

Murchison

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Monologue

December

2023



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murchisonshire
Ancient land under brilliant skies

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Editor's Message

Hi Everyone!

We hope you all enjoy this edition of the Murchison Monologue, representing a 6-month period.

As always, we might be large in size and incredibly tiny in numbers, but we continue to punch well above our weight, much like that historical Mouse that Roared.

Importantly we are always looking to receive information, pictures, event details, stories of life in Murchison and adverts from the community. So, if you have anything you would like to add to the next or future Monologue editions, then please contact the Shire Office. We'd love to hear from you!!

Meanwhile have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Ed.



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Hello All, December is once again upon us with not long to go until hopefully having a change of pace over the festive period.



Shire activities during the past several months have included regular day to day operations along with a celebration of past achievements.

On September 8 a community picnic was held on the Carnarvon Mullewa Rd, about 25km north of our southern Shire boundary, to celebrate the completion of the sealing from the Murchison Settlement to where we join the City of Greater Geraldton. Thank you to all who contributed towards this enjoyable event.

Olive and Warren have taken up the Oasis Roadhouse and caravan park management and I welcome them to the district. Positive feedback about the service levels, standard of accommodation facilities and food continue to be received so they have hit the ground running.

The SKAO project is now well and truly underway and the Shire has engaged several local contractors to assist us with the constant road upgrades and maintenance that is required with the unprecedented volumes of traffic the project has created. I would like to make special mention of the extra effort our Works Manager William has put in to try and maintain reasonable road conditions for our locals to enjoy while juggling pressures from many different entities, all with their specific demands.

Two long term Shire/community members in Stuart Broad and Neil Coombe have left the Shire's employment to pursue new challenges. Thank you very much Stuart and Neil (and your supportive families) for a long and committed period of good work for the Shire. Thanks also to Brent Cowmeadow and family who have left the Shire's employment.

Thank you to all admin and works crew who continue your efforts in keeping the Murchison Shire ticking along.

As all locals are fully aware, the Murchison doesn't often muck around temperature-wise from around December to February so, to all in our district, please look after yourselves during this time.

Here's to a thunderstorm or two, not the windy type, just the rainy ones.

Until next time.

Roscoe

CEO's Snapshot

2023 has seen us continue to punch above our weight.

All staff are to be congratulated for their efforts and I thank all including Stuart Broad, Neil Combe, Brent Cowmeadow, Des O'Brien, Steven Cosgrove Nick Drew and Pixie Phillips, and other casual Roadhouse staff who have left our employ and who have made a positive contribution.

At this stage we have been able to welcome Olive Martina, Warren Tomlinson and Angela Pardoe (Roadhouse) and Gary Pardoe (Parks and Gardens) but, as indicated in this issue, we are also actively recruiting replacements and new positions to bolster our operation. Recruitment is never easy, especially in a remote locality, but we are ever hopeful.

Of particular note is the performance of our Works Crew under Works Manager William Herold's leadership, ably assisted by Lisa Keen who doubles up on Finance matters, providing strong guidance to Vicki Dumbris and Robyne Hosking and support to Travis Bate and staff at RSM.

Despite—staff absences we have made steady progression in a large array of areas, some of which are outlined in this issue.

I am confident that with the continued strong support from all councillors, 2024 will round out an overall rich and achievable community vision that can be delivered operationally.

Ciao

Ceo Bill

Roads

Construction

Carnarvon-Mullewa Road

The Construction crew led by Mark Jones (*Jonesy*) have, since the start of the 2022/23 financial year steadily continued progress in reconstructing various narrow 4.0m wide sealed sections of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road between the Ballinyoo Bridge and Twin Peaks-Woollen Road, with a view to widening and sealing to a 7.2m width.



Apart from significantly improving the standard and safety of the road and increasing its life, a number of cement stabilised floodways are being provided to improve cross drainage and vegetation recovery as part of Council's Roads for Rehydration approach.

A key element to this is ensuring the road levels are set for water to drain in a more natural manner, rather than be held back and or channelled. This contrasts to traditional road design where the road pavement is generally higher than the natural surface with upstream ponding not much of a consideration.

In a normal situation where the level of the road is not an issue, all that is required is a bit of extra pavement material with insitu stabilisation of local and top up materials. If the road level increases slightly then there is generally issue.

The challenge for *Jonesy's* Crew is that the pavement level had to be lowered, meaning the existing pavement material had to be cut out, pavement depth lowered with materials brought back and supplemented with new gravel. Effectively this means a complete reconstruction, much like a new road, rather than just a rehabilitation which is much less costly!

Lessons learnt from this approach, which include incorporating extensive cement stabilisation work that needs to be part of the final preparation will however, be invaluable as we have similar type of work on this road programmed for the foreseeable future.

Works are funded from a mixture of Main Roads WA, and Local Roads Community Infrastructure Funds plus our own resources.

Works thus far completed to pre preparation standard involved sections from the grid just south of the Billabalong entrance. (SLK 218.48).

Final prep work for the stabilizing was scheduled to begin when the Landor traffic once again headed south.

Additional sections need to be included in the new year this work will likely commence in the first quarter of 2024 with contracts for stabilisation being awarded to WA Stabilising with sealing works to Bitutek.



Beringarra-Pindar Road Resheet Works

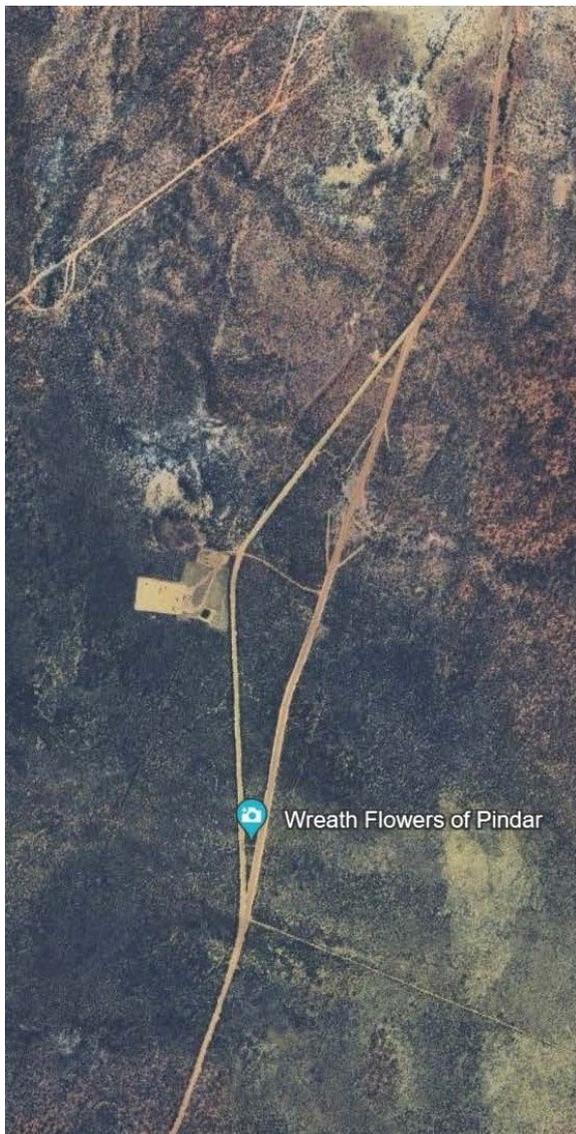
Sections of gravel resheet drainage improvement and floodway works undertaken by the Shire earlier in the year have been extended by Rowe Contractors who have also been correcting drainage issues and putting in bunds as they progressed north from Tallering.

Works were undertaken between SLK 276.30 and 309.50 with assistance from Roads to Recovery Funding. Additional sections are planned for 2024.

Beringarra-Pindar Road Wreath Flower Works

With the assistance of Main Roads WA Blackspot Funding, the Shire was able to complete Safety Improvements works undertaken earlier in the year in the Wreath Flowers section of the Beringarra-Pindar Road SLK 311.36 to 313.40

when signs were installed. The prime aim is to segment tourist traffic so that they can view the Wreath Flowers, when is season, in a safer manner. The new dual carriageway operation came into effect in August 2023.



SKA Road Upgrade Works

The early part of the financial year has seen Walladar and Squires Resources undertake several sections of re-sheet work as well as a considerable amount of works correcting drainage and water disbursement on sections of the Twin Peaks-Wooleen, Meeberrie-Mt Wittenoom, Boolardy-Wooleen and Beringarra-Pindar Roads.

As the SKA Project has started to generate additional traffic greater emphasis has now been placed on maintenance activities.

Main Roads WA Funding

Applications for Main Roads WA funding for 2024/25 were submitted during the second half of 2023. These duly went through assessment by the Main Roads WA Technical Working Group, Murchison Region Subgroup before ultimate approval by the Main Roads WA Regional Group. The Shire put forward 4 projects (the maximum) for reconstruction and widening sections of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road as part of 2024/25 Road Project Grant submission(s) as well as and an updated Three-Year Works Program.

All 4 projects have been approved. This is an increase in the number of approved projects from

this financial year (3), previous two years (2) and before that (1).

Maintenance

The maintenance crew completed the Carnarvon-Mullewa Rd to the Settlement. They then headed over to Boolardy making a start on the Boolardy-Kalli Rd then continued southwest on the SKA route, skipping works already completed or in progress. They are expected to reach the Murchison River crossing in late November 2023. An assessment will then be made with regard to their next move, it may well be back to the Boolardy-Kalli Rd. with some work on the Beringarra-Pindar Rd south of the Boolardy-Wooleen Rd. intersection.

Flood Works

Works associated with the following approved flooding disaster relief projects, overseen by Greenfields Technical Services have been completed by Squires Resources and THEM Earthmoving. since the last issue.

AGRN 951	Flood 8-Tropical Low 29 Jan-8 Feb 2021
AGRN 974	Flood 9-Rain Event 28 May-31 May 2021

Unfortunately, the following Councils claim for the following flood event has not been approved by DFES despite being under final assessment lodged some 6 months ago.

AGRN 1021	Flood 10-Rain Event 26 May-3 April 2022
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Meanwhile submission for the most recent flood event as outlined still to be submitted.

AGRN 1062	Flood 11-Midwest-Gascoyne & Pilbara 29 March-4 April 2023
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Roads for Rehydration

Council has developed an important approach to the drainage of roads with the aim to minimise environmental damage.

Council's 6.1 Roads Policy, which is proposed to be upgraded in the new year, provides some guidance and includes the following road Drainage Principles and Practices whereby on a situation-by-situation basis, roads need to be constructed and maintained in accordance with established road design standards.

However, in doing so the environmental impacts associated with drainage of land and roads need to be recognised and considered such that, where possible, road construction and maintenance activities need to be undertaken in a practical and appropriate manner to:

- ~ cater for variable rainfall frequency and intensity events.
- ~ minimise water velocities and scouring, not just to the road but also surrounding land.
- ~ minimise or prevent rain shadow effects on one side of the road through, as far as practicable, natural distribution of floodwaters.
- ~ minimise or prevent ponding adjacent to the road formation.
- ~ avoid the road becoming an effective channel for floodwaters.
- ~ Avoid, if at all possible, interfering with the natural water flow.

It is recognised that not all situations will be identical, with different techniques applied in flat terrain compared to undulating breakaway country and in large and small catchments but, in many instances, road design and construction practices can be adapted to suit the above aims and principles without compromising road safety. Examples of potential solutions could include but are not limited to the following:

- ~ use of bunds and drains, lengthening floodways, constructing the road level at the level of the natural stream.
- ~ installing low flow culverts that drain the water catchment after the flood peak has passed where road is required to be built up.
- ~ where the road has become an effective channel for floodwaters distribute flows at regular intervals back into the surrounding land rather than within the road reserve

These principles also apply in situations where Council chooses to undertake works when bunding old roads

At the November Meeting of the Murchison Economic Group, in part a follow on from presentations made by the Shire President at a Roads for Hydration Forum held at Mt Magnet in March 2023, Works Manager Will gave a presentation to the Murchison Executive Group highlighting some of the Shire's practices associated with roadworks construction and maintenance to mitigate some of the following problems.



Road level causing ponding on one side.



New road but old road formation still retained causing scouring and retention of floodwaters.



Close up of previous pic showing very happy livestock but now encouraged to stay beside the roadside and create a potential safety hazard.



Rain shadow effect showing healthy thriving vegetation one side and rain starved vegetation on another caused by road levels and design.

Plant

The Shire,s new roller arrived in September and was put to work straight away with the construction crew.



Settlement

Funding Applications

Funding applications have been lodged to assist in the delivery of Water and Power infrastructure and for development of the Roadhouse.

Application has been made under the State Government's Infrastructure Development Fund for Stream 3 relating to Unlocking Regional Worker Accommodation.

An Expression of Interest Submission under the Commonwealth Government's Growing Regions Program has been submitted for renovation of the Roadhouse, construction of a new Manager's Residence, provision of new ensuite cabins, improved lawn and landscape areas, shade sails over fuel facilities and a new chlorinator for the water supply.

Water Supply Upgrade

Major upgrades to the Settlement's water supply are well advanced with construction of a new ring having been pressure tested with no issues apparent.

Works associated with plumbing the main pump station have had to be stopped temporarily as we wait for the supply of power to the new system. These are expected to restart in 2024.



Additional works will be required in the new year to connect up all existing buildings and water services.

At this stage opportunities to fund the Chlorinator part of this project await outcomes from our funding submissions as outlined above.

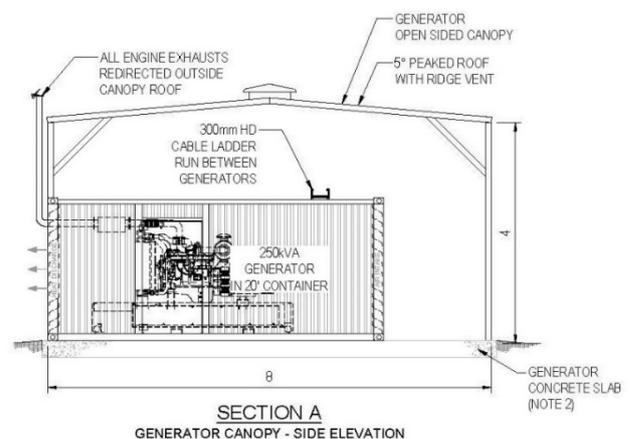


Power Supply Upgrade

Designs and specifications for a major upgrade to our power supply have been completed. Works are scheduled for 2024 but have been put on hold pending outcomes from our funding submissions as outlined above.



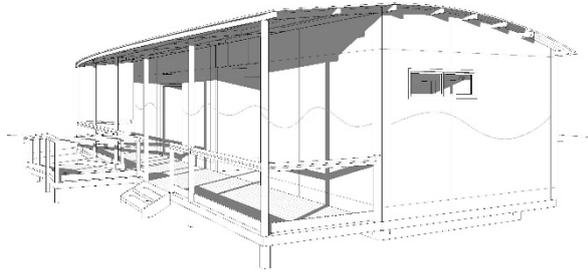
Existing Power Supply



Proposed Power Supply

Caravan Park Ablution Block

Tenders for the construction of a new Caravan Park Ablution Block have been awarded to MI Global from Geraldton.

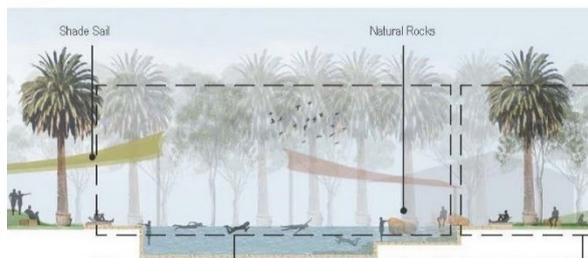


Proposed New Ablution Block

Following an onsite meeting to sort out a few loose ends to tie up with regarding the exact location and some specs, mainly the septic and plumbing, the off-site build should commence in October-November and, if all goes according to plan, they should make a start onsite by about end of March 2024.

Caravan Park-Community Swimming Pool Splash Pad

Tenders are expected be called in the new year for a small Caravan Park - Community Swimming Pool & Splash Pad, in part funded through Lottery West and the Commonwealth Governments Local Community Infrastructure Program.



Survey Works

HTD Surveyors have completed a survey and UAV imagery of the Settlement.

With assistance from a Royalty for Regions funded Business Case arranged through the Mid-West Development Commission, survey for the gravel section of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road in the City of Greater Geraldton has also been undertaken.

Hon Peter Foster Visit

As scheduled, the Hon Peter Foster MLC Member for Mining & Pastoral attended the July 2023 Council Meeting. Peter had earlier in the day presented a cheque for Lottery West Funding for an amount of \$250,000 towards the construction of a splash pad at the Murchison Settlement.



Site of Proposed Splashpad & Community Pool

Peter is current Party Whip for the State Labor Party and chair of the Environment and Public Affairs Committee who have been hearing submissions from an enquiry into forced adoptions.

A few points were raised at the meeting including the following with Peter suggesting that,

- ~ There is an opportunity for Council to raise issues of local concern with him as a means to advance them through the Government.
- ~ Council looks to get agreements for support in the community from mining companies as they usually have resources and community programs.
- ~ Council get its act together prior to the State election with details of projects that may be desired and need support.

Peter also indicated that he was happy to provide letters of support for funding applications and to assist with respect to assisting with input into government.

Carnarvon Mullewa Road Community Picnic

On Friday 8 September 2023 Council held a Community Picnic to celebrate the sealing of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road between the Murchison Settlement and the Southern Shire Boundary.



Welcome

Shire President Rosco Foulkes-Taylor welcomed everyone and thanked various people who had helped bring the event together and outlined the history and progress of the construction works as per the following overview.



History Overview

“In the early days the only sections of sealed road were the grid approaches, the Ballinyoo Bridge, and a bit later the Curbur causeway.

As an aside, the picnic day was two days short of 7 years since Council had a new bridge opening lunch.

The Ballinyoo Bridge is very important as the Murchison River is a slow mover compared to some other rivers further north and can easily be out for more than a month at the low-level crossing so we are very grateful for the access we now have.

During the nineties, as trucks/road trains speeded up and traffic increased, there was talk within Council of passing lanes.

There was also talk about fixing the worst sections (like the bit of country on Woolgorong where we had the picnic) first.

Around 2003/2004 Council decided they were in a financial position to embark on the first big step and that was the construction of the sealed Jiggernoo airstrip with bitumen lead ups at each end. Although well over budget and over time a fine new asset was created.

Around 2005 to 2007 the sand seal style of sealed road was all the rage within the region, and significantly cheaper than blue metal, so the push south from the Settlement began using this style.

Many lessons were learnt in this initial section, not least that the almost imperceptible small clumps of clay contained within the local screened sand did not lend themselves well to the sand seal process and caused more than their fair share of subsequent maintenance demands.

Federal governments have come and gone, State Governments came and went, funding schemes were implemented then changed, rules for road grants access seemed to alter about as much as the wind direction, but in amongst all this, I believe the Shire has found a financially responsible way to steadily continue with the progress of sealed road towards our South Boundary. The Shire’s appreciation is extended to all entities that have contributed funds both large and small, which have enabled us to arrive at this point. I feel it’s worth remembering though, that this progress is the exciting part, the not so

exciting part is making sure that by increasing the sealed road kilometres, we don't create an annual maintenance requirement that could see other assets within the Shire suffer because too big slice of our revenue is needed on that. While acknowledging you never quite know what is around the corner, having considered various scenario, I'm confident the Shire has this requirement in hand.

We can't claim to be unique in this road improvement pursuit though, because our neighbourhood friends at Meekatharra have done a heap of sealing on the Meekatharra Carnarvon Rd and are not far off their boundary with the UG Shire near Mt Gould, plus the UG Shire, not content with being connected by bitumen to Carnarvon have progressed east out past Bidgemia and have recently sealed a pretty testing section of road near the west end of Diary Creek which is not dissimilar to the challenging section of road where the picnic was. As a Shire we applaud their vision in responsibly using whatever funding sources are available to improve regional connectivity.

Now, the cliché of "an elephant in the room" would be pretty accurate to describe the 27odd km of gravel within the City of Greater Geraldton that runs from the Greenough River north to the vermin Fence (our south boundary). Please be assured that several approaches from myself, other Councillors and the CEO regarding suggestions/requests/offers of assistance, all to encourage the City towards tackling a possible sealing of this section have been made but as yet to no avail.

CGG reps were invited to the picnic, but I don't really blame them for not coming as they would have likely become somewhat fed up with helpful suggestions from the assembled rabble. I understand and respect the City has its own set of financial priorities and this 27km of road doesn't seem to be one of them.

"Just move the Murchison Shire Boundary South to the Greenough River" is a suggestion I wouldn't mind having received a dollar for every time I have had it offered. For those of you who are unaware, we have already had a crack at boundary adjustment because the picnic spot was historically in the Mullewa Shire and did not become Murchison Country until through mutual agreement during the nineties the boundary was moved from a bit north on the

Woolgorong/Billabong boundary down to the south end of Bullardoo on the State Barrier Fence. The Shire is continuing to investigate the possibility of moving our boundary further south one day but must do this in a responsible manner which takes into account the pros and cons for the whole Murchison Community and ratepayer population. To make a somewhat petulant decision to just move the boundary so we could pat ourselves on the back for having a sealed road connection to Mullewa and beyond without consideration of all angles would not be a very wise move.

Anyway, enough of that, the picnic was a day to pat ourselves on the back for sealing the road to the current southern boundary.

To all Shire staff, Contractors, and Councillors past and present who have ever had anything to do with this massive undertaking thank you very much.

From writing out a pay slip doing a couple of hours filling in on a roller, to many thousands of hours of skilled operation of a water cart, dozer, or grader you have all played your part.

Speaking of thousands of hours skilfully operating a grader, one such proponent of this craft would be our leading hand on the construction crew Mark Jones. Australians are fairly predictable at nicknames sometimes so let's just say, unsurprisingly more commonly known as Jonesy.

I ask if Jonesy could please come forward and cut the fancy ribbon which will mark the completion of sealing the road from the Settlement to the South Boundary."



As highlighted on the front-page Jonesy provided the honours and a round of applause followed.

Everyone then enjoyed a bite to eat and catch up before heading home.

Few Pics



Murchison Placemaking

So what is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a collaborative process that encourages local governments and external stakeholders including residents, businesses, community groups and government agencies to work together to make spaces more comfortable, accessible, active and attractive.

Most importantly, through the collaborative nature of placemaking, it enables the community to feel connected to the space and want to be there. This improves safety, improved physical and mental health, increased visitations to the area and local businesses, and the community having sense of ownership over the space.

This approach fits neatly into the redevelopment of the Murchison Settlement but is not just confined to the Settlement but indeed has application for the broader Shire with flow on to a redeveloped Community Plan.

Council has endorsed this approach. We have placemaking as a key feature in Terms of Reference for the Settlement Redevelopment and Museum Working Groups.

It's also a key part of a community role that we are currently pursuing in part to deliver on the following plans.



Whilst we can't turn back the clock and have fewer people, this approach should see us continue to punch above our weight. This shouldn't be too surprising. It's what we have historically been doing when the pastoral sector was much larger and stronger and undertook many of the Community Economic Development Actions that we need to pursue collectively.

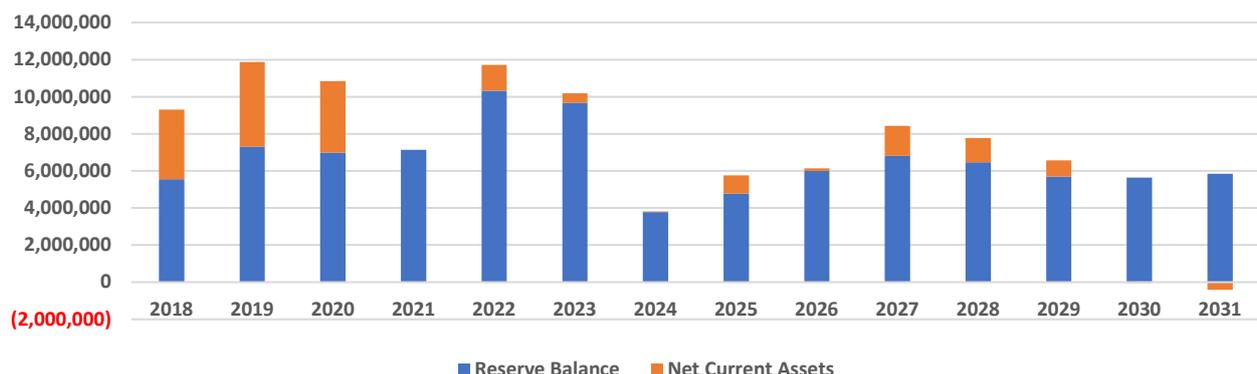


Long Term Planning

As part of a strategic approach to the development of the Shire whilst it may be a legislative requirement, in reality it's common sense to have a long-term strategy and overall plan.

At the August 2023 meeting, prior to adopting the 2022/23 Budget Council adopted an updated Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plan. The actual budget that followed merely dovetails into this strategy as in practice works and services are delivered on a continuous basis with the financial year merely a point in time. A snapshot summary of some projects from the 2023/24 Budget and Councils Asset Management Plan and a summary of the approximate cash position is shown as follows.

Project	Est Cost \$	Year
2023/24 Budget		
Community Swimming Pool (Part LRCIP Funded)	1,050,000	2024
Sports Club Paving & Minor Refurbishment	50,000	2024
Community Splash Pad (Part Lottery West Funded)	350,000	2024
Caravan Park Ablution Block	475,000	2024
Water Supply Upgrade Bores, Shed Ring Main	450,000	2024
Power Supply Upgrade Powerhouse Stage 1	350,000	2024
Container Deposit Shed	10,000	2024
Roadhouse Furniture & Equipment	26,500	2024
Roadhouse Point of Sale	25,000	2024
Roadhouse & C/V Park Precinct Works	20,000	2024
Carvan Park Buildings Improvements & Equipment	37,500	2024
Future Years Indicative Projects		
New Roadhouse Residence	450,000	2025
Staff Housing New	450,000	2025
Water Supply Upgrade- Chlorinator	230,000	2025
Power Supply Relocate Powerhouse Stage 2	450,000	2025
Playground Upgrade (Potential Grant)	200,000	2026
Roadhouse Business Building Refurbishment	500,000	2026
Power Supply Solar Power Provision (loan)	1,000,000	2026
Staff Housing New	450,000	2026
Power Supply Replacement Works	150,000	2028
Community Centre Upgrade Stage 1	750,000	2029
Caravan Park Ensuities – 3 New Units	350,000	2029
Council Building Modifications	600,000	2029
Staff Housing New	450,000	2030
Staff Housing Extension to 3 units	270,000	2030
Community Centre Upgrade Stage 2	400,000	2032



Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy

Observatory update

November 2023

Rebecca Wheadon, Site Entity Leader, CSIRO

We're glad to be offering an update on the activity occurring in the Murchison as construction of the SKA-Low telescope continues at Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory.

The SKA-Low telescope is being constructed by the SKA Observatory (SKAO), an international organisation representing 16 member and participating countries.

My role as Site Entity Leader for CSIRO is to, together with my team, manage the observatory site on behalf of all the telescope tenants. This includes the SKA-Low telescope, as well as CSIRO's ASKAP telescope and the Curtin University-led Murchison Widefield Array (MWA).

The observatory site is soon celebrating its 15th year of operations. Initially established as part of the bid to host the SKA telescope in Australia, the observatory has since become host to multiple world-leading radio telescopes, including ASKAP and the MWA.

In 2012, Australia was chosen to host the SKA low frequency telescope (SKA-Low), together with South Africa who are hosting the mid frequency telescope (SKA-Mid). In 2022, CSIRO signed a new Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Wajarri Yamaji and the Australian and Western Australian governments to expand the observatory to accommodate the SKA-Low telescope, enabling SKAO to start construction in December 2022. And as you will see in this update, a lot has happened in the year since!

Though my focus is managing the entire observatory site, CSIRO is also involved in other parts of the SKA project in Australia. This includes developing technologies and collaborating with SKAO in Australia to assist with construction and act as operations partner for the SKA-Low telescope (www.csiro.au/ska has more detail about CSIRO's involvement).

It's a very exciting and challenging time for the observatory as we expand and see the official start of construction on Wajarri Country, but we are pleased to see all the development happening in the region.

I've been glad to see local businesses engaged in the work so far and look forward to even more opportunities for local and Mid West business as construction continues.

While there is a lot of infrastructure work happening for SKAO, the existing telescopes at the observatory are still operating and continuing their world-leading science, some of which we have updates on below.



Leonie Boddington addresses visiting SKAO Council delegates at Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory, with Bec Wheadon (CSIRO) and Ant Schinckel (SKAO) pictured behind.

If you'd like to get in touch with myself and my team about anything related to the observatory or our activities in the Murchison please reach out to mrose@csiro.au we'd love to hear from you.

– Bec

Both CSIRO and SKAO acknowledge the Wajarri Yamaji as the Traditional Owners and native title holders of Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory.

SKA-Low construction update

Ant Schinckel, SKA-Low Site Construction Director, SKA Observatory (SKAO)

I'm pleased to be able to share with you the latest news about progress on constructing the SKA-Low telescope construction. It's a really exciting time for the project and I'm sure you can appreciate how momentous it is to finally see physical construction of the telescopes happening on site.

After several months of preparation, the first infrastructure work started on site in September 2023 for the telescope itself. A 103-bed 'fly camp' was officially opened on 6 September, providing temporary accommodation for staff, contractors and visitors while construction of the longer-term 200-bed construction camp continues.

In September we also commenced earthworks that will service the antenna arrays that make up the first six SKA-Low telescope stations (six stations, each with 256 antennas). It was great to see Wajarri Holdings, a Wajarri-owned and operated business, subcontracted to Ventia (SKAO's infrastructure contractor) for this work.

These critical infrastructure milestones were marked by an on-site event led by Ventia and supported by SKAO in September. The event, held at Boordalla Well, included speeches and an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. Invited guests included representatives from SKAO, Ventia, CSIRO, Wajarri Holdings, Wajarri Yamaji Aboriginal Corporation, Wajarri Enterprises Limited, Aurecon and on-site subcontractors.



The temporary SKA-Low 'fly camp' at Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory officially opened in September. Credit: Ventia

There has been a lot of progress on site since the celebration. Significant clearing, trenching and backfilling work has been done at the first six telescope stations, and power and fibre optic cables have begun to be laid. The concrete foundations for the remote processing facilities that will accompany these stations have begun to be poured. The core area, where most of the SKA-Low telescope stations will be deployed, has been cleared in preparation for infrastructure works, as well as several station sites along the spiral arms.



SKA-Low Telescope Director Dr Sarah Pearce (far left) with Aurecon, SKAO and Ventia representatives cutting the ribbon to announce the start of infrastructure earthworks at site. Credit: SKAO

Care for the environment

As construction progresses, the SKAO's ecological and environmental commitments are paramount, and are already being put into action. The region is home to a vulnerable species of lizard: the Western spiny-tailed skink. To ensure construction operations don't impact the lizard, SKAO are undertaking skink survey programs, with the first performed in September. No evidence was found in the proposed construction areas (which was good news!), and the first clearing permit was issued for clearing work associated with the first six SKA-Low stations. A small number of SKA-Low staff in Australia have since been approved to lead future surveys, which are ongoing.

Final test station complete

The SKAO team in Australia has now finalised the installation of the final test station for SKA-Low. Called AAVS3, the test station was deployed between May and September, from the first antennas deployed to the connection of power and fibre cables and associated electronics.

Representing a single complete SKA-Low station, AAVS3 is the first instrument owned, operated and maintained by SKAO staff in Australia. It is being used to trial an alternative antenna layout, and is an opportunity to test the building processes and staff requirements for the Low stations.

In late October a team from SKAO, CSIRO, Italian National Institute for Astrophysics, MWA and Curtin University, captured 45 minutes of data with AAVS3 during the Sun's transit across the sky, producing a radio image of the sky – effectively confirming the telescope is working correctly.



SKA-Low Head of Engineering Operations Angela Teale (right) and SKA-Low team member Tamara assemble antennas for AAVS3. Credit: SKAO

SKAO Council visits the Murchison

SKAO

In October 2023 the SKAO Council made their first trip to Western Australia for one of their regular Council meetings. They will return to Australia in October every two years, alternating with the other telescope host country, South Africa. The Council is a collection of delegates nominated by the SKAO member and participating countries, and acts as the governing body for the SKAO.

It was an opportunity to introduce these international representatives to the Australian component of the SKA project, including a day trip to Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory, to see progress on the SKA-Low telescope, experience the Mid West and highlight the importance of the relationship with the Wajarri Yamaji, the Traditional Owners and native title holders of the observatory site.



Can't see the antennas for the hi-vis! The SKAO Council delegates gather for a photo on site, in front of the SKA-Low test array (AAVS3). Credit: SKAO

Around 50 Council members attended. They were welcomed to Country in language by Wendy Merry and were addressed by Anthony Dann. Susan Merry and Leonie Boddington also led Wajarri art and language workshops. The Council contributed to Susan's artwork and learned key Wajarri words with Leonie, who gave visitors honorary Wajarri names for the day, such as marlu daanjamanmanha (kangaroo dancing) or gudurdu nyaan-nyaan (heart whispering).



Wajarri artist, Susan Merry, directs Australian SKAO Council representative, Janean Richards, to add her hand print to the collective painting. Credit: SKAO

As part of the site trip, the group visited existing telescopes and infrastructure on site, including ASKAP and the MWA, as well as key SKA-Low construction locations. Many of the Council representatives commented that this was a special experience for them.

The next day, we were honoured to welcome Wajarri Yamaji Aboriginal Corporation (WYAC) representatives Jennylyn Hamlett, Russell Simpson and Gailrose Simpson to deliver a special presentation at the official two-day Council meeting in Perth, to share the perspective of the Wajarri Yamaji on the SKA-Low telescope on Country. Many delegates commented that this was a special experience for them at Council.

Ring, Ring!. ASKAP finds potential ring galaxy

Aidan Hotan, ASKAP Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO and James Chesters, ATNF Communications Advisor, CSIRO



An ASKAP radio telescope dish. Can you spot six others in the background? Credit: CSIRO/Alex Cherney

A team of international astronomers has used CSIRO's ASKAP radio telescope to reveal beautiful ribbons of gas around a distant galaxy.

The galaxy pictured below is named NGC 4632, and it's 56 million light years from Earth. Surrounded by a ring of hydrogen gas, stretching like a delicate ribbon made of cosmic dust, gas and stars, the gas ring orbits the galaxy at right angles to its spiral disk, visible only to highly sensitive instruments like the ASKAP radio telescope.

Using ASKAP over the coming years, the team expects to reveal the detail of more than 200,000 galaxies, including many with polar rings like NGC 4632.



Dr Jayanne English, an expert in astronomy image-making at the University of Manitoba, combined data obtained from ASKAP with optical and infrared data from the Subaru telescope in Hawaii to make the dramatic composite image of NGC 4632. Credit: J. English (U.Manitoba), with support of T. Jarrett (UCT) and the WALLABY team: ATNF/ASKAP:Subaru/Hyper Suprime Camera

MWA radio astronomy meets art

Venus Chico and Mia Walker, MWA Project Support

A long history of collaboration between the MWA and the Yamaji Art centre in Geraldton has centred around Wajarri artwork depicting the night skies. Recently, Yamaji artists showcased their amazing talent once more by painting a bizarre object – none other than the 'beam pattern' of an MWA antenna tile.

Beam patterns illustrate how the MWA telescope sees the sky, the taller the 'bubble' in the beam pattern, the greater the sensitivity. The MWA can point in different directions without having any moving parts by electronically steering this beam around the sky to receive signals from far-away stars and galaxies.

Yamaji Art Manager and Emerging Artist, Roni Kerley, described the beam patterns as "absolutely petrifying to paint", but the results are stunning - combining radio astronomy and art with an incredible amount of creativity.



Large MWA 3D beam pattern, painted by Margaret Whitehurst, Yamaji Art. Mini MWA 3D beam patterns painted by Dylan Kerley and Nichole Dickerson, Yamaji Art. Image credit: Curtin University

Biggest Morning Tea Thankyou

Shelly Fowler once again held Our Biggest Morning Tea for Cancer Council at the Community Centre on 22 June 2023 and what a spread.

Shelly and her helpers did a wonderful job, and everyone had a great time. Raffles tickets were brought, and everyone had a chance of going home with something.

The weather was kind to us and we even had some travellers join us for a cuppa and a chat. Total raised this year was \$2,213, which will go a long way helping Cancer Council WA

Thank you for all the donations along the way, in food, raffle prizes and auction items. We hope to see you all again next year.



New Settlement Staff

Following the departure of Nick Drew and Pixie Phillips and two casuals at the Roadhouse, plus Des O'Brien from the Parks and Gardens area within the Murchison Settlement, as outlined below we were fortunately able to recruit suitable replacements from Geraldton.

All have hit the ground running and are now making a significant contribution. Welcome guys!

Welcome Warren & Olive

"After coming up to the Murchison on Anzac Day to have a look at the place, we decided to apply for the job. After gaining the position we were set for a tree change.



*Olive Martina and Warren Tomlinson
(New Roadhouse Mangers)*

The winter season was quite busy so we got straight into action. Our first weekend we had to tend to Polocrosse with about 250 people and what felt more like 200 kids all wanting lollies and chips from 7 in the morning till 7 at night.

We've had the Variety Bash, four-wheel drive clubs, motor bike groups and a few different ones riding push bikes (they can have that on their own), all of which we have catered for.

Murchison Oasis Roadhouse & Caravan Park



Now we've had some time to see what happens up here, we've got a few ideas for the park over the next 12 months. *(Fire Pit is Just One with BBQ Over it for Sausage Sizzle)."*

Welcome Gary and Angela

Gary and I are from Adelaide. We have been married for 33 years. We have four daughters and nine grandchildren and one on the way. We love spending time with the family and going off in the caravan. We are looking forward to being a part of the Murchison community going forward.



Angela Pardoe (new Roadhouse Worker)
Gary Pardoe (new Gardener)

General

Accommodation is available for campers, overnights and caravanners. Please ensure that all requests for accommodation, meals or grocery lines are phoned or emailed before you get here.

6 motel rooms available -3 with ensuite facilities and 3 without. Please phone ahead to book.

We are also a postal agency so why not buy a post card or two and post them on your way.

Public toilets remain open, and fuel is available with the 24-hour access to fuel bowsers using a card swipe facility.

Contacts

Phone: (08) 9961 3875

Fax: (08) 9961 3876

Email: oasis@murchison.wa.gov.au

Normal Trading Hours including the Christmas / New Year Shut down are shown below.

Winter hours (1 May – 30 Sep)	Summer hours (1 Oct – 30 April)
Monday to Friday 7.30am – 6.30pm	Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm
Saturday 8.00am – 6.00pm	Saturday 8.30am – 4.00pm
Sunday 8.00am – 2.00pm	Sunday 9.00am – Midday
Public Holidays 8:00am – 2.00pm	Public Holidays 8.00am – Midday <i>Closed Mon 18 Dec 2023 Reopen Tues 2 Jan 2024</i>

Activities

Roadhouse staff undertake a range of activities aside from just catering for tourists, visitors, contractors and general patrons by providing accommodation and operating a food and beverage outlet through the roadhouse.

As Shire staff, a great deal of flexibility is possible such that Roadhouse staff cover off things such as general cleaning of other Council buildings, providing meals for Councillors as shown in the pic below on Council Meeting Days and supporting community events as part of a community focused operation.



From time to time various "happenings" occur as per the following pic.



Natural Rabbit Control

Unwanted Guests

A couple of pics from a second incoming of pesky cattle that have made their way into the Murchison Settlement. Not much love from residents, but they seem to be enjoying life!!!



Wooleen Café Opening

Throughout 2023 Wooleen Station relocated and renovated the shearing shed mess constructed in 1922 by Alf Couch.

On the 26th of September surrounded by the local community and contractors, the building was formally opened by WA Minister for Regional Development, the Honourable Don Punch.

Project was a direct result of the inspiration by Frances and partly assisted through funding by a successful Mid-West Development Commission Regional Economic Development (RED) Grant.

Originally situated 7kms away, the building had become disused due to the decline of merino sheep across the region. While not heritage-listed, given its age and architectural construction, the structure held regional significance. Creatively repurposing it as tourism infrastructure preserves its integrity and the history of the area whilst expanding the tourism potential of Wooleen Station.

Hon. Don Punch said, *"It demonstrates that when heritage is embraced and valued, it can become a valuable asset for the community and a tourism drawcard."*

Frances and David worked with the Wajarri community to name the building 'Milimanmanha', meaning igniting something - to bring to light new possibilities and new knowledge. Wendy Merry, supported by her sisters Gloria and Susan gave a heartfelt welcome to country.

Wooleen Station will work closely with the Pia Wajarri Remote Community School in offering workplace experience to secondary students wherein they will undertake duties associated with tourism and hospitality including greeting guests for check-in/out, recommending local attractions, liaising with day visitors and offering hospitality. During 2024, it is envisaged that hospitality traineeships could be offered to local young people, creating career pathways that currently aren't available in the Murchison.

The new reception and café will also host a shop, providing an outlet for local creators and producers to showcase and sell products. Wooleen hopes to provide a space for Mid-West producers and creators to sell products to highlight the talent within our own region.





As we start to wind down operations in 2023, I am beginning to reflect on what a fantastic year it's been for the Mid West Development Commission and the region, and I would like to thank the Shire of Murchison for the opportunity to share my highlights with you.

Throughout the year, we continued to hold conversations around the boundless opportunities we have in the Mid West, and the areas where these opportunities are already being realised.

We kicked off in February, hosting the Mid West Hydrogen Forum. The event aimed to inform pastoralists, broadacre farmers, Traditional Owners, local governments and landholders about potential impacts and benefits of the emerging renewable energy and hydrogen sectors in the region.

We were able to provide information on diversification leases and other related land tenure matters relevant to the Mid West, as well as equip leaseholders and landowners with resources to assist them in navigating any future approach from energy companies associated with the hydrogen sector.

In March we delivered the region's first Roads for Rehydration Forum and Workshop in Mount Magnet, focussing on good road design, construction and maintenance to restore the flow of water across the landscape, with a particular focus on the Southern Rangelands environment.

Following Rossco Foulkes-Taylor's presentation at the event, we invited Bill Boehm and Rossco to present to staff (including Works Managers) at the Murchison Executive Group meeting and Cue Parliament, on their exemplary road design and maintenance policy, and recent projects.

The Shire of Murchison is leading the way on this front and we look forward to seeing their practices being replicated on other roads in the Mid West in future years.

The Commission staff and Board caught up with a number of our Murchison sub-region Local Government partners as part of our regional visits schedule throughout the year.

The Commission is committed to understanding the cumulative socio-economic impacts of major projects in the region to inform planning for social

infrastructure, in particular workforce, health and housing requirements and our regional trips have become an important opportunity to engage around local projects, key challenges and opportunities.

We commissioned a report into the housing shortage in the Murchison sub-region this year. The report was developed in consultation with Local Government CEOs and highlights potential options to address housing market failure and facilitate delivery of an adequate supply of housing.

The Commission has been regularly engaging with mining, energy, resources and METS companies operating, or planning to operate, in the Murchison Shire to gain an understanding of their businesses, opportunities and challenges, such as roads, freight and port logistics, attracting skilled workers and workforce housing.

We continue to work with these companies and Local Governments on improving communication between all parties and community engagement.

In September we were pleased to attend the picnic celebrating the sealing of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road from Murchison Settlement to its southern boundary; a huge achievement for a small local shire. The Commission is proud to be a supporting partner in funding previous sections of the road, such as the replacement of the Ballinyoo Bridge.

We acknowledge the impact this work has on enhancing access to important economic drivers such as the Square Kilometre Array and Murchison Radio Observatory site and the benefit to the pastoral and tourist sectors in the Murchison and adjoining regions.

In 2023 we also celebrated progress on a number of Regional Economic Development (RED) Grant projects in the region.

The RED Grants is a \$50 million program that has been running for six rounds now, with another due to open in 2024; up to \$250,000 grants are available to businesses, local governments and not-for-profits.

A great example of this can be found at Wooleen Station. The official opening of the new visitor hub was an absolute highlight for us, and our Minister, and is set to diversify the tourism experience in the Murchison.

This project has done a fantastic job of bringing the history of Wooleen to the fore and making it

accessible for the modern era. It demonstrates that when heritage is embraced and valued, it can become a valuable asset for the community and a tourism drawcard.

The RED Grant program has also funded a commercial kitchen supporting the Cue Café at the State Heritage-listed former Western Australian Bank building, which we were able to tour this year.

The kitchen and café will support small business establishment and employment in the region and complements various tourism priorities such as the Murchison GeoRegion and astrotourism.

We look forward to some more RED grant applications from the Murchison region – and across the whole Mid West. I urge you to think about whether you have a potential project, and reach out to us early to discuss it for the best chance of success.

We would like to thank everyone for their support to the Commission over the past 12 months and look forward to continuing our joint efforts to enable key Mid West regional outcomes in the new year.

Our office will be closed over the Christmas/New Year period from 4pm Friday 22 December, re-opening on Tuesday 2 January - until then, the team at Mid West Development Commission wish you a Merry Christmas and a fantastic start to 2024!

Nils Hay

CEO, Mid West Development Commission

www.mwdc.wa.gov.au



Murchison Settlement Community Garden



Vicki Dumbris said "Its amazing what can be grown in any community garden and what we do actually grow in our small affair. A few "green things" were recently picked and shared as follows.



Basil
(*Ocimum basilicum*)

Basil is an aromatic herb, popular as a seasoning in Italian cooking, and grows well from seed or cutting in summer if provided with plenty of sunshine, water and fertile soil. Basil is high in vitamin K. One of the most popular ways of using basil is for Pesto – a creamy, green sauce made from crushed fresh basil, garlic, parmesan cheese, olive oil and pine nuts.



Celery
(*Apium graveolens*)

Celery grows well in the Murchison if provided with rich, fertile soil and plentiful water during summer. Celery is known for its many health benefits such as reducing inflammation, supports digestion, is an antioxidant, has an alkalizing effect, is low in calories, high in fibre, contains antioxidants and is rich in vitamins and minerals.



Garlic Chives
(*Allium tuberosum*)

Garlic Chives can be used as a substitute for garlic. Add chopped to mashed potatoes, add to salads, soups, omelette or scrambled eggs. Garlic chives also grow well in the tunnel garden during the summer months.



Snake Beans
(*Vigna unguiculata*)

Snake Beans also known as – yard long bean, pea bean, cowpea, Chinese long bean, bodi, bora, asparagus bean. Snake beans love to climb and grow very well in the heat of summer. Harvest daily while young and slender or leave to mature and use as dried beans. Try steamed, in stir fries, curries and other Asian cuisine. Snake beans are good source of protein, vitamin A, Folate, Calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and other minerals and vitamins.



Sweet Potato
(*Ipomoea batatas*)
young tips of the vine leaves.

Sweet Potato Leaves. What a bonus. As well as eating the sweet tubers the young leaves are edible too. The sweet potato makes a great ground cover during summer and has a tendency to take over when planted in fertile, well-watered garden beds. Try steamed, sauteed, stir fried, juiced, boiled, added to salads. They are another good source of fibre, antioxidants, essential vitamins and minerals. magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and other minerals and vitamins.



Warrigal Greens

(Tetragonia tetragonioides)

Warrigal Greens commonly called New Zealand spinach. Grows easily during summer months from seed when other leafy greens struggle and burn. The fleshy dark green leaves make an excellent ground cover and are able to grow well in our highly mineralised water.

Warrigal Greens were first documented by Captain Cook, who picked, cooked and pickled the leaves to help fight scurvy on the Endeavour.

Warrigal greens are rich in antioxidants, protein, B12, fibre, iron and vitamin C.. Try Warrigal green pesto on pasta, gnocchi, frittata or stir fried. Use as a substitute for silver beat and spinach. They should not be eaten raw as they are rich in oxalates which may cause damage to the liver.

All these plants are self-sewn except for the garlic chives. They have been growing successfully for many years on drip irrigation in the tunnel garden during our hot dry summers.

Wildflowers

Unfortunately, the wildflower season was very limited this year due to a very dry winter. Here are a few snap shots from around the settlement and south.



Pia Wadjarri School Developments

Landscaping & Development Works

A few pics from recent landscaping and development works in progress at Pia.



Landscape works with fire pit & river bed



Free book box for books to share or use



PIA WADJARRI RCS NEWSLETTER



NEW PLAYGROUND RIVER SAND

Squires' Earthmoving Works in partnership with Murchison Shire have kindly donated a HUGE amount of river sand to the school. Our outstanding Gardener Gyula and volunteer students have been hard at work this week, and the playground has never looked better.

KANGAROO REPORTS



The Junior class wrote up reports on kangaroos this week, and made a kangaroo puppet to boot!

Everyone put in a lot of effort and did a really good job!! Well done Junior Class!!



CAREERS ROADSHOW CIRCUS, WOODWORK AND CAMERAS OH MY!



SIDE visited the school last week to run three fun and educational workshops for our senior students. The students got to experience circus work, music and film and woodwork. Everyone found it engaging and thought provoking for their future endeavours.



NEW UNIFORMS



Pia Students have been provided a new uniform and they look amazing! Please ensure their shirts are packed and ready for camp next week.



PIA WADJARRI SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

At this weeks assembly, several amazing students were awarded Barndi certificates, to acknowledge all their incredible work so far this term.

Well done to everyone!!



SWIM CAMP

Friendly reminder that **NEXT WEEK** is Pia Wadjarri RCS Swimming Camp to Geraldton! Itineraries have been sent home with students so you can start packing now. Please ensure students are packed and at school by **7:20am** ready for a departure at **7:30am**. With heaps of fun (and educational) activities planned, we hope everyone is getting excited!

MORE OF WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:



MORE OF WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:





Ancient Lands Brilliant skies



www.murchisongeoregion.com Google Play, Apple Store to download app

The Murchison GeoRegion and Aspiring Geopark was launched three years ago on 18th September 2020. With its remarkable "one of a kind" geology underpinning natural landscapes with overarching dark night skies, unique biodiversity and culture, it was recognised that the opportunity existed to open up experiences to a growing national, and international, multi-million dollar geotourism market.

Forming the first geotrail, an initial 21 key geological sites were identified across the seven shires of Murchison, Meekatharra, Yalgoo, Mount Magnet, Cue, Sandstone and Wiluna to draw people through the Murchison GeoRegion and into each community. This geotrail is currently being expanded in response to feedback from visitors, who are asking for more geosites and also, more local information, at Visitor Centres, about some of the inaccessible geosites.

The Murchison GeoRegion Project Working Group (MGR PWG), with representatives from each of the seven local governments, is currently working towards incorporation.

PWG members chose incorporation as the preferred governance model for MGR. As the only legal requirement for a UNESCO global geopark, this will place the MGR in a good position for future geopark development.



Errabiddy Bluff



2023 Australian Earth Sciences Convention Australian Geoparks Network. Board Members: Chair, Prof Ross Dowling, Karen Morrissey (MGR Project Officer), Prof Patrick James. www.australiangeoparksnetwork.org

Geoparks are different to georegions and geotrails. Unlike other designated parks, geoparks don't influence land titles, have no requirement for legislation and are grass roots led community organisations. Geoparks are like Regional Tourism Organisations in that they do not affect land tenure (as confirmed by WA Lands Department) but rather, are marketing and promotional organisations which are known to grow local businesses and create employment in rural and remote regions.

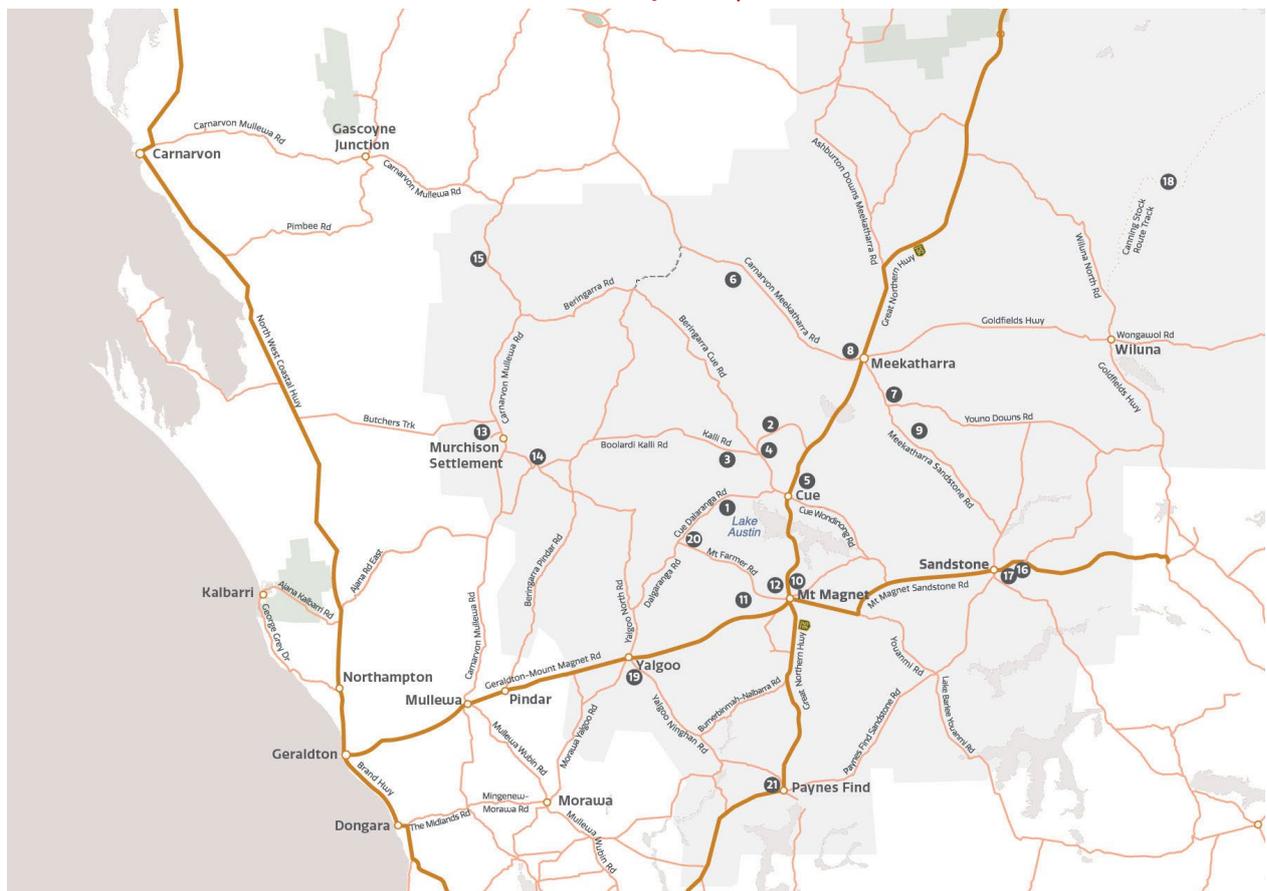
Australasia's first UNESCO Global Geopark, NZ's Waitaki Whitestone Geopark, was declared earlier this year and covers some active farming land.

Pronounced "Australia's first major geotourism development", the Murchison GeoRegion is one

of three geotourism projects aiming to be nominated as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark - noted in Thrive 2030, Australia's national strategy for the long term sustainable growth of the visitor economy. As a case study, the Murchison GeoRegion has a seat on the National Geotourism Strategy Working Group 2, designed to support orderly development including pathways for identifying and implementing major geotourism projects.

With its various plans completed or underway, and incorporation imminent, the Murchison GeoRegion is another step closer to stakeholder engagement 2024.

Murchison GeoRegion Map



- | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Walga Rock | 5 Garden Granite Rock | 9 Barlagani Rock | 13 Errabiddy Bluff | 17 The Brewery |
| 2 Wilgie Mia | 6 Jack Hills | 10 The Granites | 14 Wooleen Lake | 18 Shoemaker Crater |
| 3 Poona | 7 Mount Yagahong | 11 Boogardie Orbicular Granite | 15 Bilung Pool | 19 Jokers Tunnel |
| 4 Afghan Rock | 8 Peace George | 12 The Amphitheatre | 16 London Bridge | 20 Dalgara Crater |
| | | | | 21 Paynes Find Battery |



**Southern Rangelands
PASTORAL ALLIANCE**

info@srpa.org.au • www.srpa.org.au



The Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance (SRPA) is a non-profit incorporated community association governed by a Board of 9 members, all pastoralists in the Southern Rangelands, which encompasses all of the land area south of the Pilbara, excluding the Agricultural Zone of the South-West Land Division.

SRPA Aims

To provide leadership and support for sustainable pastoral production and diversification in the Southern Rangelands.

SRPA Vision

Connected,
Producer-Driven,
Healthy Landscapes,
Better Business

SRPA Vision

To lead change by sharing knowledge and facilitating research and innovation based on industry needs

Murchison Shire is one of the early financial supporters of the SRPA.

What has the Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance been up to?

SRPA has now been in existence for 3 years – time flies!

We continue to roll out the Bullseye 2 Livestock Productivity project (funded by Meat & Livestock Australia). Participants span the region from the Upper Gascoyne to near Kalgoorlie.

As part of this project we had RCS from Queensland deliver the well-known Grazing for Profit workshop. This week-long workshop was held in Geraldton and attended by 17 people. Feedback on this very intensive workshop was all positive and we look forward to supporting participants with ongoing mentoring and training activities.

Our Innovation Grants funded projects have now been finalised. These were the Drone-Mounted Species Recognition project and the Automated Technology to Assess Natural Capital project. Both of these projects were designed to trial new and exciting technological solutions to management activities on pastoral leases. As such, each project faced problems which had to be addressed. Reports on these projects can be found on the SRPA website (www.srpa.org.au).

Our podcasts and videos created in 2022 by the girls from GenerationAG were very popular. Building on that success we have commissioned

Dragonfly Media from Geraldton to create four more property-specific feature videos. Two of these have been completed and will soon be available on our website and social media pages (Linked In and Facebook), with the remaining two to be filmed and produced in 2024.

The very dry season combined with depressed livestock markets are creating huge challenges for our pastoralists. To this end, we have recently held information webinars on livestock nutrition with Desiree Jackson. We have also had an update from Jack Nixon (of DPIRD) on the NLIS requirements (National Livestock Identification System) for livestock. Another webinar from Processworx focussed on HR and occupational health and safety.

Our annual Pastoral Industry Forum was held in Mt Magnet on Thursday 12th October this year. The theme for the day was “Technology in the Southern Rangelands” and featured a very diverse collection of speakers. Topics ranged from virtual fencing and drone monitoring to carbon markets and lizard microbiomes!

If anyone would like more information about topics presented on the day, or contacts to the speakers, please contact Executive Officer – Margi Weir – on 0408 210 285 or info@srpa.org.au.

The year ahead promises to be a busy one, with more field trips, workshops and training in the pipeline, plus some new ideas that have yet to be formulated into projects. As always, in you have any queries or suggestions please contact Margi (as above).



Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon. Jackie Jarvis, who opened the forum, speaking with Debbie Dowden of Challa Station.



Tom Foulkes-Taylor, Yuin Station, Blair Allen and Jared Ridley, Kirkalocka Station, Klint Breese, Yarraquin Station



Debbie Dowden gave the welcome address



Gemma Cripps, Gabyon Station, Wendy Hoseason-Smith, Dairy Creek Station, Gemma Oldfield, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Kate Griffiths, Edjudina Station.



Darren Cousins, Hillview Station and Martin King, Austin Downs Station.



Karel Eringa, DPLH, Ray Hoseason-Smith, Dairy Creek Station, Damien Priest, DPIRD, Carnarvon, Meja Aldrich, DPIRD, Geraldton



Attendees at the Pastoral Industry Forum 2023

Shire Wild Dogs Donkeys & Camels Snapshot

The Shire of Murchison has been operating a financial assistance program by way of a bounty scheme for the destruction of Wild Dogs Donkeys Camels since 2014.

The graphs below show numbers not \$ and are in reality a catchup of the past. They exclude efforts from the CRBA nor any other activities.

Analysis is still "work in progress" which the Shire's Wild Dog Working Group will be involved in working with moving forward but provide a good "snapshot".



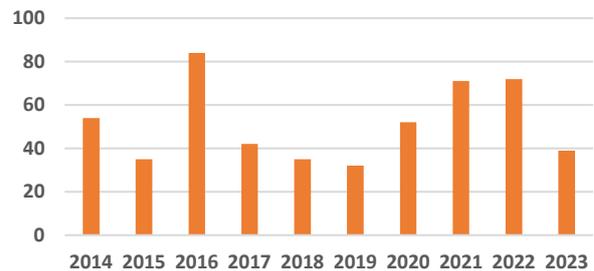
Ewan Crook from VENCE virtual fencing



Dean Revell, CEO, Select Carbon, Perth



Shire Wild Dogs Bounty Scheme No's



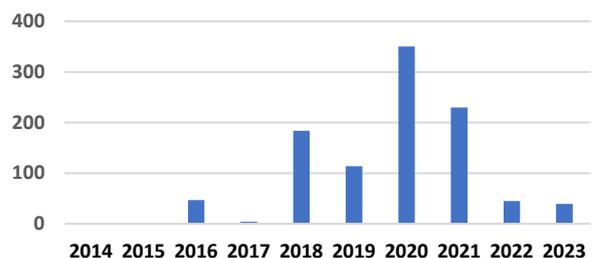
The On Farm Connectivity Program provides eligible Equipment Suppliers with up to \$30,000 rebate for sales of digital farming technology to eligible Primary Producers to help improve their connectivity and productivity.

Applications close 31 May 2024 or until funding is exhausted, whichever occurs first.

Full details are located at <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/on-farm-connectivity-program>



Shire Wild Donkeys & Camels Bounty Scheme No's



Shire Recruitments

Murchison Shire might be small in population, but we are big in size and heart.

Located some 300km from Geraldton and 650km from Perth, Murchison Settlement is entirely Council managed. Council office, depot, housing, power and water supply, community and recreation facilities, Roadhouse and Caravan Park are now all under our umbrella.

The Shire has a revamped community focus and a raft of new projects to implement. As with all councils, especially small ones, this very much depends on the skills and capabilities of each individual. In our instance we have additional housing costs and considerations which means that where we can have more than one staff member employed and reside in one house the operational costs reduce.

This situation may apply to some of the current vacant positions we have on offer, which due to unusual circumstances are larger in number than is normal.

We are currently seeking the following.

Administration & Roadhouse

Community Role (New Role)

Finance / Admin Officer (New position)

Casual Roadhouse Customer Services Officers and Cleaning Staff used during the year & often required

Works

Mechanic (Replacement position)

Gardener (New position)

Plant Operator Construction (Replacement position)

Plant Operator Maintenance (Replacement position)

Further information about these positions can be obtained by contacting the Shire Office on 08 9963 7999 or email admin@murchison.wa.gov.au

There is no specific closing date, but applications will be considered as soon as practicable, otherwise a mid-January 2024 outcome is being aimed for.

Christmas - Office & Roadhouse Closure

In line with previous years well established practice, the Shire Office will be closed from Monday 18 December 2023 and reopening on Tuesday 2 January 2024, after the Monday 1 January 2024 public holiday.



The Murchison Oasis Roadhouse and Caravan Park will be closed in line with Office Hours.

Public toilets will remain open, and fuel will be available with 24-hour access to fuel bowser with card swipe facility.

Travelling Precautions

We would like to take this opportunity to send out a safety precaution reminder to all travelling our region to:

- ~ Carry Adequate Fuel, Water, Food Supplies, Spare Tyres & Road Maps.
- ~ Carry a Satellite Phone.
- ~ Carry First Aid Kit.
- ~ Beware of Stock and Wildlife on Roads - Avoid Night Driving.
- ~ Drive to Conditions.
- ~ Do Not Camp in Waterways – Flash Floods Can Occur Without Warning.
- ~ Remain with the Vehicle in the Event of Mechanical Breakdown

For a medical emergency call the Royal Flying Doctor Service on 08 9417 6389 or 1800 625 800



Community Information

Financial Assistance for Primary Producers



Nicole Graham, who is the Farm Household Case Officer for Services Australia has provided an introduction as one of Two Farm Household Contact officers located in Western Australia. This is to advise of a program for assistance that is available to assist Farmers and their families by offering Financial assistance and support to those experiencing financial hardship.

The program supports farmers to improve their financial self-reliance.

There are 5 key support elements to the program:

- 1 A fortnightly income support payment.
- 2 Ancillary allowances (e.g. rent assistance, telephone, pharmaceutical) and a Health Care Card.
- 3 Case support from a Farm Household Case Officer (FHCO).
- 4 A financial assessment of the farm enterprise worth up to \$1,500.
- 5 \$10,000 activity supplement (lifetime capped) to help develop skills, access training and pay for advice to increase the capacity for financial self-reliance.

Nicole's contact details information links to Services Australia and Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry websites below.

[Farm Household Allowance - Services Australia](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/search?search_api_fulltext=farm+household+allowance)

https://www.agriculture.gov.au/search?search_api_fulltext=farm+household+allowance

Nicole Graham,
Farm Household Case Officer
Nicole.Graham@servicesaustralia.gov.au
Phone: 08 949 39606 Ext: 939606 Mob: 0436 847 333
WA/QLD Community Engagement Hub
Zone WA
Face to Face division

SERVICES AUSTRALIA
servicesaustralia.gov.au

Rechargeable Battery Risks



Government of Western Australia
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety



Consumer Watch

Consumer Protection 50-52 Durlacher Street, Geraldton WA 6530
Tel: (08) 9920 9800
Email: candice.evans@dmirs.wa.gov.au

Know your rechargeable battery risks

If you have a mobile phone, laptop, electric toothbrush, e-scooter, e-bike, any power tools, or solar power backup storage, you need to know how to reduce potentially deadly fire risks lurking in their batteries.

These common household items use rechargeable lithium-ion batteries which can be highly flammable. If these batteries are used incorrectly, or are damaged, they can overheat, explode and cause fires that can be dangerous and difficult to extinguish.

House fires, burns, chemical exposure, smoke inhalation and property damage have all been reported in connection with lithium-ion battery charging. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) saw a 92% increase in reported lithium-ion battery-related incidents in 2022 compared to 2020.

But you can take simple steps to reduce the risks, such as only using the charger recommended for the battery, unplugging products when they're fully charged, and charging batteries in a cool and dry place out of direct sunlight and away from combustible materials like beds, lounges or carpets.

If your batteries overheat, appear to be swelling, or leak or vent gas, stop using them immediately, and never use damaged charging cables.

Disposal of these batteries also poses problems because the batteries can catch fire if they're crushed, or exposed to heat or moisture in rubbish trucks, household rubbish, or waste facilities. [Recycle Right](https://recycleright.wa.gov.au) at recycleright.wa.gov.au can help you find your closest drop-off point to dispose of lithium-ion batteries safely.

Lithium-ion batteries play a vital role in helping to achieve Australia's transition to net zero emissions. But the safety of those using these batteries is paramount. The ACCC is recommending national regulations around testing, labelling and storage of these batteries to better protect consumers.

In the meantime, you can increase your safety by following Product Safety Australia's easy and [practical guide](#) to understanding and managing the risks of lithium-ion battery fires at productsafety.gov.au

Take Care when Giving to Charity



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety



Consumer Watch Column

Consumer Protection 50-52 Durlacher Street, Geraldton WA 6530

Tel: (08) 9920 9800

Email: candice.evans@dmirs.wa.gov.au

Christmas plea to take care when giving to charity

As the festive season unfolds, the spirit of giving comes alive, prompting many of us to extend a helping hand to our community through charitable donations.

Before opening your wallet to support a cause close to your heart, it's important to watch out for scams and ask questions to find out if your full donation will be passed on.

Scammers may pose as a real charity or a cause that appeals to consumers, while third-party collectors usually receive a fee for every donation they secure. Online fundraising platforms may also charge a fee for their services, which in some cases can significantly impact on the value of your donation.

Whether you're approached at your doorstep, in a shopping centre, or over the phone, ask the collector if they are from the licensed charity itself and will receive your donation in full, or through a third-party collector who will likely take a fee.

Another benefit of dealing directly with your chosen charity, rather than through third-party collectors, is you avoid exposing your personal or financial details to an additional source. Protecting your information as much as possible during this time of frequent data breaches will go a long way to stop it falling into the wrong hands.

According to national ScamWatch figures, Australians lost \$418,132 to fake charity scams, up 121 per cent on losses from 2021.

Scammers may seek to target victims via unsolicited emails, text messages and social media posts, so the best advice is to 'practice the pause', avoid clicking on any links and opt for safer methods, such as finding the charity's official website through a search engine or the charity register.

For face-to-face collections, legitimate representatives should carry an identity badge or document naming the charity and displaying the WA licence number. They must provide a receipt containing this information, and any cash collection boxes should be securely sealed.

To verify the legitimacy of a charity or not-for-profit organisation, consult the [licensed charity register](#) on our website at www.consumerprotection.wa.gov.au. The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) also maintains a [public register](#), providing official websites and contact details for all registered charities in Australia.

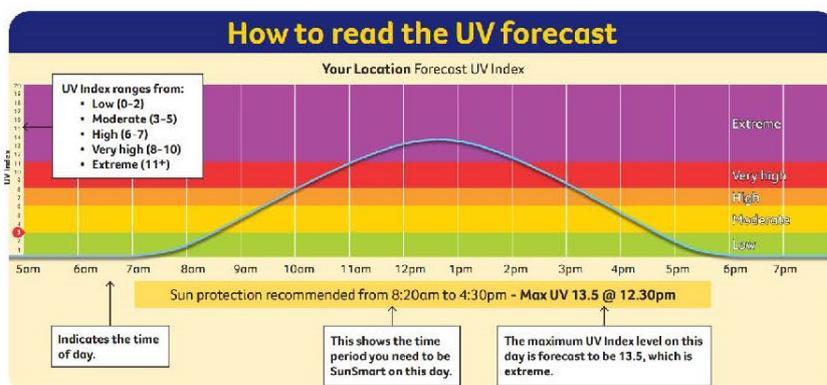
How to be SunSmart



Leigh Bright
Mid West Regional Education Officer
Cancer Council Western Australia
Leigh_Bright@cancerwa.asn.au
cancerwa.asn.au

How to be SunSmart

Australia is the skin cancer capital of the world. Two in three Australians will develop skin cancer in their lifetime, and every year around 2,000 people die from this disease. The good news is that skin cancer is largely preventable by minimising exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Being SunSmart is a simple and effective way to reduce your risk of developing skin cancer.



There's more to sun protection than sunscreen. Protect yourself in **five** ways:

- Slip** on sun protective clothing
- Slop** on SPF 30 (or higher) sunscreen
- Slap** on a broad-brimmed hat
- Seek** shade
- Slide** on wrap-around sunglasses

Find Skin Cancer Early

Common skin cancer symptoms:

- A new spot or mole on your skin that is red, pale or pearly in colour
- A spot that is different from other spots on your skin
- Any crusty or non-healing sores
- Any spots, freckles or any moles changing in size (width), thickness (height), colour, or shape

Get to know your skin and what's normal for you, particularly if you're over 40 years of age. If you notice any of these symptoms or any other unusual changes tell you doctor without delay.

If it's skin cancer, the earlier it's found, the greater the chance of successful treatment.

Visit <https://www.findcancerearly.com.au/cancer-symptoms/skin-cancer/> for more information.



When UV is 3 or above be SunSmart.

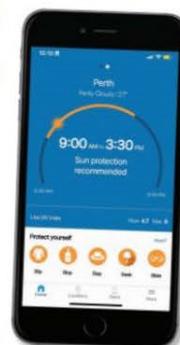
But how do you know when?

Use the free SunSmart Global UV App!

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer. UV cannot be seen or felt and can damage your skin on cool or cloudy days. The sun protection times tell you when UV is forecast to reach 3 and above, **that's the time to be SunSmart.**



Scan to download the SunSmart app



Download the app or go to myUV.com.au



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

Call us on 13 11 20
findcancerearly.com.au



You are invited to the Murchison Sports Club for our annual community

Christmas Tree

DATE: Saturday, Dec 16

We will kick off at 2.15pm for various community meetings, followed by Father Christmas @5pm then dinner.

THE MURCHISON SHIRE AND MAC WILL PROVIDE MEAT & BREAD ETC. PLEASE BRING A SALAD TO SHARE FOR DINNER AND SOMETHING FOR AFTERNOON SMOKO

JOIN IN THE FUN OF A KRIS KRINGLE WITH A GREEN THEMED, GENDER-NEUTRAL GIFT (NO BRIC-A-BRAC PLEASE) - HOMEMADE OR APPROX \$10 IN VALUE

12.00 noon	Ordinary Council Meeting held in the Council Chambers
Arrive 2.15 for a 2.30 start for	Meetings in the Community Meeting Room
2.30 to 3.30	Sports Club Meeting
3.30 to 3.45	Smoko
3.45 to 4.20	Bushfire Brigade Meeting
4.20 to 5.15	Community Meeting



