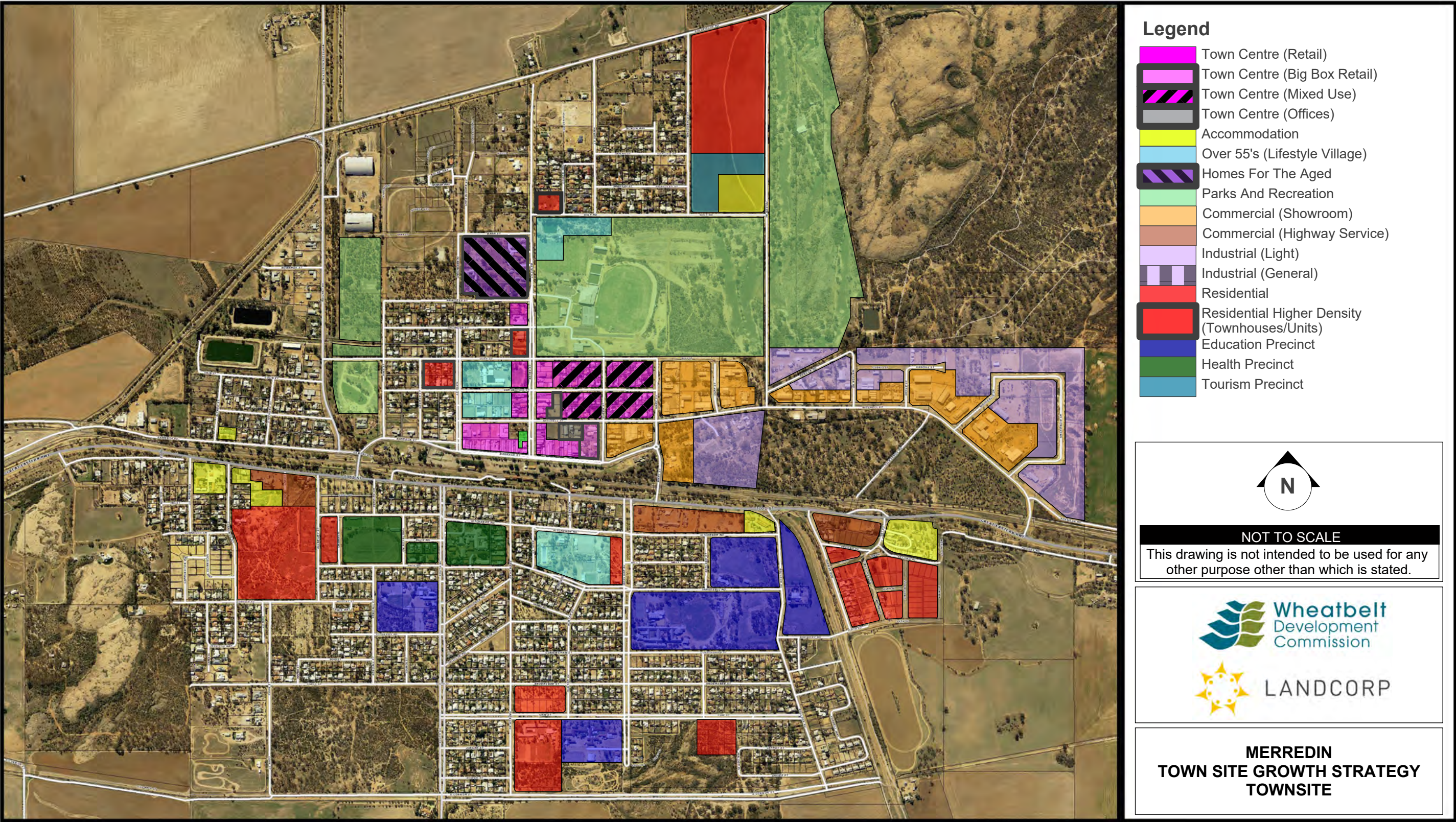
Appendices

1.0 Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6 Townsite Map

(NOTE: Not To Scale - Utilise Original For Planning Purposes)

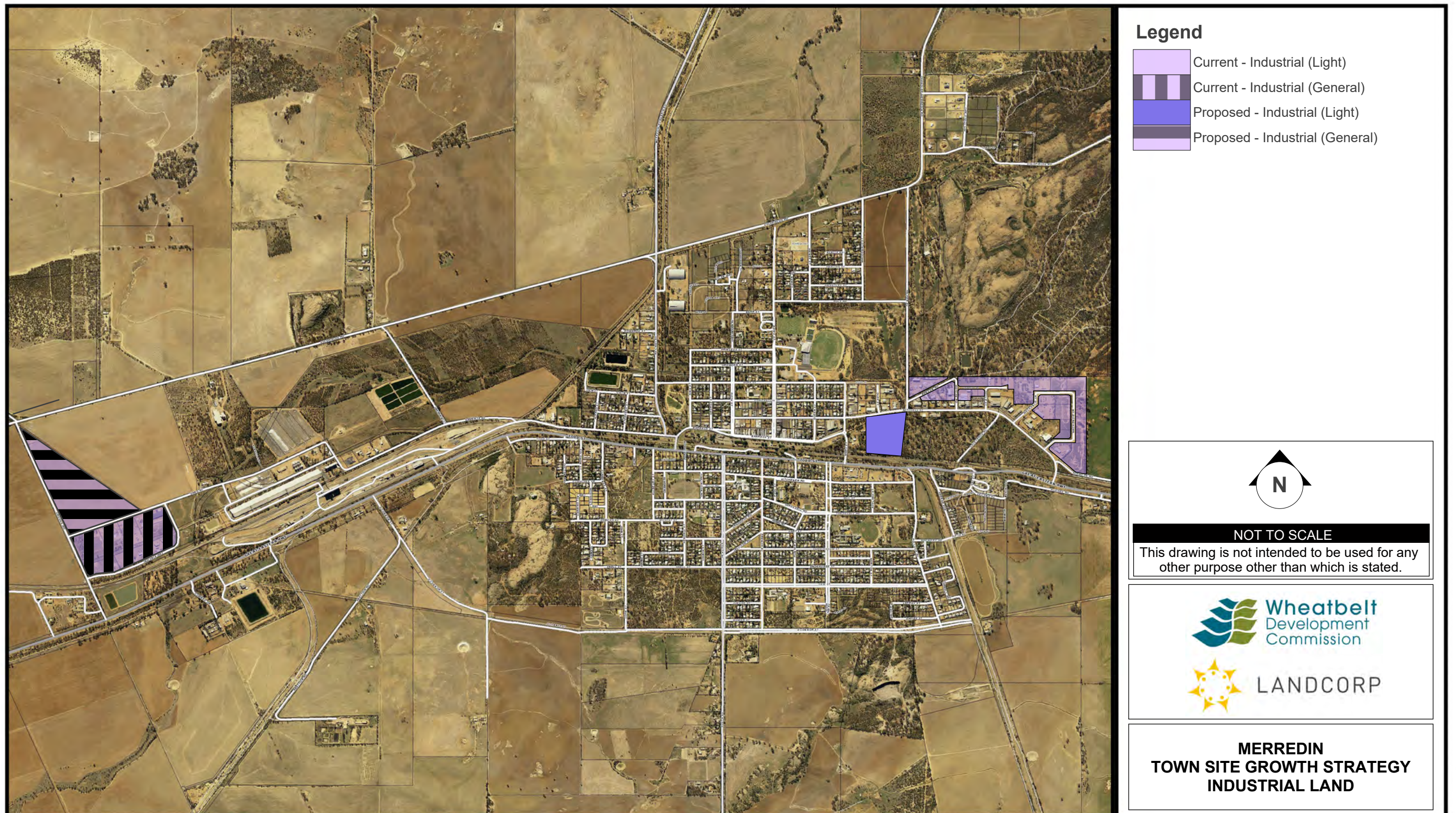


2.0 Merredin Precinct Plan – Townsite



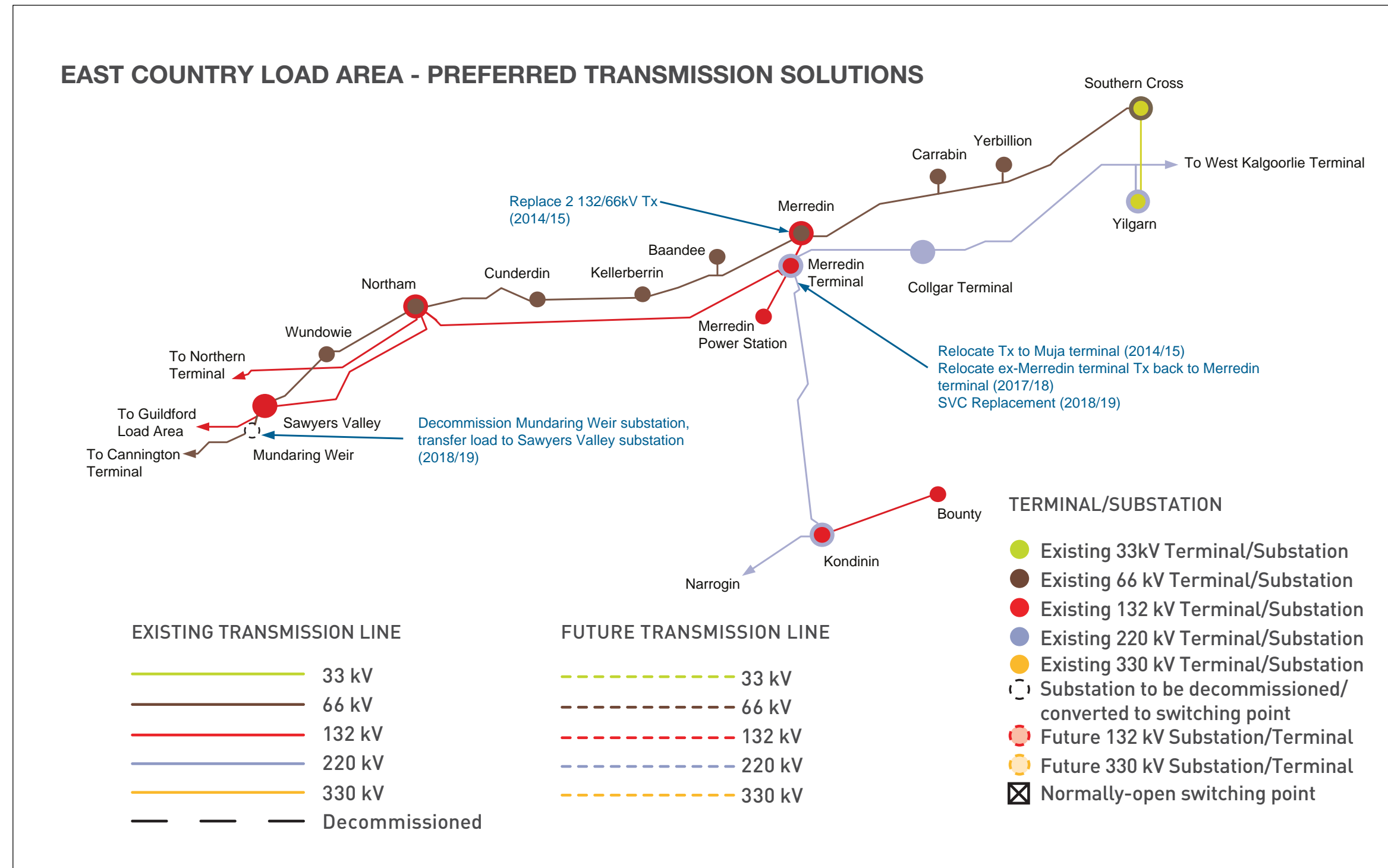
Basemap Source: Landgate. 2015

2.1 Merredin Precinct Plan – Industrial Land



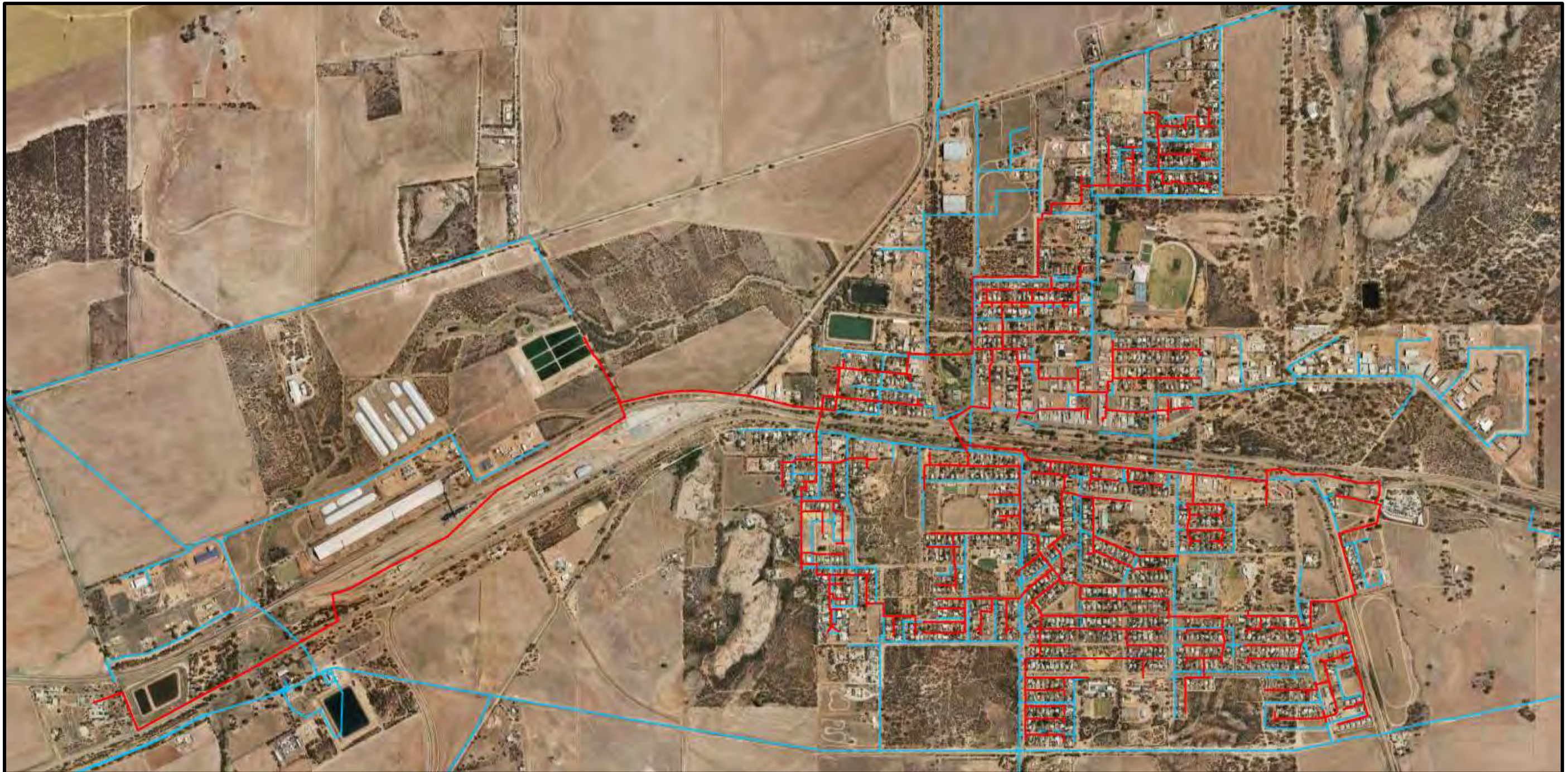
Basemap Source: Landgate. 2015

3.0 Western Power Solutions



Source: [Western Power](#) Annual Planning Report 2014/2015

4.0 Merredin Water & Sewerage Services



 Water Services

 Sewer Pipe

Source: www.locate.wa.gov.au (accessed 30/06/15)

5.0 Projects & Initiatives Implementation Plan

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 1a: Barrack St & Bates St Redevelopment Scale: Local Description: Stage 1a: Redevelopment of Barrack St & Bates St (including investigations on the installation of high speed broadband services to businesses). Scope: Redevelopment of Barrack St & Bates St (roadworks, streetscape and infrastructure upgrade). Outcome: Revitalisation of Barrack St & Bates St to increase amenity, streetscape access/attractiveness, business investment, CBD activity and utilisation and enhanced investment return (increased CBD patronage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Technical investigations complete, approvals signed and project funded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Private Sector and High Speed Broadband Provider 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: CEACA Merredin Land Assembly Scale: Local Description: Planning, site design & construction and headworks to enable the development of Independent Living Units (ILUs) as a component of the CEACA Merredin Project (Stage 1 of 3). Scope: Land assembly to cater to the development of 73 lots and 73 ILUs. Outcome: Development of 73 lots for the construction of 73 ILUs in two stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Land tenure secured, rezoning undertaken if applicable, site design developed, approvals signed for all land assembly stages and project funded for Stage 1 land assembly. Medium: Buildout of Stage 1 ILUs are at 85% utilisation, project funded for Stage 2 land assembly. Long: Buildout of Stage 1 ILUs are at 85% utilisation, project funded for Stage 2 land assembly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: CEACA, RDA Wheatbelt and Wheatbelt Development Commission 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: CEACA Merredin ILU Development (Stage 1) Scale: Local Description: The development of 60 ILUs as part of the CEACA Merredin Project (Stage 2 of 3). Scope: Construction of 60 ILUs to meet demand for aged care housing. Outcome: Construction of 60 ILUs in Stage 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Stage 1 ILUs are delivered post land assembly, site design/engineering complete and approvals signed and funded for construction of 60 ILUs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: CEACA, RDA Wheatbelt and Wheatbelt Development Commission 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: Industrial & Residential Marketing Scale: Region Description: Development of promotional material, branding and marketing of economic opportunities in relocating to Merredin to increase economic development. Scope: Development of a marketing program for Merredin. Outcome: The development and implementation of a marketing program for business, industry and potential residents (target marketing) will enable economic development and growth through the expansion in the number of businesses and residents in the townsite. Will provide a multiplier effect if the growth trend is significant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Target marketing study for Merredin developed, identifying businesses, industries and families which would be attracted to Merredin based on current and potential programs. Medium: Target marketing utilised by the local business members to deliver targeted marketing to attract new businesses and industries to town. Marketing reviewed in-line with changes to population trends, townsite formation and economic trends. Long: Marketing reviewed in-line with changes to population trends, townsite formation and economic trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Heartlands WA and Merredin WBN 	TBC
Project: C.Y. O'Connor Institute Campus Expansion (Training Facility & Accommodation) Scale: Region Description: Construction of additional buildings for education and training at C.Y. O'Connor Institute and accommodation options to provide regional access to the institution for off-campus course offerings. Scope: Construction of additional site facilities to increase student courses available and cross sector training capacity. Outcome: Campus upgraded to provide additional training and accommodation for regional student access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Approvals signed and project funded for Campus Expansion. Medium: Campus enrolments increased by 20%, begin planning for acquisition and purchase of land for onsite accommodation for students. Long: Funding approved for development of C.Y. O'Connor Institute accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: C.Y. O'Connor Institute and Department of Training & Workforce Development 	C.Y. O'Connor Institute
Project: CBD High Speed Broadband Rollout Scale: Local Description: Rollout of high speed broadband services as part of the CBD Revitalisation with potential examination into cost sharing arrangements to enable deployment of services as part of the CBD works and wider townsite works. Scope: Rollout high speed broadband services within the CBD and townsite. Outcome: Development of high speed broadband services within the CBD to enable increased digital economy development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Barrack, Bates St and CBD Carpark redevelopment funded, liaise with high speed broadband service provider on installation of services to provide connection nodes to businesses in the CBD Revitalisation Area as the Revitalisation project rolls out. Medium: Continue high speed broadband service rollout in line with CBD Revitalisation Project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: High Speed Broadband Provider and Private Sector 	TBC

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: Mining Support Service & Potable/Non-Potable Water Re-Use Industry Development - Business Incubator Development Scale: Region Description: Facilitate the development of mining support service industries and water re-use industries in the General Industrial area through business incubator development. Scope: Development of land and business incubator units for industry to establish and grow to enable churn (on sell) for new enterprise development. Outcome: Utilisation of general industrial lots for the development of several water re-use business incubator units to enable industry development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Merredin General Industrial area lot creation complete. Business incubator units developed connected to water re-use infrastructure. • Long: Merredin General Industrial area lot creation complete. Business incubator units developed connected to water re-use infrastructure. Previous industrial units sold to existing businesses or to market to construct new/additional industrial stock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin 	TBC
Project: Merredin Desalination Plant Scale: Region Description: Installation of a desalination plant to provide potable and non-potable treated wastewater for industrial and agricultural purposes. This is ancillary to existing utilisation of water on the townsites parks and gardens. Builds upon previous work by DAFWA (hydrological studies). Scope: Development and installation of desalination plant & related infrastructure for water re-use (saline groundwater). Outcome: Construction of desalination plant for industry and agriculture (utilising on & off grid power sources).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: On construction of dewatering infrastructure and renewables, planning and development of expandable desalination system to be developed subject to approvals and funding. • Long: Desalination upgrade if water available for desalination and demand-supply ratio is at 80% utilisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Water and Water Corporation 	TBC
Project: Biomass/Biogas Plant Scale: Region Description: The construction of a biomass/biogas plant to produce energy for use within the townsite - by agriculture, industry and desalination in non-peak periods. Scope: Construction of biomass/biogas plant for energy production. Outcome: Construction of biomass/biogas plant providing energy for off grid industry and peak energy users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Private sector and/or Government sectors ready to invest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Private Sector • Partners: Shire of Merredin and Department of Agriculture & Food WA 	TBC
Project: CBD Townhouse/Unit Development (Worker/Professional Accommodation) Scale: Local Description: Planning, land purchase/acquisition, site design and construction of townhouses/units/apartments to expand residential market to cater to workers/professionals in Merredin (an increased supply of single/couple housing to reduce demand on family housing). Scope: Facilitate planning, land purchase, site design and development of alternative housing for professionals/workers. Outcome: Development of young professionals/workers accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Acquisition of land for staged project, development of outline development plan for site and scheme amendment where appropriate. • Medium: Housing stock utilisation approaching 90% of available market. Headworks development, lot creation and construction of first stage of townhouses/units delivered. • Long: Housing stock utilisation approaching 90% of available market. Headworks development, lot creation and construction of second stage of townhouses/units delivered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Housing and Department of Training & Workforce Development 	TBC
Project: Digital Technology Training & E-Commerce Development Scale: Region Description: Implementation of training programs to facilitate uptake of digital technology and implementation of e-commerce platforms. Scope: Delivery of an education program to increase digital technology uptake and e-commerce development in Merredin. Outcome: Digital technology training programs developed to enhance skillsets of local businesses, industry and residents and enable use of e-commerce platforms by Merredin businesses (online outlet presence).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan implemented, programs developed for educators and trainers in the region. Merredin CRC, Merredin Development Group, C.Y. O'Connor Institute and Merredin College/St Marys Merredin involved as key stakeholders. • Medium: Programs delivered, uptake and usage of digital technology and ICT infrastructure necessitates townsite/regional telecommunications upgrades. Strong e-commerce presence in Merredin, businesses and community aware of and utilise digital technology trends at an above average adoption rate. • Long: Uptake and increased usage of ICT infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Wheatbelt Development Commission and Heartlands WA • Partners: Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt, Merredin Community Resource Centre, Merredin College, Merredin Development Group and Industry, St Marys Merredin, C.Y. O'Connor Institute and Shire of Merredin 	TBC
Project: CEACA Merredin ILU Development (Stage 2) Scale: Local Description: The development of 13 ILUs as part of the CEACA Merredin Project (Stage 3 of 3). Scope: Construction of 13 ILUs to meet demand for aged care housing. Outcome: Construction of 13 ILUs in Stage 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-Long: Stage 2 ILUs are delivered post land assembly, site design/engineering complete and approvals signed and funded for construction of 13 ILUs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: CEACA, RDA Wheatbelt and Wheatbelt Development Commission 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 1b: CBD Carpark & Parklands Redevelopment Scale: Local Description: Stage 1b: Redevelopment of Merredin CBD Carpark (Barrack St). Scope: Merredin CBD Carpark redevelopment (roadworks, streetscape and infrastructure upgrade). Outcome: The redevelopment and upgrade of Barrack St CBD Carpark will encourage businesses to reinvest in their businesses and improve access and amenity within this area to serve local and regional residents and visitors effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Technical investigations complete, approvals signed and project funded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Private Sector 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 2a: Mitchell St Redevelopment Scale: Local Description: Stage 2a: Redevelopment of Mitchell St (including investigations into the installation of high speed broadband services to businesses). Scope: Redevelopment of Mitchell St (roadworks, streetscape and infrastructure upgrade). Outcome: Revitalisation of Mitchell St to increase amenity, streetscape access/attractiveness, business investment, CBD activity and utilisation and enhanced investment return (increased CBD patronage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium: Stage 1a & 1b completed. Technical investigations complete, approvals signed and project funded. Long: Seek major retailer/big box investment when population reaches 4,000 and more than 12,000 in the sub-region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Private Sector & High Speed Broadband Provider 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 2b: Government Offices & Corporate Office Development Scale: Region Description: Stage 2b: Siting, design, costing and construction of Government Offices/Commercial Office space (including investigations into the installation of high speed broadband services to the site for telecommuting purposes). Scope: Conduct feasibility study, acquire land, develop services and construct regional Government Offices/Commercial Office building. Outcome: Development of major commercial office space with High Speed Broadband connectivity to enable telecommuting opportunities in Merredin and enhanced service efficiencies in Government Office co-location, freeing up existing CBD space for retail/office expansion. Provides existing government services in an economically and professionally justified manner for future growth and service retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Complete feasibility study. Medium: Available office space suitable for Government and business below 20% triggering approvals process, funding and construction. Long: Available office space suitable for Government and business between 20-40% triggering examination of land requirements and purchase for development when available office space is less than 20%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Wheatbelt Development Commission, Department of Commerce, Department of Finance, Department of Housing, Department of Training & Workforce Development and High Speed Broadband Provider 	TBC
Project: Southern Inland Health Initiative - Capital Works Program - Merredin Hospital Scale: Region Description: Upgrade of Merredin Hospital to provide efficiencies in service delivery. Scope: Merredin Hospital upgrades including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department Outpatient Services: Emergency Care, Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Counselling, Community Health Nursing, Community Mental Health & Aged Care Support Outcome: Merredin Hospital upgraded to provide increased regional health servicing capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Approvals signed and project funded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Department of Health & Merredin Hospital Partners: Department of Regional Development 	Southern Inland Health Initiative: \$26.4million
Project: Merredin College Extension (100+ beds) Scale: Region Description: The development of additional boarding capacity at Merredin College (100+beds). Scope: Construction and fitout of additional boarding facility to increase student boarding capacity. Outcome: Additional boarding capacity for students delivered through upgrades to Merredin College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Merredin College boarding capacity is at 90% utilisation, initiating planning, design and construction of additional boarding capacity. Medium: Upgrade of capacity to be reviewed and upgraded in line with demographic trends in the sub-region. Long: Sub-regional population reaches 14,000, upgrade reviewed and funded in line with demographic trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Department of Education Partners: Merredin College 	Department of Education
Project: Merredin Development Group Scale: Region Description: Development of a group or members within a current organisation to market the town and perform activities in the interest of the private sector in Merredin. Scope: Facilitate the development of a local business group to engage in economic development activities. Outcome: The establishment of a forum for Merredin businesses will provide a focus group to further the economic development interests of Merredin businesses and provide a single reference point for the Shire of Merredin to establish development priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Industry stakeholder group developed or incorporated into currently active groups. Framework and key issues and discussions paper established. Medium: Establishment of membership program once membership numbers exceed 15. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Or Private Sector Partners: Private Sector, Shire of Merredin, RDA Wheatbelt, Heartlands WA and Wheatbelt Business Network 	TBC

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: Central East Agricultural Development Strategy Scale: Region Description: Facilitate the development of a strategy on future agricultural development in the Central East. Scope: Development of strategy for agriculture in the Central East to guide investment, research and development. May be developed within a wider Wheatbelt Agricultural Development Strategy. Outcome: Strategy developed to guide agricultural investment in research and development and infrastructure investment for the Central East agricultural industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Stakeholder group developed, involving government, business and industry. • Medium: Central East Agricultural Development Strategy delivered, findings encouraged to be implemented by industry. • Long: Ongoing workshops to educate stakeholders in the effective implementation of findings of the strategy to their operations/planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Department of Agriculture & Food WA • Partners: Central East Sub-Region LGAs and Grains Research Development Corporation 	TBC
Project: Cross Sector Skill Training Program (Agriculture & Mining - Health & Disability Care) Scale: Region Description: Development of cross sector skill training programs in agriculture, mining, health and disability care to be delivered through C.Y. O'Connor Institute, Merredin. Scope: Implementation of cross sector skill training programs to diversify the workforces skill base. Outcome: Cross sector course offerings developed and delivered in liaison with private sector to enable development in similar industries (cross sector specialisation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Private sector is consulted on the development of certifications and training programs (practical & theoretical work). • Medium: C.Y. O'Connor Institute campus expansion complete. Cross sector programs implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: C.Y. O'Connor Institute • Partners: Department of Training & Workforce Development and Private Sector 	C.Y. O'Connor Institute
Project: Intensive Agriculture Pilot Project Development Scale: Region Description: A pilot project to develop commercial scale intensive agriculture to provide a test case for further development of the industry through water re-use and innovative use of aquaculture/horticulture technologies. Scope: Development of intensive agriculture pilot project in Merredin (horticulture/aquaculture) including purchase of land and equipment. Outcome: Development of commercial scale horticulture/aquaculture enterprise through water re-use and application of desalination technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Development of water infrastructure to provide resources for project (Merredin Desalination Plant & Water Re-Use Reticulation Upgrades). • Medium: Private sector and/or Government sectors ready to invest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Department of Agriculture & Food WA • Partners: Shire of Merredin and Private Sector 	TBC
Project: Kindergarten/Childcare Development (Co-Located Education Precinct) Scale: Local Description: Development of additional childcare service to enable resource sharing and provide co-located education service provision within the education precinct. Scope: Development of additional childcare services and co-located development in proximity to the education precinct. Outcome: Additional childcare facility developed to provide parents of young children the opportunity to re-join the workforce and provide children with youth education development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Childcare demand exceeds 75% of supply; population trends indicate increase in youth age cohort, family age cohorts. Identify site for additional childcare facility. • Medium: Approvals signed and project funded when population reaches 3,600 or childcare capacity has less than 15% remaining. • Long: Upgrade childcare centre facilities when population reaches 4,200. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Education and Merredin And Districts Childcare And Play School (MADCAPS) 	TBC
Project: Townsite High Speed Broadband Rollout Scale: Local Description: Project will involve the identification of broadband technologies and deployment strategies involving the physical deployment of infrastructure in the townsite. Scope: Rollout high speed broadband services within the townsite. Outcome: Development of high speed broadband services within the townsite to enable increased digital economy development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Identify potential partners and stakeholders to develop a plan to identify and prioritise areas of the townsite to have broadband services delivered in stages. • Medium: Rollout of high speed broadband infrastructure with partners when funding has been secured. • Long: Continue high speed broadband service rollout in line with townsite broadband service rollout prioritisation plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: High Speed Broadband Provider and Private Sector 	TBC
Project: Small Scale Solar/Wind Plant Scale: Local Description: Small scale renewable production facility developed to produce energy for townsite dewatering and for peak energy usage by industry/commerce. Scope: Installation of small generation capacity consisting of solar panels and wind turbines for utilisation by industry, dewatering and desalination. Outcome: Small scale energy production sites developed in Merredin's General Industrial Area and Light Industrial Area (solar/wind).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Private sector and/or Government sectors ready to invest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Private Sector 	TBC

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: Townsite Dewatering System Extension Scale: Local Description: Extension of dewatering infrastructure (pipes & bores) to reduce townsite salinity and enable potential desalination and industry development. Scope: Development of additional bores for townsite dewatering and pipe system extension to capture water for re-use. Outcome: Construction of dewatering bores and pipe system extension for water re-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Findings of Aquifer/Groundwater Abstraction Study project utilised to determine points for the installation of additional dewatering equipment and ancillary infrastructure. • Medium: Dewatering infrastructure constructed, dependent on approvals and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Water and Water Corporation 	TBC
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 3: Fifth St & Queen St Redevelopment Scale: Local Description: Stage 3: Redevelopment of Fifth St/Queen St to Mitchell St (including investigations on the installation of high speed broadband services to businesses). Scope: Redevelopment of Fifth St/Queen St to Mitchell St (roadworks, streetscape and infrastructure upgrade). Outcome: Revitalisation of Fifth St/Queen St to Mitchell St to increase amenity, streetscape access/attractiveness, business investment, CBD activity utilisation and enhanced investment return (increased CBD patronage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Merredin CBD Revitalisation Stage 2 completed. Technical investigations complete, approvals signed and project funded. • Long: Seek major retailer/big box investment when population reaches 4,000 and more than 12,000 in the sub-region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Private Sector and High Speed Broadband Provider 	TBD (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: Over 55s Lifestyle Village Development Feasibility Strategy Scale: Local Description: The development of a feasibility strategy for the development of an over 55s lifestyle village in Merredin. Scope: Lifestyle Village Feasibility Strategy developed for Merredin. Outcome: Development potential for lifestyle village identified by Strategy including indicative industry support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Consult with private over 55s lifestyle village companies on the development of a feasibility study for such a facility in Merredin. • Long: Private sector and/or Government sectors ready to invest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Private Sector • Partners: CEACA, Shire of Merredin 	TBC
Project: Water Re-Use Reticulation Upgrades Scale: Local Description: Upgrade of the Shire of Merredin's parks and gardens reticulation. Scope: Reticulation upgrades to Shire of Merredin parks and gardens. Outcome: Reticulation extension to non-reticulated parks and gardens in the townsite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Shire of Merredin identifies corridors for infrastructure investment, including related infrastructure for water re-use. • Medium: Shire of Merredin, Department of Water and Water Corporation invest in construction of infrastructure on ongoing basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Water and Water Corporation 	Shire of Merredin
Project: Rural Residential Expansion (North Merredin) Scale: Local Description: Planning, land purchase/acquisition, site design and construction of headworks to enable future rural residential development within the townsite. Scope: Facilitate planning, land purchase, site design and headworks for lot development. Outcome: Development of additional rural residential lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Acquisition of land, development of outline development plan for site and scheme amendment where appropriate. • Medium: Less than 5 lots remaining triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. • Long: Less than 2 lots remaining from previous land release triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin 	TBC
Project: Merredin Pump Station Revitalisation Project - Building Restoration Scale: Local Description: Redevelopment of Merredin Pump Station No.4 to current Building Code of Australia Standards to enable reutilisation for alternative uses. Scope: Redevelopment and repurposing of Merredin Pump Station No.4 for alternative uses. Project will involve a repurposing strategy aimed at aligning potential users for the redeveloped structure. Outcome: Merredin Pump Station No.4 redeveloped for alternative uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Potential proponents identified for re-use of the existing structure for alternative uses (post redevelopment/clean-up works). • Medium: Technical investigations complete, approvals signed and project funded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Heritage Council of Western Australia and Water Corporation • Partners: Private Sector 	TBC
Project: Aquifer/Groundwater Abstraction Study Scale: Region Description: A study to be undertaken by the Shire of Merredin in conjunction with government agencies and industry to identify potential groundwater sources/aquifers to expand the existing townsite dewatering system. Scope: Undertake and deliver a study on groundwater and potential sites of aquifers in the Merredin region. Builds upon previous work by DAFWA (hydrological studies). Outcome: Study prepared and delivered on groundwater and aquifer size for Merredin and surrounds, enabling an environmentally and economic justification for water re-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Study prepared for the townsite to identify aquifer/groundwater reserve size and environmentally acceptable abstraction rates. • Medium: Wider study prepared for agriculture and industry to identify aquifer/groundwater reserve size in prioritised locations for environmentally and economically acceptable abstraction rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Water and Water Corporation 	Water Corporation

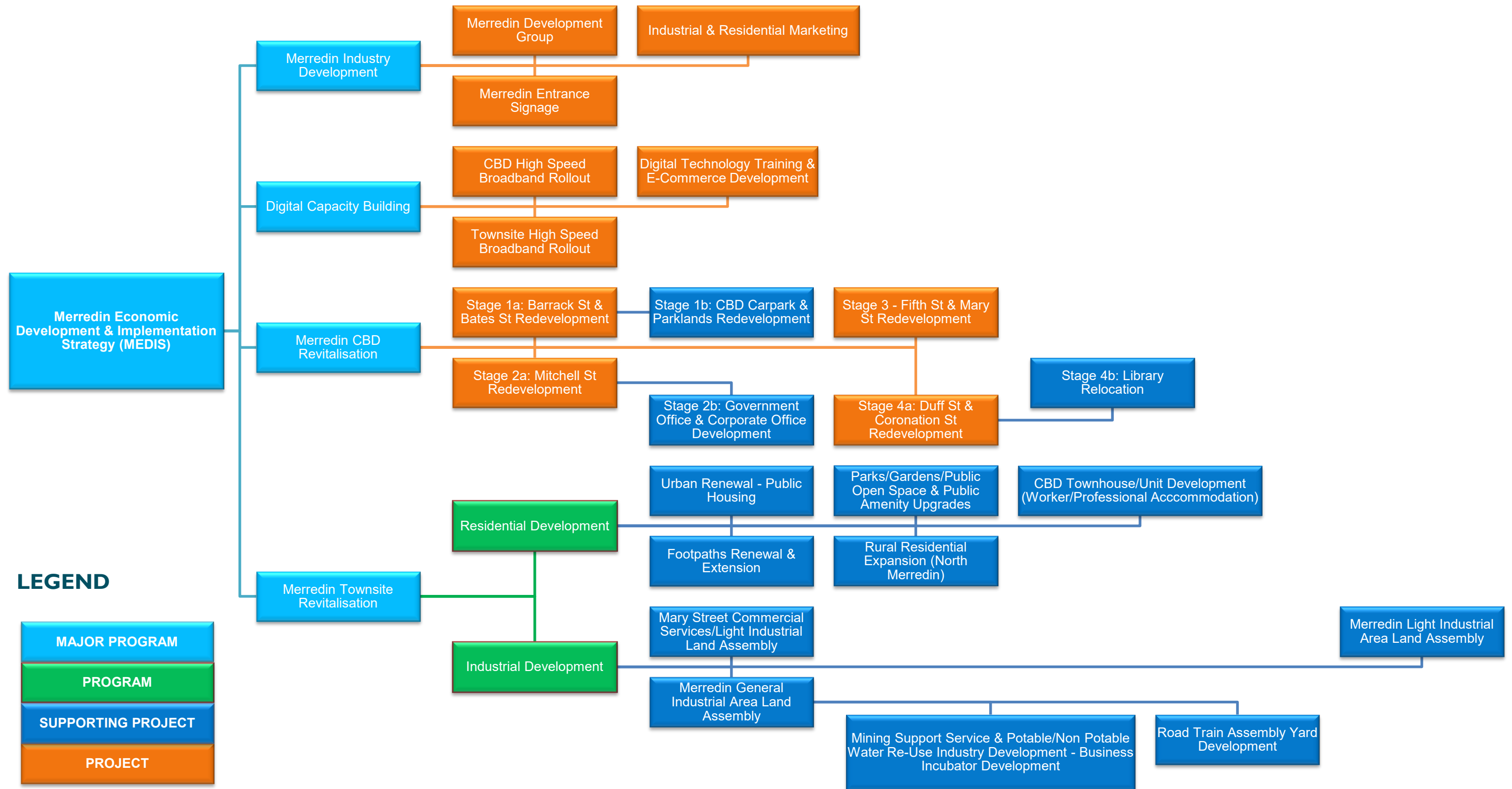
Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: Merredin Entrance Signage Scale: Local Description: Design and installation of signage approved by MainRoads WA to attract passing motorists into the Merredin CBD Scope: Design and install CBD entry signage. Outcome: The design and installation of CBD entry signage on Great Eastern Highway entrances to town will provide economic development incentive to local businesses through increased trip generation in the CBD and expenditure on goods and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Approval received from MainRoads WA on siting and design. Funding and construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: MainRoads WA 	Shire of Merredin
Project: Sub-Regional Transport Strategy Scale: Region Description: Planning key infrastructure priorities (formation of working group) for transport in the Shire of Merredin and in the Central East Sub-Region and provide a strategy for key infrastructure priorities and their development out to 2050. Scope: Development of strategy to identify key infrastructure priorities of transport in the sub-region for development through to 2050. Outcome: Strategy identifying regional transport priority projects out to 2050 developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Stakeholder working group developed, involving government, business and industry. Medium: Sub-Regional Transport Strategy completed and findings implemented into infrastructure planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Central East Sub-Region LGA's Partners: Private Sector, Department of Transport, MainRoads WA and WALGA 	TBC
Project: Mary St Commercial Services/Light Industrial Land Assembly Scale: Local Description: Planning, land purchase/acquisition, site design and construction of headworks to enable future light industrial/commercial services development within the townsite. Scope: Facilitate planning, land purchase, site design and headworks for lot development. Outcome: Development of 26 commercial service/light industrial lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Acquisition of land, development of outline development plan for site and scheme amendment where appropriate. Medium: Less than 2 vacant lots remaining/90% stock utilised in light commercial area triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. Long: Less than 2 vacant lots remaining from previous land release triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin 	TBC
Project: Youth Development & Engagement Program - Youth Centre/Youth Services Development Scale: Local Description: Increase youth services utilisation in Merredin to reduce anti-social behaviour and potentially upskill the youth workforce. Scope: Development of youth infrastructure, spaces and youth education and engagement programs. Outcome: Development of youth education programs and youth services to mitigate potential antisocial behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Shire of Merredin establishes a youth survey to indicate the requirements of the 8-18 age cohort. Findings identify leadership programs and education programs to facilitate youth development. Medium: When the youth age cohort reaches 15-25% of the Shire's population, plan for the development of appropriate youth centre services to meet demand. Approvals and project funding to be secured for construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Merredin College, St Marys Primary School, C.Y. O'Connor Institute and Avon Youth 	TBC
Project: Merredin General Industrial Area - Land Assembly Scale: Local Description: Planning, land purchase/acquisition, site design and construction of headworks to enable future general industrial development within the townsite. Scope: Facilitate planning, land purchase, site design and headworks for lot development. Outcome: Development of additional general industrial lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Acquisition of land, development of outline development plan for site and scheme amendment where appropriate. Medium: Less than 2 vacant lots remaining/90% stock utilised in general industrial area triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. Long: Less than 2 vacant lots remaining from previous land release triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Department of Agriculture & Food WA 	TBC
Project: Road Train Assembly Yard Development Scale: Region Description: Investigate potential development of a Road Train Assembly Area/Yard in Merredin and potential benefits of its development for transport and logistics in the Shire and for the broader Central East Sub-Region. Scope: Feasibility study on procuring land adjacent to Great Eastern Highway for the development of a Road Train Assembly yard for heavy vehicles. Outcome: Identification of investment and development potential of a road train assembly area to serve the regional and interstate transport industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium: Merredin Townsite Haulage Strategy completed, findings utilised in consultation with Department of Transport, MainRoads WA and Private Sector into feasibility of a road train assembly yard being developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Shire of Merredin Partners: Department of Transport and MainRoads WA 	TBC
Project: Merredin Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Scale: Local Description: Upgrade of the Merredin Wastewater Treatment Plant to provide capacity for further development. Scope: Develop and upgrade capacity of Merredin Wastewater Treatment Plant. Outcome: Increase capacity of the Merredin Wastewater Treatment Plant for additional lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short: Merredin Wastewater Treatment Plant additional serviceable lot capacity is less than 30 lots triggering acquisition of land, planning, design and approvals process for system extension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: Water Corporation Partners: Department of Water and Shire of Merredin 	Water Corporation

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: Merredin Light Industrial Area Land Assembly Scale: Local Description: Planning, land purchase/acquisition, site design and construction of headworks to enable future light industrial development within the townsite. Scope: Facilitate planning, land purchase, site design and headworks for lot development. Outcome: Development of additional light industrial lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Acquisition of land, development of outline development plan for site and scheme amendment where appropriate. • Medium: Less than 2 vacant lots remaining/90% stock utilised in light industrial area triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. • Long: Less than 2 vacant lots remaining from previous land release triggers headworks development and creation of a marketable release of lots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin 	TBC
Project: Urban Renewal – Public Housing Scale: Local Description: Construction and upgrade of public housing building stock within the townsite. Scope: Perform public housing upgrades within the townsite. Outcome: Increased public housing quality and visual amenity of Merredin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Development of public housing renewal register between the Department of Housing and the Shire of Merredin and an asset register with prioritisation on infrastructure age and use for replacement. • Medium: Upgrade infrastructure based on prioritisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Private Sector and Department of Housing 	Shire of Merredin and Department of Housing
Project: Merredin Townsite Freight Haulage Strategy Scale: Local Description: Planning key infrastructure priorities (formation of working group) for transport in the Shire of Merredin and Merredin Townsite and provide a strategy for key infrastructure priorities and their development out to 2050. Scope: Development of strategy to identify key infrastructure priorities of transport in Merredin for development through to 2050. Outcome: Strategy identifying Merredin's transport priority projects out to 2050 developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Shire of Merredin conducts preliminary investigations from a Shire level for information to include in a townsite review of transportation infrastructure requirements. • Medium: Sub-Regional Transport Strategy completed and regional findings used for further work on Merredin. Detailed investigation conducted into the Merredin Townsite and findings implemented into infrastructure planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Private Sector, Department of Transport and MainRoads WA 	TBC
Project: St John's Ambulance - Sub Centre Upgrade Scale: Region Description: Relocation of St John Ambulance Merredin Sub-Centre to Merredin Regional Hospital to provide efficiencies in service delivery. Scope: Relocation of St John Ambulance Merredin Sub-Centre to Merredin Regional Hospital Outcome: Merredin St John's Ambulance Sub-Centre relocated to Health Precinct to provide reforms in emergency health delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Department of Health and Merredin Hospital liaise with St Johns Ambulance to identify a location for relocating the existing operations. • Medium: Approvals signed and project funded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: St Johns Ambulance Merredin • Partners: Department of Health, Merredin Hospital and WACHS 	TBC
Project: Co-Located Medical Precinct Development (Ancillary Services & Government (Health Offices) Development Scale: Local Description: Redevelopment and repurposing of buildings in the Merredin Health Precinct for the expansion of health services and ancillary services. May include the relocation of government departments/agencies. Scope: Redevelopment and repurposing of buildings adjacent to Merredin Regional Hospital for health services. Outcome: Development of a co-located health precinct for government health services and outpatient servicing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Available space for health services is less than 10% of total stock, land owners contacted about acquiring site. • Long: Funding provided for purchase of adjacent sites for ancillary services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Department of Health, Merredin Hospital, WACHS • Partners: Private Sector, CEACA and St Johns Ambulance Merredin 	TBC
Project: Parks/Gardens/Public Open Space & Public Amenity Upgrades Scale: Local Description: Construction and upgrade of public open spaces including public amenities, parks and gardens within the townsite (infrastructure/plantings). Scope: Construct and upgrade public open space areas within the townsite Outcome: Increased recreation infrastructure quality, accessibility and visual amenity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Development of public open space and recreation area asset register for prioritising works on existing public open space assets/areas and identify construction priority of new public open space and recreational areas. • Medium: Develop/upgrade infrastructure based on prioritisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Department of Sport & Recreation 	TBC
Project: Footpaths Renewal & Extension Scale: Local Description: Construction and upgrade of footpaths and extension of footpath network within the townsite. Scope: Construct and upgrade footpaths within the townsite. Outcome: Increased pedestrian infrastructure quality, accessibility and visual amenity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Development of footpaths/cycle ways asset register for prioritising works on footpaths and the construction priority for new footpaths/cycle ways. • Medium: Develop/upgrade infrastructure based on prioritisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin 	TBC

Delivery & Thresholds			
Action/Activity/Project	Threshold Indicator	Delivery Method	
		Lead Agency & Partners	Funding Source
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 4a: Duff St & Coronation St Redevelopment Scale: Local Description: Stage 4a: Redevelopment of Fifth St & Queen St to Duff St and Duff St & Coronation Street (including investigations on the installation of high speed broadband services to businesses). Scope: Redevelopment of Fifth St & Queen St to Duff St and redevelopment of Duff St and Coronation St between Fifth St & Queen St (roadworks, streetscape and infrastructure upgrade). Outcome: Revitalisation of Fifth St & Queen St & Coronation St to Duff St to increase amenity, streetscape access/attractiveness, business investment, CBD activity and utilisation and enhanced investment return (increased CBD patronage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium: Stage 3 completed. Technical investigations complete, approvals signed and project funded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin • Partners: Private Sector and High Speed Broadband Provider 	TBC (actively seeking capital works funding)
Project: CBD Revitalisation - Stage 4b: Library Relocation Scale: Local Description: Stage 4b: Relocation of Merredin Regional Library to North Merredin Primary School Administration Centre. Scope: Merredin Regional Library relocation to Mitchell St to enable demolition of asbestos library on Queen St. Outcome: Library relocation will provide additional space for commercial development within the CBD and improve library functions (existing building deteriorated).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short: Approvals signed and project funded. • Medium: Demolition of previous library building when removal/movement complete and funding available to safely demolish (asbestos structure). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: Shire of Merredin 	Shire of Merredin

Projects and Initiatives founded as at 5 July 2015. These Projects and Initiatives for Merredin have been identified from Local, State and Federal Governments, private enterprise and Non-Government-Organisations during the consultation and research phase for this Plan. It is of the view that the Projects and Initiatives will guide the development of Merredin and the broader Central East sub-region. A prioritisation process was undertaken that identifies the priority of 47 projects which will have the most impact on economic and population growth at this point of time. It is of the view that this list is not exhaustive and will evolve as Projects and Initiatives are completed, new Projects and Initiatives identified or changed completely. The list will form part of the Implementation and Monitoring process of which will be reviewed to ensure project information is current and accurately reflects the investment required to meet the infrastructure and service needs of a growing population and economy. The Wheatbelt Development Commission as part of the Implementation and Monitoring of this Plan will be updating this project list on a regular basis.

6.0 Project Implementation Flowchart (Page 1 of 2)



6.1 Project Implementation Flowchart (Page 2 of 2)

