




Merriwa
Bringing *quality* to *life*

Annual Report
2020/21

www.merriwa.org.au



Our Dream:

We are part of a future where people of all abilities reach their potential and they feel respected, happy and confident

Our Purpose:

We provide an environment which encourages people to reach their potential while delivering quality products and services to our customers and clients

Our Values:

The Merriwa team has shared values which result in taking PRIDE in our work and our role in supporting our community

Prosperity

We are prosperous and successful in the provision of our products and services, and having a positive working environment

Responsability

We treat the Merriwa business like it is our own

Integrity

We are honest, ethical and work to high standards

Diversity

We acknowledge that every person has different abilities and we welcome, accept and celebrate our differences

Excellence

We are committed to being the best we can be, everyday, as we serve our clients and our customers

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Board of Directors:



Danny O'Donoghue
Chair



Chris Cunningham
Deputy Chair



Craig Thorp
Treasurer



Libby Hosking
Director



John Joyce
Director

Senior Management Team:



Bart Crawley
Chief Executive Officer



Scott Grant
Leader Business
Development



Jeff Little
Leader Business Services



Jacquie Pavlik
Leader Compliance



Lisbeth Long
Leader Commercial



Colin McClounan
Leader Community

Commercial Divisional

Management Team:



Peter Anderson
Packaging



Maria Wadley
Park Lane Nursery



Mark Umanski
Timbers



Natasha Arnold
Commercial Services
Manager Packaging



Amy Collins
Commercial Services
Manager Timbers





Chair's Report

Merriwa Industries

“There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more.”

Robert M Hensel

It wasn't this quote that motivated me to join the Merriwa Board in 1995 but it certainly is an excellent synopsis of the sentiment that attracted me to Merriwa in the first place and why I am still here.

This reflection about what inspired me to join the great organisation that it is Merriwa Industries Inc, comes at a time when I am about to step aside from the Board Chair position after 10 years in that role.

Our CEO, Bart Crawley, now in his 7th year in that position has overseen a dramatic improvement in every aspect of the organisation's operation. Merriwa has diversified its commercial pursuits including opening a business arm in Wodonga.

Merriwa has reinforced its absolute focus on the people they employ and their aspirations for an enjoyable workplace and a positive future. Merriwa is moving towards a goal where 50% of all work carried out in each operational division will be undertaken by all abilities team members.

Merriwa has strengthened its management team across all divisions, maintained the highest quality standards and has become an Employer of Choice in the North East Region.

Merriwa is reaching out to become more involved in the community by developing partnerships with organisations that share our values such as the Wangaratta District Specialist School.

In my opinion, as biased as it may be, Merriwa Industries is a world class example of a social enterprise focused on the employment and welfare of an all abilities workforce.

I am proud to be playing a small part in the organisation that Merriwa is and as outgoing Chair, I wish the Board of Management and team Merriwa Industries every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danny O'Donoghue', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Danny O'Donoghue

Chair - Board of Management



At Merriwa we have a broad diversification amongst our people:

- Skills
- Ethnicity
- Abilities
- Ages
- Religious Beliefs
- Sexuality

We don't only play lip service to recognising diversity, we celebrate our differences together. We continuously explore ways of creating new opportunities and foster an environment which allows our teams to flourish.

CEO Report

Dear Humans,

You may think this is a strange way to start a script for our annual report but as I begin to write this it is October 2021, and the morning news is reporting Sydney coming out of a 100-day lockdown. Personally, I have never been more aware of the fragility of our species and the power of Mother Nature.

Over the last 22 months in Northeast Victoria alone we have experienced bushfires, a magnitude 5.8 earthquake, flooding, and of course the COVID19 pandemic.

Last year I heard one of the media commentators mention this was Mother Nature's way of reminding Humans of her power and we should start taking more care of our home and each other.

There is a saying "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger". I am happy to report Merriwa has survived, learnt new lessons, acted on those learnings and we are starting to see shoots of growth appear.

The greatest lesson from 2020/21 for me was, how easily when under external pressure from customers, it was to lose sight of our Purpose, or as one of the leading thinkers on Leadership (Simon Sinek) says - our "WHY". Merriwa's "WHY" is to be part of a future where people with disabilities reach their potential and feel safe,

happy and respected. To do this, our "HOW", is we operate a Social Enterprise, meaning we trade in goods and services to create profits to be re-invested to increase our ability to do more. The key ingredient, the place where the magic happens, is within our "Team". At Merriwa our "Team" is made of people with and without disabilities and it is through working together, feeling safe, having empathy for their differences, they learn and grow. So, what happened in 2020 and what have we put in place to correct the imbalance?

What happened in 2020 is demand went off the charts for our goods and services. Customers in the supermarkets were panic buying a range of products and unfortunately for us some of the products were the ones we pack, example - baking and petfood. We experienced growth in our Plant Nursery and Timber businesses but not to the same extreme. The result of the overwhelming demand was our systems did not cope; our business model, which is people and jobs not machines, wasn't equipped for rapid expansion; stress levels went up; and we started making reactive and poor decisions which had a detrimental impact on our people.

Lesson learnt!!



They say the definition of insanity is “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome”, we were determined not to let this happen. In early 2021, through shared problem solving, the Leadership Team identified the following actions:

1. To reach out to each of our key customers and reconnect as to why they do business with Merriwa.
2. The introduction of a tool to assist in decision making. The tool appropriately named Go-NoGo, takes you through a list of questions and required actions to ensure the business activity is a good fit for Merriwa.
3. Using the teaching of Jim Collins, a person considered one of the greatest business minds of the modern era, we introduced the Merriwa Hedgehog and Flywheel. The Hedgehog identifies what Merriwa can be the “Best in the World” at, and the Flywheel sets out each executed step needed to achieve our Hedgehog.
4. The final action was to develop a set of Leadership Guiding Principles to support delivery the leadership required to achieve all the above and more. Merriwa’s Leadership Guiding Principles are - Empathy, Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment, and Integrity.

I would like to thank the Merriwa Team, across all aspects of our wonderfully diverse organization – Packaging, Timbers, Community Services, Park Lane Nursery and the support teams who do an amazing job providing services to each of the Business Divisions.

Thank you to our customers old and new, without you we don’t have a Social Enterprise and it’s through your support we can change people’s lives.

Finally, to the wonderful leaders of our organisation, it’s times like these when you find out how good the team is, and we have a Great One!! The future of Merriwa will be full of challenges and opportunity and I am confident with your care and leadership, the best is yet to come.



Bart Crawley
CEO

Commercial Operations

2020/21

The last 12 months has been another incredible period in Merriwa's inspiring journey. By the start of the financial year we had farewelled the devastating 2020 bushfires and weathered our first lockdown as a result of the COVID19 pandemic.

Merriwa's people entered the new financial year with determination, optimism and an ever increasing focus on team member mental health and wellbeing, underpinned by respect, compassion, empathy, kindness, inclusion, empowerment and integrity.

However, lockdown 2 (July 2020) was soon upon us and Merriwa's focus on creating a safe work place where our team members felt respected and had purpose resulted in our people and operations exceeding expectations. We were again all challenged as we experienced lockdowns 3 (February 2021) and 4 (May 2021).

Throughout these turbulent and often unsettling times, all of our team members continued to rise to face the challenges presented, and have created and embraced the opportunities as a result. Our team members' belief that their work place was safe and that they were valued and cared for meant that Merriwa experienced very little business interruption as everyone continued to engage with optimism and resilience.

Despite the momentous events that Merriwa has faced over the past 12 months, along with the broader community in which we serve, Merriwa's growth across all operations placed exciting, and at times, daunting demands on team members.

2020/21 saw the consolidation of the operational entities of Merriwa coming together to form the Commercial Operations group. Those entities include Contract Packaging, Contract Process Packaging, Timbers and our Retail and Production Nursery operations.

The Commercial Group has worked hard to deliver a significant number of goals directly supporting Merriwa's FY21 Strategic Plan. In doing so, we learnt that our people are determined, resilient, optimistic and passionate.

In the face of challenge and change our people have adapted, responded and been flexible as they have risen to, met and achieved beyond all of our expectations. Our people have taught the Merriwa leadership group much about the importance of trust, respect, compassion, empathy, kindness, inclusion, empowerment and integrity, first and foremost above all else.

We have all learnt that mistakes are an opportunity for learning and growth, and if we are open, transparent and ask for our team members' understanding and support, we can very quickly, not only get back on track, but get even better.

In addition, and most excitingly, throughout this financial year, despite the swings in demand, pace of change and increased complexity within the operations, not only were we able to achieve record levels of all abilities employment, we were also able to commence our new programs designed to advance our team members professionally and personally.

New training was introduced to Merriwa and was made available to all team members. We had a very strong participation rate with 36 team members electing to undertake the following courses:

- Certificate II in Food Processing
- Certificate III in Food Processing
- Certificate II in Warehousing Operations
- Certificate III in Warehousing Operations
- Certificate IV in Leadership and Management



23% of the participants in the above courses were all abilities team members. A further 14 current team members commenced and completed their Certificate I in Work Education, with 88% of all abilities team member participation.

Investing in our community is also an important tenant of Merriwa's operations and the Commercial group supported 27 gap year students who participated in programs ranging from 6 weeks to 12 months. Those students that committed to full time employment over 12 months, also achieved Certificate level qualifications.

The focus for 2021/22 in the Commercial Operations can be simply captured as being one of leadership and learning with, and for, our people. Our team comprises very talented, skilled and valued team members delivering to their personal best, across the diverse businesses of Contract Packaging, Contract Process Packaging, Timbers and our Retail and Production Nursery operations.

Standards and expectations of ourselves and all our leaders will continue to be raised, consistent with our learnings and progress this past 12 months. With this understanding in the forefront of our minds, the goals for the Commercial Operations team, which will also support the achievement of Merriwa's FY22 strategic goals, will be to:

- Continue to progress Merriwa's leadership capacity and effectiveness through embedding Merriwa's Leadership Guiding Principles, embracing the concept of leaders in every seat, and achieving consistency in the application of agreed leadership, mentoring, teaching and personal development standards
- Increase our all abilities workforce to achieve 50% of hours worked in every division of the Commercial operations
- Through our leadership that will demonstrate empathy, respect, inclusion, empowerment and integrity, deliver measurable employee engagement results beyond 75%, where people feel safe, respected and included
- Improve sustainability through increased sales; improved production planning and delivery through continuous improvement; revenue growth; personal and professional development; and realisation of people's value and contribution to growth opportunities

None of the achievements, learnings and progress of the past 12 months, during the incredibly difficult and tough times of pandemic, lockdowns, and significant business challenges and growth, would have been possible without the invaluable support and contribution of our dynamic, energetic and engaged team members that are Merriwa's heart and soul, and very reason for being.

The dedication and passion of our team members in making such a valued contribution to the organisation is all part of how and why Merriwa is able to continue on its journey of delivering its dream of being part of a future where people of all abilities and indeed, every team member, reaches their potential and they feel respected, safe, confident and can reach their personal best. It is also incredibly humbling and for that, we express our thanks and gratitude to all our team members that make Merriwa possible. We are filled with great joy, excitement and optimism as we face whatever 2021/22 brings our way.

Lisbeth Long
Leader Commercial

Contract Packaging

Wodonga and Wangaratta



Our Contract Packaging operations located in both Wangaratta and Wodonga have had an eventful and productive year. As our communities and customers we serve adjusted to meet increased demand for petfood as a result of working from home and other lockdown requirements, our teams faced incredible and unprecedented increases in demand.

Our workforce numbers prior to Christmas 2020 swelled by 25% as we responded to the demand uplift and afternoon shifts and overtime were implemented for a period of 2 months. Our teams rose to the occasion and managed through the inevitable changes, remaining calm and focussed, and ensuring each other's, and their own, wellbeing, mental health and safety remained a priority. Throughout this period our focus did not waver from remaining true to our vision and purpose of being an employer for people of all abilities where people can be safe and respected at work, in a role that has purpose and contributes meaningful outcomes and that they are cared for and valued. We exceeded our all abilities employment targets, even during the rapid recruitment phase, and all our team members remained engaged and contributed to the new work patterns with aplomb.



In addition to serving our team members and our communities, Merriwa remained focussed on serving its customers. It was a difficult time for all as we navigated through the challenges of rapidly shifting demand and supply scenarios that significantly impacted production and labour scheduling and delivery and financial outcomes. However, the Merriwa team rose to the occasion and delivered against significant continuous improvement goals, while progressing customer relationships through performance that met operational requirements by year end, and negotiated and renewed contracts with increased partnership, collaboration and problem solving bias. In Contract Packaging our early pilot trials on primary packaging (operating in a food room environment) proved enormously successful and with our customers, we continue to grow this packaging opportunity which is experiencing significant projected demand. Meeting and exceeding customer measured KPIs remained a significant focus and pleasingly, by the end of the financial year 2021, this was now being achieved on a consistent and repeatable basis. This is an absolute credit to our dedicated Merriwa team members, who focussed daily on delivering against what we say we will do, with pride and a focus on quality, consistency and performance.

Our focus for Contract Packaging for 2021/22 will be on consolidating and furthering the sales, production and efficiency gains achieved to date. Of course, this is only possible through the investment in our people, their personal and professional development and ensuring the appropriate leadership structures are in place. Our goal this year is to achieve 50% of hours delivered by all abilities team members and Contract Packaging is sharing its skills and experience as a leader in this area with other divisions within the Commercial operations.

We will continue to develop our team members through the next round of training and development Certificate I-IV, leadership and continuous improvement training offerings as well as developing individual plans identifying by team member, their professional development goals. Our focus on team member engagement will deliver clarity on understanding what is expected of team members at work, do they have what they need to do their work well and do they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day. Ensuring recognition and praise for doing good work, being cared about as a person, being heard and having opinions count, having personal development encouraged and being given the opportunity to learn and grow will also be key to achieving our 75% employee engagement target.

Challenging, yet achievable operational and growth targets have been set for the Contract Packaging division, building on our efforts to date and with the support and collaboration with our team members and customers we are confident that 2021/22 will deliver excellent outcomes. Focussing on continuous improvement and use of the Merriwa suite of problem solving tools to deliver improved team member skill levels, equipment uptime and operational uplift we are confident we will provide exciting opportunities for our team members and customers.

Peter Anderson

Divisional Manager Packaging

Natasha Arnold

Commercial Services
Manager Packaging

Contract Processing and Packaging

What an exciting and rewarding year it has been for Contract Process Packaging (CPP). As previously mentioned, the significant complexities delivered by COVID19 resulted in an operation that was stretched and tested to its limits, and yet throughout the financial year exceeded against all expectations. The relatively new, dynamic and energetic production and commercial leadership team, supported by both new and very experienced operational team members worked through demand and supply uncertainty, implementing afternoon shifts and overtime to deliver against rapidly changing and increased customer requirements. These circumstances persisted well into Quarter 3 and placed considerable pressure on the operations.

Our primary customer, Woolworths faced unprecedented demand for its product range packed by Merriwa, which included products exported to New Zealand, another new horizon for us. Raw material supply challenges, changed contract conditions and new operating demands for finished goods further significantly increased the complexity for CPP and its team members. It is fair to say that some of the challenges of 2020/21 are not those that the CPP team and its customers would like to repeat. To the absolute credit of the team, they remained focussed on the core business and went back to basics using the Merriwa suite of problem solving tools to continuously develop, deliver improved equipment utilisation and slowly, yet consistently reduce the production schedule deficit. During this time, significant contract negotiations were completed and these efforts were recognised with an ongoing commitment by Woolworths to its relationship with Merriwa. The new leadership team further built on this commitment and by financial year end had moved into much welcomed, positive territory against all of Merriwa's own internal, and customer measured KPIs.

As per Merriwa's customer goals for this financial year, the relationship moved to one of collaboration, problem solving and solution delivery through our responsive, adaptable, flexible and innovative approach. The can do attitude of our team members and their ongoing skill development also came to the fore, enabling the implementation of new machinery, improved production flow and increased operational capacity. At all times, team member wellbeing and safety remained a priority, and what was particularly impressive, was the genuine welcome and support given to new team members during the rapid recruitment phase required to support the production uplift. In such changing and complex times, a team's culture can often be challenged and even harmed, and yet this was proven not to be the case in CPP. This is a testament to our focus on people, safety, quality, compliance and continuous improvement above all else. By Quarter 4, CPP renewed its commitment to all abilities employment and made significant gains in achieving its goals of successfully providing these team members with employment opportunities in the food rooms.



Proof of this focus was also demonstrated with a number of new customers joining the Merriwa family and growing with us during these times. Our ability to sell additional production capacity for new products not previously packed by Merriwa, was a standout and even better, these customers are absolutely committed to supporting our vision and purpose of providing all abilities employment through meaningful economic and social engagement. During the height of the pandemic, this was a series of opportunities and positive outcomes that could not be under estimated.

As we head into the new financial year, 2021/22 continues to provide exciting horizons for CPP and its team. Our team members are looking forward to continuing to their personal and professional skill development and our leadership team has embraced the challenge of achieving our employee engagement goal of 75% or better, and our all abilities employment target of 50% hours worked. We are confident of securing increased sales and revenue opportunities through selling available production capacity, released as a result of improved production flow, operational efficiencies and equipment uptime.

None of the achievements, learnings and progress of the past 12 months would have been possible without the invaluable support and contribution of our dynamic, energetic and engaged team members that are Merriwa's heart and soul, and very reason for being. The support, dedication and passion of our team members in making such a valued contribution to CPP is all part of how and why Merriwa is able to continue on its journey of delivering on its dream of being part of a future where people of all abilities and indeed, every team member, reaches their potential and they feel respected, safe, confident, able to reach their personal best.

Peter Anderson

Divisional Manager Packaging

Natasha Arnold

Commercial Services
Manager Packaging



Merriwa

Timbers



The financial year 2020/21 has given Merriwa Timber's the highest sales in structural laminated beams since the product was first introduced in 2013. Monthly sales in 2013 were just under \$100k per month. For 2020/21 monthly sales averaged \$400k, with some months resulting in record production outcomes. There was also a healthy order bank throughout the year, with at least 1 month's worth of orders in front of the team.

The Black Summer bushfires saw 24 million hectares of 2019/20 land affected including 8.5 million hectares of forest and plantations. This has led to a shortage of timber within the Australian market. The demand for timber has also increased as part of the Australian Government HomeBuilder program which provided a grant to build a new house, substantially renovate an existing home or buy an off-the-plan home/new home.

As with all business, the impact of COVID19 pandemic was felt throughout. With travel severely restricted, Australians have decided to spend their money on home rebuilds making timber a rare and expensive commodity.



With all these challenges, we have been fortunate to have what other beam manufactures don't - kiln drying facilities. This has led to an increase in GL18 Tas Oak beam production as well as other value added hardwood. It has also allowed us to offer our hardwood beams for larger industrial jobs within Victoria.

Our main goal throughout the last 12 months has been to support our all abilities team to remain strong and work through the challenges that we were all facing due to the pandemic. As work was one of the only social outings that we were able to attend, we wanted to make it an enjoyable place to attend. The team at Timbers showed resilience, compassion to their teammates and worked together exceptionally well.

Factory layout and other improvement initiatives have reduced non value added activities improving our production flow while maintaining a safe environment and high quality product. We have been able to bring our lean training into practice ensuring that problems are worked through and the root cause determined. We have also focused on the process and running production through at a consistent pace which increases productivity, improves equipment up time as well as helps with decision making.

Our team has showed their commitment to Merriwa through a focus on open communication and looking forward. They have all contributed to making Timber's culture one of a kind. Some team members have gone through Emerging Leaders training as well as finishing or commencing other qualifications/certificates including Mental Health First Aid, General Education and Leadership and Management.

The administration and production teams have been able to work together to continue to meet customer demands, and as well as improve the scheduling, communication and feedback processes.

They use different visual management techniques to ensure we continue being inclusive and uncomplicated.

We have commenced working with a new company 3RT that is making a name for themselves in engineered sustainable wood. Through this partnership, we have produced panels, treads, and posts as an alternative to traditional timber. These products have allowed us to increase our all abilities team and diversify our skills and knowledge.

Our continued focus for 2021/22 will be on ensuring our pine feedstock is being supplied to meet the demand for our laminated beams. We do anticipate that feedstock will reach critical levels in the coming year, however we are working with old and new customers to offer a hardwood alternate with the option to treat the hardwood offsite at a facility in Melbourne.

We are also focusing on getting our name and capabilities out into the building industry. Through collaboration with Bowens and other companies we have been able to see our products used in new and innovative ways. We plan to continue to do this, while continuing to be a quality, made to order, beam manufacturer.

And always, and most importantly, we will continue to focus on every member of our team to ensure they feel valued and supported.

Mark Umanski

Divisional Manager Timbers

Amy Collins

Commercial Services
Manager Timbers

Park Lane

Nursery

What a year 2020/21 has been! We expected to have some return to normalcy after the dust settled from last year's bushfires and COVID19 situation. But as we know the changes around COVID19 continued.

Our goals over the last 12 months were to further develop our contract growing opportunities in order to have a more sustainable Production division, to continue to offer an enjoyable experience for our retail customers, and to ensure that our team members always felt safe and valued at work.

As well as these goals, we focussed on reducing our direct material costs and understanding and utilising our labour better.

The result has been a positive Gross Profit when we expected a negative one, and an engaged team who support each other and value their contribution.

Our Production team continue to deliver fantastic plants and outstanding customer service. We have solidified our relationships with new commercial customers by delivering excellent quality advanced stock for their wholesale nurseries, as well as bulk tube stock for large infrastructure improvement planting projects.

We also began working with the Department of Transport and North East Maintenance Alliance to revegetate along the Hume Freeway. This will be an ongoing relationship, with NEMA already discussing next season's order.

We exceeded our order bank again this year (a 214% increase over the last four years), resulting in a delicious hot dog lunch to celebrate!

Park Lane Nursery has been privileged to contribute to the enhancement and healing of our beautiful region by supplying plants to bushfire recovery, and Bush for Birds projects – a legacy we are all proud of.

Our Retail space has been busier, and more challenging than ever. The continued lockdowns have had an impact on our Retail sales, however we certainly made up for it once lockdowns were lifted!

Our team continue to keep the nursery looking gorgeous and well stocked, and continues to offer our new and returning customers a great experience. They have certainly gone above and beyond over the last 12 months – displaying resilience, and deep commitment to our business.

Some of the feed back from our team mates over the last 12 months has been just how much they value working at Park Lane Nursery. There have been periods where we have had to close due to lockdown, and during our regular check ins with team members they have all noted how much they were missing coming to work – it was certainly wonderful when we were all able to come back together again.

Maria Wadley
Divisional Manager
Park Lane Nursery







Quality & Safety

2020/21

2020/21 year has been another year of frustrations, goodbyes, and wins. Lockdowns and separations from teammates and family have been necessary but not easy and has challenged us to look at how we work, stay connected, and care for one another.

We said goodbye to Peter Martin from the Safety Team who we are happy to say is doing well and enjoying his work at GOTAFE Wangaratta. Scott Henthorn also took on a new role with the Packaging Division.

Safety across the divisions has been improving with regards to reporting of Near Misses, however, will still remain a focus area. We continue to work on our COVID19 Safe Plans in this ever-changing world we live in at the moment, with movements across sites restricted to business critical reasons and approved by SLT; and QR code scanning requirements implemented across all sites including MCS houses.

The Quality Team have been really focused on strengthening relationships between existing customers and new customers' quality teams and our own. There has been real progress made with regards to improving communications and resolving ongoing product quality issues, customer complaints etc.

External Audits have been ongoing throughout the year, and we have maintained all our current certifications to the same level, which is a fantastic result and credit to all teams involved.

A real challenge and is still ongoing is our internal audits process and the need to conduct them remotely across all Merriwa sites.

Food Safety relationships between the teams continues to strengthen with regards to team members feeling comfortable in approaching the Quality Team with any food related issues they find. We have introduced an in-house swabbing program to verify immediately that our cleaning processes are working and effective and that the products we pack are safe to eat for the consumer.

We will be focusing on the following areas in the coming year. We will continue to work towards increasing Safety and Quality awareness across all the sites. Within Safety we will be looking to refresh our OH&S meeting forum, increase risk assessment training between the teams, implement regular safety audits across the sites, and continue to support the OH&S Representatives and Management on advancing our safety culture.

The Quality Team will continue to work on customer relationship between the quality teams, maintaining internal audits and assisting with the implementation of the actions, working on our Food Safety Culture and training programs around same.

We look forward to working with each of the Divisional Teams over 2021/22 financial year and to assist them in continuing to focus on Employee Safety, Food Safety and Product Quality.

Jacque Pavlik
Compliance Leader

Community Summary

2020/21

The Merriwa Community Division was formed early in 2021, is led by Colin McClounan and encompasses the following teams:

- The People Engagement team with responsibility for our team member resource management and learning and development
- The Support Services team who support and develop our all abilities team members
- The Community Services team who manage our residential and disability accommodation services
- The Marketing and Communications team who play a key role in connecting us to both our internal Merriwa community and to the broader community and customers

One of the key goals of the Merriwa Community team is to continue to build a culture at Merriwa that we can all be proud to be involved in.

A critical part of developing this culture is to be clear about the standards we set and to build individual leadership capacity to drive those standards.

The development of the 'Merriwa Way' and sharing our Leadership Guiding Principles broadly are two ways in which the Community division are commencing this work.

In 2021/22 we are focussing on building leaders who listen, who follow our Leadership Guiding Principles and display empathy and integrity in their work with their teams. Continuous improvement will guide the process of Listen, Learn, Lead in the coming years as we build on this culture.

The Merriwa Way is the first step towards developing a framework for the Merriwa we want to see through building on Merriwa's Dream and Purpose and ensuring we see the ability in everyone at Merriwa.

Developing standard work across People Engagement to ensure we provide the level of support for our teams is another priority along with building the pipeline of all abilities employment which is at the heart of everything we do.

Colin McClounan
Leader Community





People Engagement and Human Resources

A key focus of the People Engagement team has been managing the ongoing impact of COVID19 on our organisation and ensuring our people feel safe and valued everyday they come to work, while providing opportunities for growth and development for our team. In order to continue to provide the best support for our team while operating in the COVID19 environment, the following initiatives were implemented across all divisions to support mental health and wellbeing;

- Increased Employee Assistance Program (EAP) sessions with local preferred providers across our sites in Wangaratta and Wodonga
- Supporting our working from home initiative/model that was implemented in 2020, particularly around home schooling
- Supporting our team with the everchanging COVID19 environment and Government requirements including, border passes, authorised worker passes and the vaccination process
- Onsite annual Flu Vax rollout was again a big success with 134 team members rolling up their sleeves for their yearly vaccination



We also saw changes to the structure of the People Engagement team in April 2021, which was previously known as People Operations. Lisbeth Long accepted her new position of Leader Commercial, resulting in Natalie Milgate stepping into the role of People Engagement Manager. Further changes to our team saw, Kristyne Van Strijp join the team as HR Coordinator. Her role is to work collaboratively to help our teams identify areas for learning, support, opportunity and goal achievement as a team and as individuals.

Even through the constant change of 2020/21 we were able to continue prioritising learning and development of our people, which saw us deliver the following opportunities;

Success of Emerging Leaders Program 2020/21

At Merriwa we know the importance of encouraging good leadership and we continued the year with a focus on building capacity and the development of our people in this area. Up and coming leaders across Merriwa completed our Emerging Leaders Program which has been a great success and led to further training with our Mentor Learning Program which engaged our Senior Leadership Team.

All Abilities Development with Certificate I in General Education

14 of our all abilities team members across both our Wangaratta and Wodonga divisions successfully completed their Certificate I in General Education. For 6 months, the team members engaged in one 2-hour class per week, during their normal work hours and proved their resilience and adaptability through the year with all of the disruption to learning that COVID19 presented. Some of the topics covered included communication skills, operating digital devices, reading and writing skills and work-related skill development.

Traineeship Program

36 team members across Merriwa undertook nationally recognised traineeships in warehouse operations, food processing, and leadership and management.

The National Food Institute worked with our trainees onsite each fortnight, teaching them concepts and skills to focus on during the next fortnight on-the-job. In order to minimise risk to our team members during lockdowns, our training sessions were conducted remotely via online learning.

MCS Employee Engagement Survey 2021

An annual survey was developed and provided to all Merriwa Community Services (MCS) team members to provide the team the opportunity to rate their experience and provide feedback specific to their roles. The survey allows MCS Leaders to review areas that require additional support, to ensure we are providing quality care to the team and highlights skill development priorities and support requirements.

Ongoing Learning Bites: exploring monthly topics relevant to current workforce environment

A popular initiative at Merriwa has been the introduction of monthly 'Learning Bites' which are held internally and online to cover a range of topics that are current and specific to our work environment. The sessions are short, informative and concise, exploring meaningful topics to provide our people with support tools to enhance learning.

Natalie Milgate
People Engagement Manager

Support Services

2020/21

2020/21 has been challenging, yet at the same time incredibly rewarding and surprising in its own way. The ability for our team members, existing and new, to adapt to their changing workplace shows that they are resilient and well supported. Our team members have come to work where they feel safe, and where COVID19-safe practices are clear and easy to follow. As a team in the workplace, you look at the collective whole and though it's been interesting, it's predominantly positive.

Our all abilities team members have navigated the changing working landscape commendably and are thriving. Throughout the broader report you will see a common theme around 'change', particularly around changes to process and procedures. While this has had an impact on our people, you will also see that throughout this change, our team is resilient, adaptable and supportive.

We have team members that are very set in a routine in either attendance, work patterns or production lines, which is a part of who they are and not solely related to being on the spectrum. These team members have been supported by the Support Services team in a kind and mindful way, to manage the changes that are happening around them.

There are teams that love a bit of banter and fun, the conversation across the production floor and lines is what appeals and motivates our team to come to work. But throughout 2020/21 we saw changes which impacted this; we were required to fit perspex screens, adjust our production lines to increase the distance between team members, split break times, limit movement between divisions, and conduct meetings online. These changes will be with us for a long time, but so will the attitude and what drove those people to attend work. They just have to sing louder!

In the Support Services team, we have also seen adjustments. We bounced around with a few changes to the line-up. There are currently 8 Engagement and Development Leaders (EDL's) supporting team members across 5 sites in Wangaratta and Wodonga. We worked from home, we were restricted to specific sites to minimise movement, meaning that the team ranging from 19-69 years worked together 'remotely.'

As part of our team, we also have a dedicated NDIS support team who administers the employment supports across commercial operations and are also key to formulating the all abilities wage assessments.

Another impact brought upon by COVID19 restrictions was the ability for us to bring in new team members. There were potentially a number of reasons for this;

- Less people seeking employment funding through NDIS during COVID19
- Exhausting the pipeline with rapid recruitment that took place in the last 2 months of 2020
- Students not having the opportunity to experience Merriwa through Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and Work Experience (WE)

In identifying the above trend, we are aware of gaps in the intake process and are addressing them with virtual tours, digital content, collaboration with the People Engagement team to streamline the recruitment process and identifying our 'employment champions' who are currently working part-time at Merriwa and transitioning out of secondary school.

We have seen a number of all abilities team members that have not been able to attend the workplace, but we have worked extremely hard to keep them engaged. There has only been 1 team member that has chosen not to return to work and retire when the lockdown was lifted. With 140 all abilities team members, that is a testament to what Merriwa means to our team.



Some of the key areas the Support Services team have been focused on throughout 2020/21 include;

- Foster the professional standing of Disability Support Officers to Engagement and Development Leaders
- Supporting the Business Operations group to grow their all abilities team member opportunities within their operations
- Working through the NDIS transition for employment from Capacity Building to Core Funding, which has created flexibility for team members to utilise their funding in a manner that suits them.
 - 92 team members have transitioned over to Supports in Employment, 11 currently in the transition phase and 22 yet to commence transition from Finding and Keeping a Job.
 - It is expected that the remaining 22 will be complete by the 31st of December as indicated by NDIA.
- Create relationships with external NDIS providers to collaborate on supports for our team members
- Continue to support the SEAC (Supported Employee Advisory Committee) in attending

their meetings online and creating Easy English accessible documentation to distribute across Merriwa

- Complete Police Checks for team members across the organisation. Many team members found the process challenging with the required identification needed. We were able to gain adequate documentation that the team members will be able to use in other settings.
- Merriwa's wage assessment process was reviewed and improved prior to the Agreements recommencing in 2021. There was a need to consolidate records and improve process to ensure consistency for our team members. As an Australian Disability Enterprise, Merriwa is required to complete this annually for our all abilities team members.

The Support Services Team is now fully resourced with motivated, energetic, proactive individuals. They take pride in assisting our team members to achieve as much as they can whilst at work. They have assisted in setting and achieving many goals ranging from product-based skills development to assisting in safely cooking the workplace BBQ, to supporting their attendance so they can gain their Certificate I in Adult Education.

Their efforts have ensured that when needed, wrap around supports are available by liaising with external providers. The Support Services team have taken great pride in working with individuals one-on-one and side-by-side as they develop confidence in themselves and find ways to contribute and feel valued.

As we look to the coming 12 months, our team will continue to support people with a disability to come through our door, whether that be face to face or on an online platform. We will work closely with each business division to achieve their production targets by growing and developing the skills of our team members (in alignment with their NDIS plans) and providing opportunity for professional development aspirations.

Another identified area for opportunity will be for Support Services to offer NDIS funded services other than employment. Key to this will be ensuring that these are aligned with Merriwa's values and that they assist in creating a wraparound service to benefit our team members and community.

Joanna Bate
Support Services Manager



Community Services

2020/21

Merriwa Community Services (MCS) team has risen to the challenge throughout the past 12 months achieving some great results with our young people and improving outcomes for our teams.

Following the team member survey in April 2020, we listened to what our people were telling us and moved from a largely casualised workforce to around 70% of hours being permanent part time around September 2020.

During this time our teams responded exceptionally dealing with the challenge of managing complex young people through regular lockdowns and restrictions. It has been a credit to the resilience and commitment of the teams throughout this period.

Key areas of focus for the MCS team have been;

- Embedding team leaders across all houses and focussing on their development and leadership capacity
- Introduction of permanent part-time employment to stabilise workforce and management of a changing workforce

- Improved engagement and development of the young people in our care including their connection to community
- An increased team member connection and engagement with Merriwa, improving their professional development
- Improving and maintaining high levels of compliance

Following our initial survey in April 2020 a second MCS survey was conducted in June 2021. The survey had an extraordinary engagement rate of 97%, with 80% of team members reporting being happy at work. Key focus areas for our team members include improving how we connect young people to the community and focussing on how we engage as teams to continue to improve our culture.

The MCS team has worked well with many young people achieving excellent results including helping them learn to establish routines, manage their challenging behaviours and developing their independence.

Many of the young people in our care 12 months ago have transitioned away from care back to extended families or to independent living, and whilst there are ups and downs through this journey, the development of young people is at the heart of why our team members

undertake this work. We can't share individual stories due to privacy, but we can assure you we are proud of the young people involved and proud of the team's ongoing commitment.

Our success with compliance standards over the New Year period was positive but has proven a challenge to sustain. This is an area of constant challenge, requiring continual focus and all team members need to play a role in maintaining high standards.

We have many opportunities to continue to develop particularly in the NDIS environment. This is one of our key areas of focus to review the NDIS property and continue to learn and improve what we do. Similar opportunities to review the work at Merriwa Grove in Cobram and continue to develop our work in the Supported Residential Service also exist.

We will continue to focus on leadership development within MCS as it is key to improving standards and as a result, improving the lives of the young people we care for on a daily basis.

MCS Management Team

Community Connections

2020/21

Structured Workplace Learning and Work Experience

Merriwa's Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and Work Experience opportunities have grown with the engagement of a larger number of education providers throughout the Northeast region. We have continued to build on existing relationships with schools with extremely positive results. Once again, our team adapted to the restrictions placed upon us and provided a variety of workplace experience options including virtual information sessions, online interviews, and face to face tours when restrictions allowed.

A small number of students were able to participate fully in their placement while others had their placement temporarily halted due to restrictions. Students that have missed the opportunity of completing SWL within our divisions are now being given the opportunity to transition to employment in a supported manner whilst still completing their last term of education.



Wangaratta Digital Hub Project

A number of the Merriwa team were chosen to participate in a new project for the North East region to develop animated training videos for all abilities workforce. This project has been in collaboration with the Wangaratta Digital Hub, Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company and NE Tracks Local Learning and Employment Network (NELLEN) and was made possible through a successful, joint grant application.

As part of the project, the Merriwa team received digital technology training to create the animated training videos which will be accessible for all team members. Support Services Manager, Joanna Bate says "The intention of the project was to increase social inclusion and assist workforce development in a digital space. The content is specific to our work environment and is focused on the wearing of personal protective equipment and the importance of being focused at work to reduce risk of workplace injury".

The project is currently on hold due to COVID19 restrictions, but has created a lot of inquiry and intrigue for the participants, who have greatly enjoyed their time being involved and learning new skills and they are looking forward to the opportunity to recommence and complete the project.



Scott and Mathew from the Merriwa team, working with Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company at the Wangaratta Digital Hub.

Photo credit: Jan Osmotherly

Oak FM

Merriwa's partnership with local radio station 101.3 Oak FM has continued to flourish in 2020/21 with members from our Communications Team learning the ropes of running their own radio show at the station. Merriwa's show runs every Thursday from 12pm -2pm with 10 team members from across Wodonga and Wangaratta being trained in the computer system and learning how to schedule songs, advertisements, news, weather and speak live to air.

The program has been impacted by COVID19 restrictions and we have been unable to attend during lockdowns, but the Communications Team has remained positive and are looking forward to getting back into the routine of attending each Thursday. We are excited to be able to continue this partnership and extend training in radio to more team members at Merriwa.



R U OK Day

The team at Merriwa was proud to host a morning tea at each division to encourage our teams to be understanding, encouraging and support each other everyday, because it's OK to not be OK. At each division we had a speaker to talk about R U OK Day and a team member from SEAC or the Communications Team to thank everyone for their support and for organising the morning tea.

At the core of Merriwa is our team; we celebrate our people, our diversity and our successes on a daily basis. We are committed to creating a culture of inclusion, where people feel empowered to speak up and be listened to, and we are here to support each other especially when things get tough. We encourage everyone in our community to look out for each other and reach out if someone you know needs some extra care, but also to reach out if YOU are not feeling ok. Well done to everyone at Merriwa for making this day a great success!



All Abilities AFL creates virtual league for 2020

While the All Abilities AFL season was unable to go ahead like many sports in 2020, the Victorian FIDA Football League along with All In Sports, created the FIDA Futuristic Football (Fantasy Football) league to bring teams from across Victoria to compete virtually against each other to earn their place in the Grand Final.

This initiative was the first of its kind for the league with players from each of the teams having the opportunity to be interviewed by All In Sports, who then created a virtual commentary for each of the matches.

The Merriwa Magpies reached the Elimination Final, where they met the Grampians Giants, another top team in the league. The Giants proved to be too tough and the Magpies went down 13-18-86 to 10-8-68, which saw the Grampians progressing to Semi Final. In the end, it was the Ballarat Bulldogs and Geelong Dragons Chapman who progressed to the Grand Final with Geelong being crowned Premiers winning 14-12-96 to 15-9-99.

Merriwa Magpies team members Corey Davis, Daniel Castle and Alex Graham had the opportunity to be interviewed via video call with Stephen Murphy from All In Sports, which was a great experience for the boys to talk about the team, their positions on the field and anticipation for the season ahead.

Hume Freeway Project: Park Lane Nursery

Park Lane Nursery and Merriwa Contracting Services were proud to partner with the Victorian Government to create a habitat for the endangered Regent Honeyeater along 5 kilometers of the Hume Freeway. 9000 trees, shrubs and ground covers propagated by Park Lane Nursery as tubestock were planted in Glenrowan and Chiltern as part of a commitment to helping create a more sustainable transport network.

Park Lane Nursery Divisional Manager, Maria Wadley was thrilled to have the team involved in the Hume Freeway planting project, "We are extremely proud to be a part of this significant environmental project and work towards building a sustainable future for our environment in the years to come. There will be great outcomes for our all abilities team, including project experience and learning new skills which is something that we really value and love to see our team learn, grow and develop."



HABITAT FOR HONEYEATERS: Mick Stanton and Caleb Attenborough from Merriwa Industries and Jaclyn Symes (MLC, Northern Victoria), planting some of the 9000 new trees.

Financial

Report

The COVID19 pandemic became a real test for Merriwa in 2020/21. Business development plans for both Packaging and Timbers were suspended due to the economic uncertainties at the beginning of the financial year; production lines were rearranged to meet social distancing requirements reducing efficiencies; delays in the supply of donor and raw material packaging stock was experienced; and, by November 2020 our all abilities business model was substantially challenged by customer demands requiring us to operate a 2 shift structure across our packaging business.

A major change occurred in the third quarter of the financial year in CPP operations with a large volume of product that had become unprofitable to pack being removed from our orders. In the second half of the year there were shortages in orders from both major packaging customers. Efforts commenced to bring in another major packaging customer to Merriwa and expand the business of our other customers.

Our Timber division experienced a substantial increase in demand in the second half of the year but was hampered with labour efficiencies due to the incomplete line restructuring. Additional challenges (however, promising future opportunities) to the core business included the development of new customer relationships and product development with Hug Homes and 3RT.

The JobKeeper subsidy continued until September 2020. This allowed Merriwa to financially support team members unable to attend work due to COVID19 risks and improved the net result for the year by \$1,788,533.

Key results:

- Sales were 15% under budget
- Gross profit was 64% under budget
- Net loss was \$411,406
- Capital additions during the year totalled \$2,183,823

There is a saying “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger”. I am happy to report Merriwa has survived, learnt new lessons, acted on those learnings and we are starting to see shoots of growth appear.

A number of positive changes occurred during the year in the Business Services Team, including: Stephen Byrns starting in the Finance Manager position; Lee Yang moving into a Management Accounting role; Michelle Webb commencing as Payroll Administrator; and, Stella Harris starting in Accounts Payable.

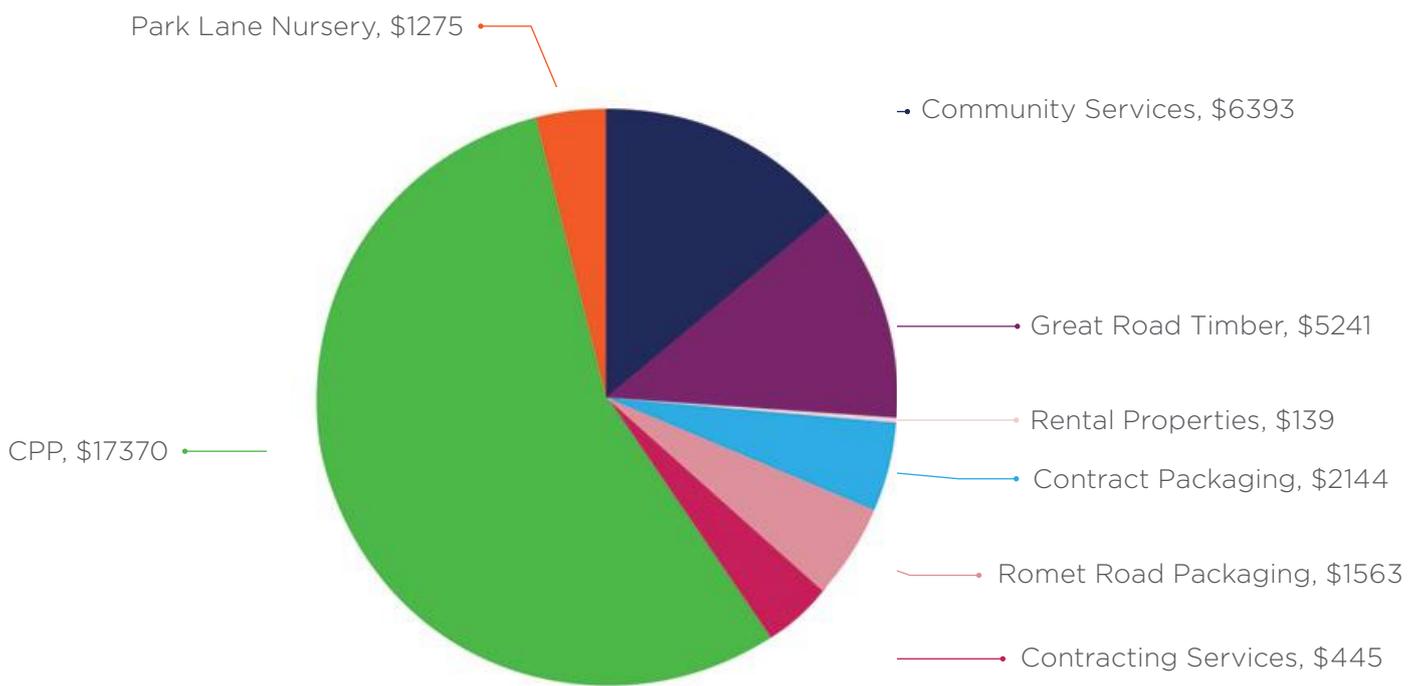
The team has been working closely with the divisional managers to improve their financial literacy and better understand their business standard costs. A key focus is to support the divisional managers in returning Merriwa back to a profitable and sustainable position.

Jeff Little

Leader Business Services



Sales Analysis



Segment Revenue by Division \$,000

Service Awards

2020/21

10 Years

Will Flynn

Will commenced work at Merriwa in 2011 at the Timber division and transferred to Plant 2 Packaging. Will undertakes many tasks on the floor at Plant 2, working in the food rooms and in the warehouse. He is a very reliable and valued team member at Merriwa. Thanks Will for your ten years of great service.

Mathew Woodrow

Mathew commenced at Merriwa in July 2010, working his full ten years at Plant 2 Packaging. He now works in the food rooms at Plant 3 and has also been involved in a local project through Merriwa's partnership with the Wangaratta Digital Hub. Well done Mathew.

Catherine Maddigan

Catherine commenced working at Merriwa in June 2011 in Community Services, transitioning to the Administration team in 2014. Catherine is very outgoing and fills a wonderful role as Merriwa's first point of contact at reception, welcoming everyone who enters with her cheerful and friendly disposition. Congratulations Catherine on your 10 years of service!

Geoff Miller

Geoff commenced working at Merriwa in November 2010 as a machine operator in Contract Processing and Packaging, progressing to a Production Supervisor before moving over to the Engineering team. Geoff's current position as Procurement Officer is part of the Business Services team. Geoff is a thoughtful and caring team member working closely with all the divisions with the timely supply of consumables and spare parts. Congratulations Geoff on your 10 years of service!

Toby Butler

Toby has been an instrumental part of Wodonga's success. He enjoys creating a very positive atmosphere when he works, and contributes to a culture of fun, happiness and motivation. Toby lifts the spirits of his peers if they are feeling down, and loves to sing and dance whilst working on the production lines. Congratulations Toby!

Lee Turnbull

In Lee's 10 years at Merriwa he has proven to be a valuable asset to the teams and his fellow team members. Lee commenced working within Contract Processing and Packaging until he transferred across to the Compliance Team in April 2015. Lee is hardworking and enjoys assisting his fellow team members across Merriwa achieve their goals and objectives. He continues to work hard on ensuring we stay compliant with many standards Merriwa currently holds. Thank you, Lee, for the hard work and dedication you have put in over the last 10 years. Your service is very much appreciated.

Denis Gillman

Denis is an extremely caring and patient person whose work as a team leader for Community Services has been exceptional. His clarity and support for young people in his care and for the team members he is responsible for, ensure that he gets great results, and invariably creates an environment that helps settle and support young people. Denis has a great sense of humour and develops trust with those he supports. Great work Denis and congratulations!

Julie-Anne Menzies

Julie is a well respected team member who creates strong relationships with the young people in her care. She is a consistent and reliable support to her peers and plays an important mentoring role in the team given her years of experience. Congratulations on your 10 year anniversary with Merriwa Julie.

Peter Skinner

Pete's journey with Merriwa has included a stint in most divisions, but for the last 5 years Pete has been a key member of our Contract Gardening crew. In this public facing role, Pete engages with our customers, and is always up for a friendly chat, on many occasions about his past cricketing exploits! Well done Pete on 10 years with Merriwa.

Shawn Smiles

Shawn started at Whitlands Saw Mill (now Gibson Street Timbers) as a line operator grading and processing hardwood timber. Shawn was then elevated to Site Supervisor overseeing the entire operations. Shawn was transferred to Plant 1 Timbers in 2019 and has utilised his skills in the hardwood processing area working alongside our all abilities team. Shawn has developed many skills while at Merriwa including forklift skills and timber grading. He is a great addition to the team at Timbers. Congratulations Shawn.



Gail Miller

Gail has great experience in the Community Services space. She has always been focussed on outcomes for young people and develops strong relationships with those she works with. Gail has worked as a team leader and is currently playing a critical role in managing the complexity of the community services rosters and interviewing potential candidates. Congratulations Gail on your 10 years with Merriwa.

Michael Detzke

Michael commenced work at Merriwa in January 2011. Over this time he has worked at Plant 2 Packaging where he has worked many varied tasks, and also spent time working in Plant 3 Packaging. Michael is a very punctual and reliable team member who is a pleasure to work with. Thank you Michael for your 10 great years of service.

15 years

Maria Wadley

The very public face and voice of Park Lane Nursery, as Divisional Manager, Maria has overseen the enormous growth in the nursery's retail offering over the last decade. Her combined passion for the nursery team, an unparalleled horticultural knowledge and a drive for excellence in customer service has elevated the nursery to one of the most recognised in the region. Maria is also highly renowned for the variety of birthday cakes she can whip up at short notice for her team members. Congratulations Maria on 15 fabulous years of commitment to Park Lane.

20 Years

Tanya Berger

Tanya has been working at Merriwa since 2000. Tanya works at Plant 2 Packaging and works multiple roles including cleaning and is an expert in the tea room. Tanya loves her footy and supports the Mighty Blues (Carlton), going to games whenever she can. Tanya is a very reliable team member and travels on the bus from Benalla. Thank you Tanya for your wonderful 20 years of service.

Shane Marjanovic

Shane commenced work at Merriwa in November 2000 in the Timber division and then moved to Newman Street when in operation. Shane has been working at Plant 2 Packaging and worked afternoon and night shift when required. Shane works on the factory floor and was the fork lift driver in the warehouse. Thank you Shane for your valued services at Merriwa over the past 20 years.

Shane Moore

Shane has worked over many years with Merriwa working actively to engage young people in the community. Shane enjoys getting our young people fishing, having a kick of the football or going bowling. Shane has worked with many highly complex young people over the years and retains a calmness and steadiness that is critical in working in this environment. Well done Shane and congratulations on 20 years of service with Merriwa.

25 Years

Alex Tancontian

Alex commenced work at Merriwa in November 1996. He has seen many changes and worked across several divisions at Merriwa, including bottle washing and then working in the ammunition department at Newman Street. Alex also worked at the Timbers division and now has been working at Plant 2 Packaging for a number of years. Thanks Alex for your wonderful 25 years of service at Merriwa.

Mark Borrington

Mark commenced work at Merriwa in January 1996 and has worked across many divisions of Merriwa. Starting at Timbers he then transferred to Merriwa's Newman Street site to work in the Defence department. He now works in Contract Processing and Packaging at Plant 3 in the warehouse. Thank you Mark for your contribution to Merriwa and congratulations on your 25 years of service.

30 Years

Ross Schulz

Ross commenced working at Merriwa in October 1990 in the Timbers division. Ross transferred to Plant 2 Packaging and has been working there for many years, learning a number of skills over the years. Ross travels by bus from Benalla to work each day and we are extremely grateful for his contribution to Merriwa. Thank you Ross for the excellent service you have given Merriwa over the last 30 years.

Vales

2020/21

Peter Gibson

We are all very saddened to hear of Peter's passing. 'Gibbo' as we all affectionately knew him, was a long term member of the Merriwa team and had many roles at Merriwa. He was known for his sense of humour, care for his team-mates, and doing the little things that made you feel valued and important. Our heartfelt condolences and thoughts are with Peter's wife Robyn, daughters Katie, Ellen, Sarah and their families and friends.

Gibbo will be missed, but will be remembered at Merriwa with heartfelt appreciation and admiration.

Helen Wolstenholme

Helen was a wonderful community focussed person who volunteered her time at Oak FM radio station and was the wife of our bus driver, Cliff Wolstenholme. We were very saddened to hear of her passing and our hearts go out to Cliff and his family.

Julie Edmond

Julie was a much loved team member at Merriwa, retiring in 2019. Sadly, she passed away in 2020 and will be greatly missed. She started work at Merriwa in 2003 and worked afternoon and night shifts for several years and enjoyed her work at Merriwa, describing her time as "It's just like working with family. We are one big team and the biggest thing I'll miss is working with such great people". Condolences to Julie's family.

Tony Gleeson

Tony, also known as 'Boofa' in the community and local footy club, sadly passed away in 2020. His daughter Jess was a long term team member at Merriwa and Tony also worked for Merriwa in the Maintenance Team. Our thoughts go out to Jess and the extended Gleeson family in this tough time. May loving memories ease your loss and bring you comfort.



Retirements

2020/21

Carolina Cabolar

Known as the life of the party, we had mixed emotions as Carolina retired from Merriwa. As a team member at Plant 2 Packaging, quite often she would be seen dancing and singing on the lines, keeping her team entertained, happy and uplifted. We were sad to see Carole leave Merriwa, but wish her all the best in retirement.




Merriwa
Bringing *quality* to life


Merriwa
COMMUNITY
SERVICES


Merriwa
PACKAGING


Merriwa
TIMBERS


Park Lane
nursery and garden centre



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Merriwa acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government and Federal Government