



Our Shire – A Brief History

The Shire of Mt Marshall comprises an area of 10,134 km² and is located within the north eastern wheatbelt area of Western Australia. Some general statistics for the year ending 30 June 2016 were -

<i>Area (km²)</i>	<i>10,134</i>
<i>Population (2016 census)</i>	<i>527</i>
<i>Km Roads</i>	<i>Unsealed 1,440</i>
<i>Km Roads</i>	<i>Sealed 307</i>
<i>Townsites</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Centres</i>	<i>Bencubbin, Beacon</i>
<i>Density (Persons/km²)</i>	<i>0.052</i>

The Shire is approximately 273 kilometres north east of Perth and has borders with the Shires of Trayning, Koorda, Mukinbudin, Yalgoo, Dalwallinu, Westonia, Yilgarn, Wyalkatchem, Sandstone and Menzies. The area is primarily wheat, coarse grain, cattle and sheep farming district. There are many points of interest all serviced by the two main centres, Bencubbin and Beacon.

In 1836 the Surveyor General Captain John Septimus Roe led a 40 day expedition out into the unknown areas east of the settled districts of the Avon Valley. Mt Marshall and Lake McDermott were named after Captain Marshall McDermott, an early settler to the Swan River Colony. Graziers and people looking to harvest Sandalwood were the first European settlers in the Mt Marshall area. The first grazing lease was taken up in 1868. Sandalwood was taken from the district from the 1880's through to the 1920's. Permanent settlement and development of the land for farms commenced around 1910. Prior to 1923 the area was part of the Ninghan Road District. In June 1923 the Mt Marshall Road District was gazetted.

By 1929 the Waddouring Rock catchment dam opened and water was made available to the townsites of Bencubbin and Gabbin. The estimated population of the district at that time was 2,200 people. Development extended to the northern area of the Shire and in 1930 the railway was extended from Burakin to Bonnie Rock. Beacon and Wialki Primary Schools opened in 1932.

The 1930 depression and a series of drought years during that period resulted in over a hundred farms being forfeited to the Crown. By 1940 the population had dropped to 1,260 in the space of ten years. The 1940-45 war years resulted in very slow growth in the district due to a shortage of labour and the rationing of fuel and other necessary commodities. During the 1950's more farms were developed and the population was 1,000 by 1959. The sheep and grain production increased and there was a decrease in the stigma of the 'marginal' label.

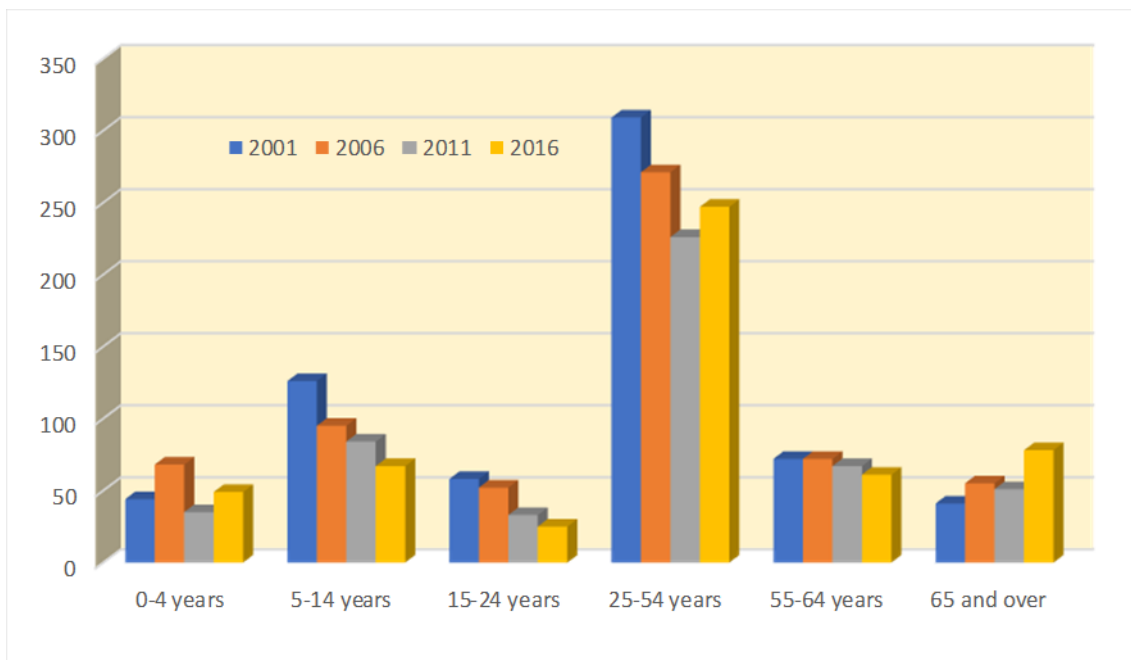
The Road Board became the Mt Marshall Shire Council in 1960 and in the next decade there was considerable expansion in the district. It was in this decade that the district expanded to have machinery dealers, 'A' class fuel depots, new shops, housing and sale yards. In addition the Bencubbin power supply was taken over by the State and Beacon was connected to the Comprehensive Water Scheme while Council took over the provision of power to the Beacon town-site. Wheat quotas and the drought of 1969 saw a drop in the population of approximately 250 as farms and businesses declined.



By 1979 the population was estimated at 1,000. Spiralling interest rates during the 1980's brought about a decline in the farms and businesses in the district. The technological explosion of the last twenty years has enabled remote delivery of services and information, which results in the withdrawal of 'shop fronts' and staff from the district and has a snowball effect on the whole community.

The district has experienced a decline in population over the long term and if this trend continues then further declines can be expected in the services and facilities available to the community. The Shire's population has been in steady decline in the last 15 years, however the 2016 census saw a reversal of this long-term trend.

Population data from the 2016 census shows the district has increased from 496 to 527 (6.25%). Of the 527 people 54.1% were male and 45.9% were female. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.0% of the population. The median age has risen from 35 to 42 in the last 10 years.



Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 22.1% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 14.8% of the population. Some 25.1% of people were attending an educational institution. Of these, 39.7% were in primary school, 8.4% in secondary school and 8.4% in a tertiary or technical institution.

The 2016 census has also provided demographic information by suburb or locality with the localities of Beacon (160 persons), Bencubbin (242 persons) and 125 persons in the surrounding localities.

Previous forecasts by the Australian Bureau of Statistics had forecast a decline in the population for the Shire of Mt Marshall. The 2016 census showed a reversal of previous trends.

Our Vision

Build an active, safe and vibrant community with shared social values based on mutual respect and fairness

We will enhance our community through individual commitment, partnerships and community involvement to enhance our way of life. Our natural assets are valued, protected and enhanced for future generations.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN



Our services and facilities will be provided equitably, efficiently and effectively to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

We will advocate on behalf of our community to position our Shire with key stakeholders that will support our success and growth.

We will be transparent, display good governance and manage our customer service commitments within our resources.

We are determined to be solution focused, proactively seeking innovative partnerships, working collaboratively with stakeholders and industry to enable growth and ensure that our Shire is sustainable.

The following objectives and strategies have been presented under four main categories; Community; Economy; Environment (Built and Natural); Governance and Leadership

The NEWROC Regional Alliance

The Shire of Mt Marshall is a member of the NEWROC Alliance consisting of 7 Local Governments within the north east wheatbelt. The Mt Marshall Strategic Community Plan compliments the NEWROC Strategic Plan which summarises regional priorities and is available on the Shire web-site.

Key Statistics for the NEWROC Alliance

Criteria	Dowerin	Koorda	Mt Marshall	Mukinbudin	Nungarin	Trayning	Wyalkatchem
Area (Sq km's)	1867	2662	10,134	3414	1145	1632	1743
Sealed Roads (km)	196	245	307	204	249	181	175
Unsealed Roads (km)	773	840	1440	732	390	594	508
Population	697	414	550	555	240	423	523
No of Dwellings	410	298	350	315	134	255	332
No of Employees	34	19	27	27	10	14	14



How We Developed this Document

Our Strategic Community Plan reinforces our commitment to the people who live, work and visit our shire and to regional co-operation and prosperity. The purpose of this document is to provide a clear purpose and strategic direction for our Shire, and to reinforce our commitment to regional co-operation in order to source the funding and support required to address the regional and local priorities detailed later in this document.

It was developed based on

_The State Government's Blueprint for the region and other relevant policies, plans and strategies from both the State and Federal Governments.

_Extensive community engagement on what is important to the people that live within our Shire.

_Input from Elected Members and Staff based on feedback they have received and their strong desire to deliver positive outcomes for their community.

_Current partnerships and projects already being delivered.

Progress Reporting

The Shire of Mt Marshall has adopted a traffic light based Quarterly Update to report progress against the priorities as detailed in the Corporate Business Plan which will be shared via a Council Item. In addition, results are formally communicated to the community annually via the legislated Annual Report

IPR Reviews

This Strategic Community Plan will be subjected to a minor review in 2022 and a major review requiring extensive community engagement in 2024 as legislated.

In addition, the Corporate Business Plan will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect any changes to the regional or local priorities, the budget and to service levels.

Summary of Community Engagement

Engagement Group	Date	Venue	Attendees
Beacon Parents	9 Sep 2020	Beacon Sports Complex	5
Beacon Community Forum	8 Sep 2020	Beacon Sports Complex	33
Bencubbin Seniors	8 Sep 2020	Shire Offices	5
Bencubbin Community Forum	9 Sep 2020	Bencubbin Sports Complex	7
Community Survey	31 Aug-21 Sep	On-line	21
Community Survey	31 Aug-21 Sep	Hard Copy	51
Elected Member Forum	9 Sep 2020	Shire Offices	7
Total Reach			129



Community Feedback

Strategic Priorities

Community members were asked to rank the following strategic priorities in order of importance to them with the resulting order being.

1. Healthcare Services
2. Telecommunications and Mobile Coverage
3. Business Attraction and Retention
4. Tourism and Events
5. Alternate/Back Up Energy
6. Childcare Services
7. Volunteer Co-ordination & Support
8. Regional Co-operation
9. Regional Waste Facility

Emerging Issues

The following provides a summary of emerging issues raised by community members based on the community survey and engagement activities conducted. These issues are addressed in the Strategic Priorities on the next page with planned initiatives to address each priority detailed in the Shire Corporate Business Plan.

- Concerns with a shrinking population and the potential impact on this could have on community facilities and services
- Concerns with equity in facilities and services
- The need to source funding for an attraction in Beacon with many residents supporting the concept of a water park.
- The importance of meeting places for residents such as the local shops and clubs
- The importance of retaining current healthcare services within the community
- The importance of day care
- The regular loss of power and telecommunications
- The number of communication blackspots particularly in rural areas
- The potential for recreational tourism such as cycling tours in spring
- The need to improve the safety of existing footpaths and to expand the footpath network
- The potential to upgrade and expand the capacity of Shire Caravan Parks
- Families leaving the region due to a lack of education opportunities

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN



Community Priorities

Priority	We know we are succeeding when
Community	
Deliver programs and services that engage with the wider community and engender community spirit	People from all walks of life and backgrounds feel motivated to contribute
Support and maintain facilities that connect people, promote a healthy community and are appropriate for residents	Community surveys indicate high satisfaction with the facilities provided by the Shire
Encourage and support volunteers and community groups to grow an active volunteer base that feels valued	Volunteering and participation in community groups is maintained or increases.
Economy	
Work with local business and other stakeholders to attract investment; create jobs and support business growth	There is an increase in business activity and employment within the Shire
Encourage, promote, and deliver activities and events that promote our region and have a positive economic and social benefit	The Shire regularly hosts activities and events which attract positive feedback.
Continue to work with regional partners to advocate for improved energy reliability and telecommunications coverage	There are fewer power and telecommunications disruptions and increased access to mobile and high speed communications
Environment (Built and Natural)	
Deliver sustainable long-term planning for infrastructure that meets the needs of the community	Maintenance and renewal of Shire assets is environmentally and financially sustainable
Design, construct and maintain infrastructure in a manner that maximise its life, capacity, and function	Shire facilities and assets continue to function effectively as they age
Deliver a sustainable and progressive approach to waste management including continued collaboration with neighbouring local governments	Waste services across the region are delivered in a sustainable and cost-effective manner
Governance and Leadership	
Work with groups from across the community to address their concerns regarding equity in facilities and services	Residents and community groups believe they are being listened to and fairly treated
Provide informed and transparent decision making that, meets our legal obligations, reflect the level of associated risk, and are adequately explained to community	The Shire is viewed as a Local Government that does what it says it will do
Implement systems and processes that meet our legal and audit obligations and the needs of the community.	External audits and reviews confirm compliance with relevant Local Government legislation