



Evaluating Health and Wellbeing: Outcomes of Men's Sheds – Koo Wee Rup Men's Shed



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Koo-Wee-Rup, Victoria Australia

- Located 75Kms SE Melbourne
- Reclaimed Marshland
- Recognized as major farm area in shire
- Mainly Asparagus, Potato, Dairy, Cattle
- Second highest level of disadvantaged in Victoria



Background

In recent years Men's Sheds have gained increasing attention and government funding, enabling the development and expansion of this important health promotion initiative.

To date, the growing policy and practical interest in the Men's Shed strategy has not been matched by research evidence to demonstrate the positive outcomes for men's health and wellbeing (Fildes et al. 2010).

Although not all Men's Sheds aim to either directly or indirectly promote health outcomes, common to all Sheds are the psychosocial benefits associated with social connectedness – including benefits to mental and physical outcomes (Misan & Sergeant, 2008).

While some studies indicate that Men's Sheds enhance the health and wellbeing of the men who are participant in them (e.g. Ballinger, Talbot, & Verrinder, 2009), the mechanisms of initial attendance, and maintenance of ongoing participation remain poorly understood.

Qualitative Studies of Men

In their own words, depressed men report:

Heifner, 1997

- Substance abuse
- Avoidance of help seeking
- Hidden self

Brownhill et al., 2005

- Overwork
- Aggression
- Substance abuse
- Risk taking
- Violence

Chuick et al., 2009

- Overwork
- Aggression
- Substance abuse
- Irritability & Anger

Rochlen et al., 2009

- Overwork
- Covering weakness
- Substance abuse
- Self-masking

Men and help-seeking

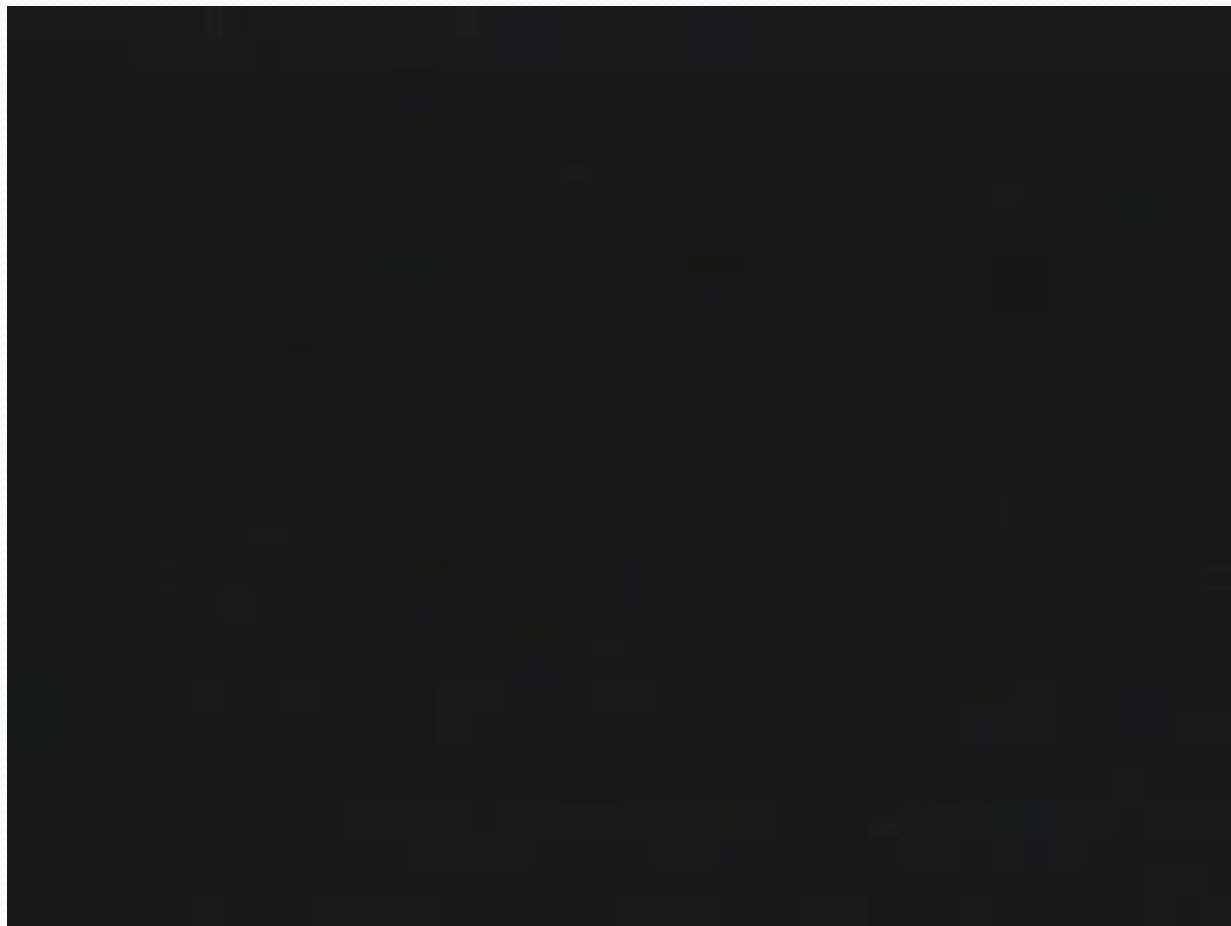
Traditional
Western
male role
expectations

- Stoicism
- Toughness
- Self-reliance
- Avoidance of emotional vulnerability



- Impeded help seeking
 - Male depression
 - Risk taking
 - Suicide ?







Why build a shed?

Evidence would suggest that a Men's Shed could;

- Provide emotional support
- Share social activities
- Acts as a buffer against stress on health and is protective of mental health
- Men benefit greatly from support that only other men can provide

Why Build cont:

This in Turn may:

- Reinforce evidence based health messages
- Increase personal awareness
- Encourage men to adopt a healthy lifestyle
- Encourage men to know their GP

Study and Evaluate value of sheds

- Engaged with Simon Rice Assoc MAPS from ACU – School of Psychology to support us with research and evaluation.
- Engaged Vicki Bradley from South Coast Primary Care Partnership for her expertise to carry out face to face interviews.
- 9 sheds were invited to participate in the survey

Aim

This qualitative study of fourteen Men's Shed participants sought to explore the factors that promote engagement with a Men's Shed program, and identify the perceived barriers preventing other men from Shed attendance.

Method

| Sample | <i>n</i> | Age range | Mean age | Mean Shed involvement |
|-------------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Time 1 (May 2010) | 14 | 14yrs – 90yrs | 67.05yrs (<i>SD</i> = 19.42) | 9.07 months |
| Time 2 (Dec 2010) | 4 | 62yrs – 81yrs | 70.00yrs (<i>SD</i> = 8.45) | 20.25 months |

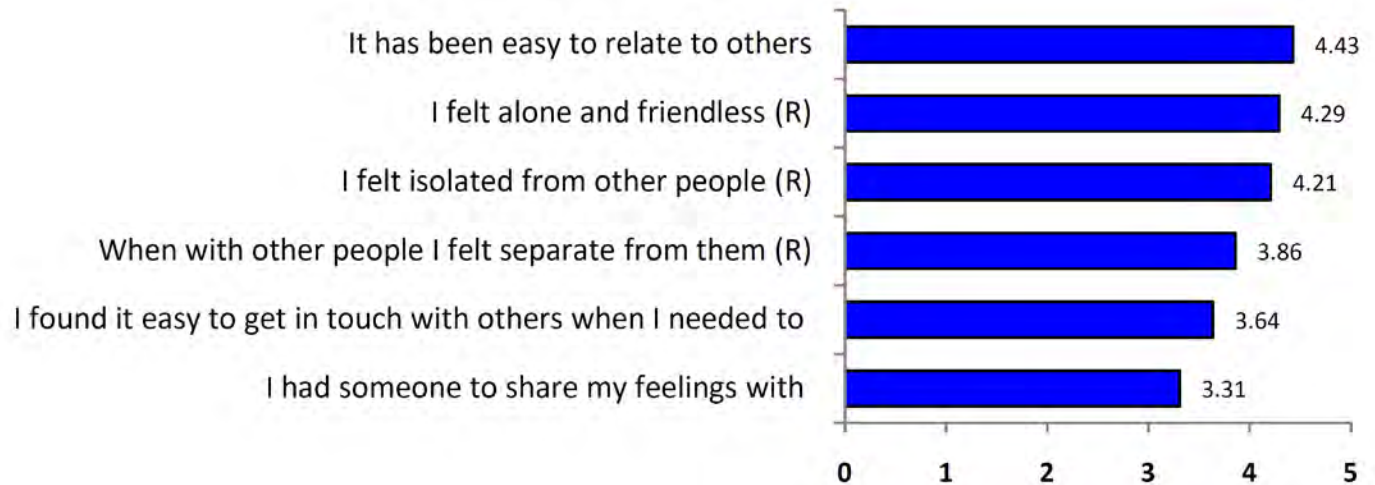
Study questions were adapted from those used by Ballinger, Talbot and Verrinder (2009). All interviews were undertaken at the Kooweerup Men's Shed by a health promotion practitioner not directly involved in the daily running of the Shed program.

Participants

14 participants completed the evaluation questionnaire at Time 1.

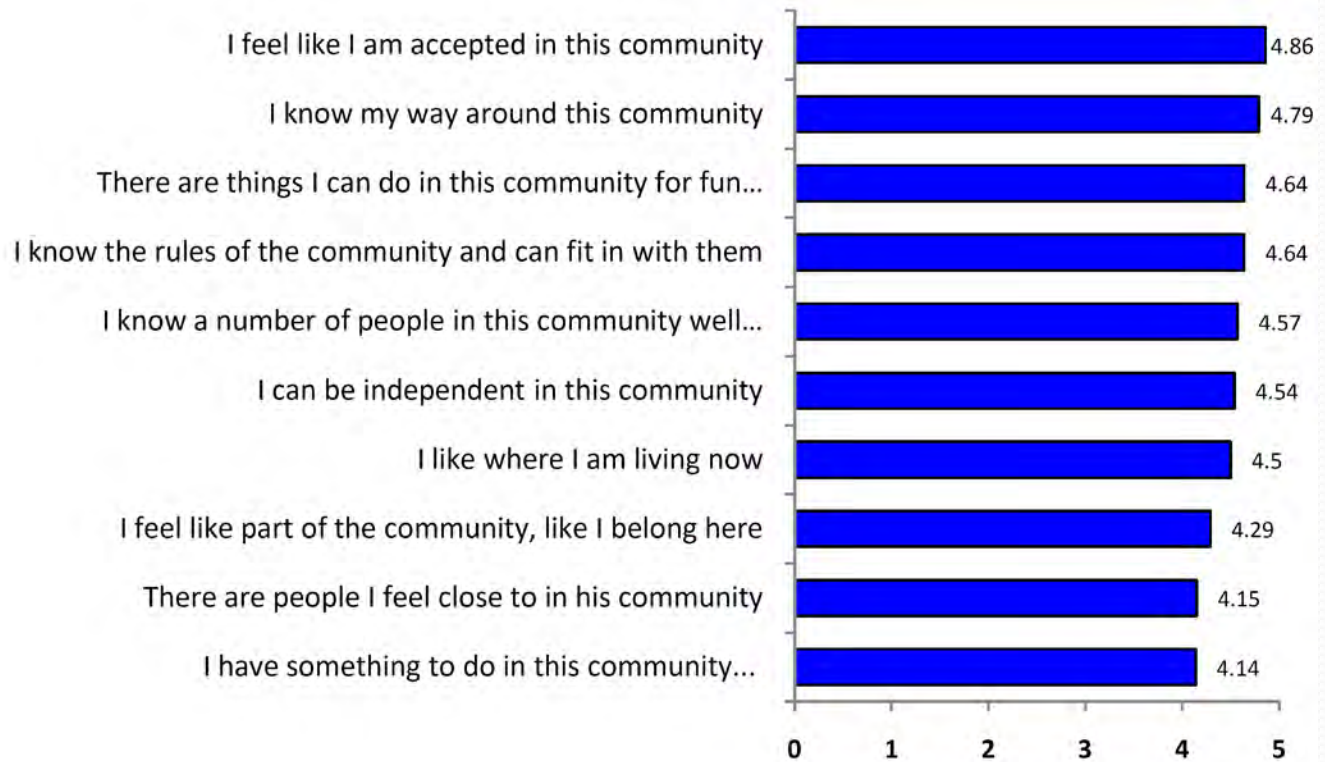
- Average age 67.07 years ($SD = 19.42$), ranging from 14 to 90.
- Average number of months attended the shed was 9.07 ($SD = 5.93$), ranging from 1 month to 24 months.
- Shed attendance per month ranged between
 - once a month ($n = 2$)
 - three times a month ($n = 1$)
 - four times a month ($n = 4$)
 - five times a month + ($n = 7$).
- The majority of the sample were retired ($n = 10$)
 - three participants were on disability support pensions, and one participant was studying.
- The majority of participants were married ($n = 9$), with one participant identifying as single, one as de facto, one as separated, one divorced and one participant indicated they were widowed.

The Friendship Scale



| Total Score | Frequency | Interpretation |
|-------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 4 | 1 | Very Isolated $n = 3$ |
| 7 | 1 | |
| 11 | 1 | |
| 14 | 1 | Socially Isolated $n = 2$ |
| 17 | 1 | |
| 18 | 1 | Some Isolation $n = 1$ |
| 19 | 3 | Socially Connected $n = 3$ |
| 21 | 1 | |
| 24 | 4 | Very Connected $n = 5$ |

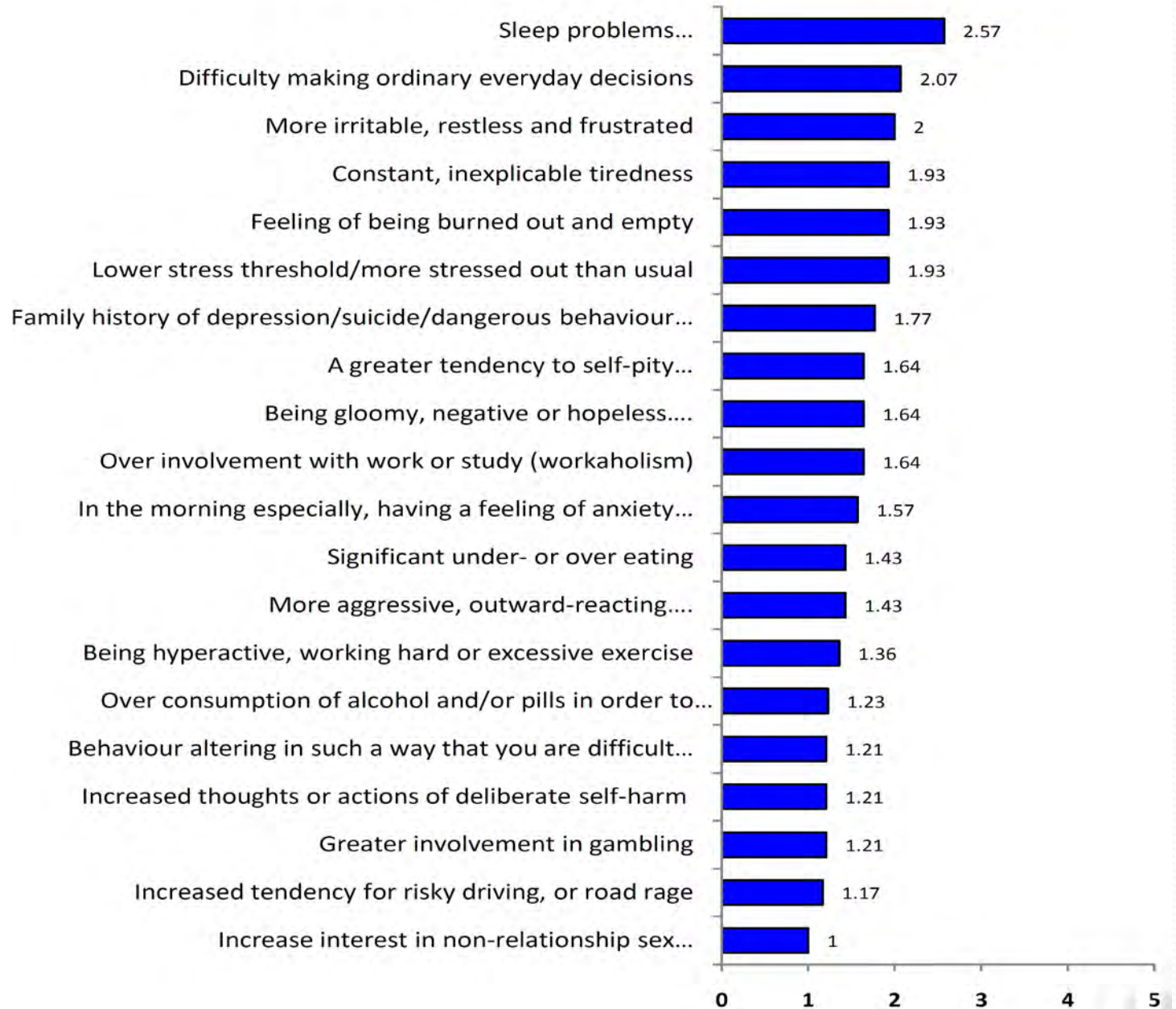
The Community Integration Measure



The total mean score for the present sample was 45.00 ($SD = 4.60$) with scores ranging from 37 – 50.

Men's Shed participants demonstrated very high levels of community integration. Data from a sample of Canadian tertiary students (McColl et al., 2001) reported a Community Integration Measure mean score = 33.90, $SD = 4.40$, with scores ranging from 21 – 40).

Gotland Male Depression Scale

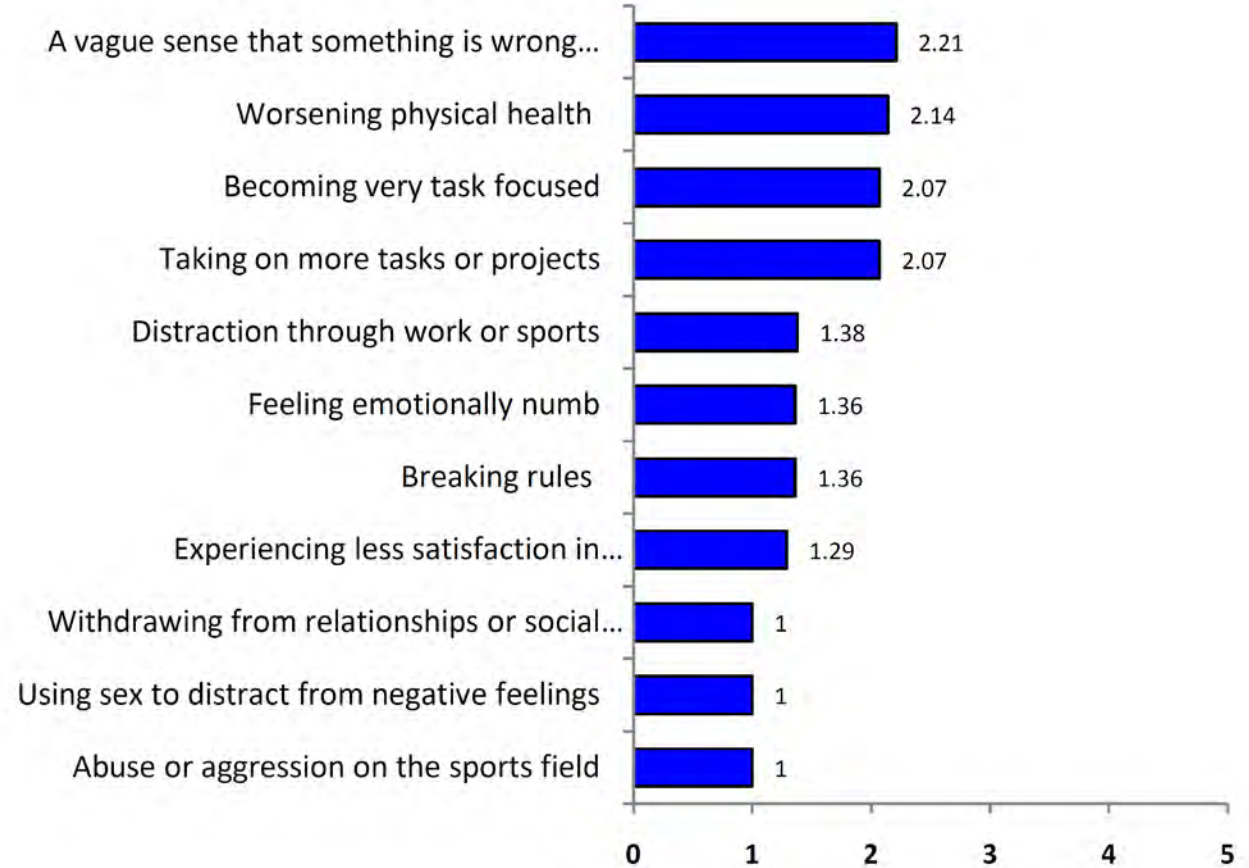


Gotland Male Depression Scale

| Total Score | Frequency | Interpretation |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 0 | 3 | No Depression $n = 10$ |
| 2 | 1 | |
| 4 | 3 | |
| 6 | 1 | |
| 9 | 1 | |
| 10 | 1 | |
| 17 | 1 | Depression Probable $n = 3$ |
| 21 | 1 | |
| 26 | 1 | |
| 31 | 1 | Definite Depression $n = 1$ |



Externalising Behaviours



What started you coming to the Shed?

- Three key themes emerged from the responses to this question. The most frequent response to this question involved receiving a personal invitation to become involved in the shed ($n = 6$)

“Invited by staff” and “[invited by] my carer at the hostel”.

- On occasion the personal invitations overlapped with the participant having a specific interest that the Shed could assist with.

“Ran into another man who said he could teach me how to do computers with computer lessons every Friday”.

- Other participants indicated they were drawn to the shed through developing a particular interest or skill ($n = 6$).

“For personal reasons of achievement and satisfaction”, “To get out of the house, to get involved in other things”, and “A chance to contribute, share the skills of my trade like taking on challenges”.

- Finally, some participants were motivated by seeking out social connection ($n = 4$).

“Get with other people socialising”, “I like woodwork and meeting people”, “Develop relationships with other fellas...” and “Sense of community involvement”.

What keeps you coming to the Shed?

- Three key themes emerged from the responses to this question. The most frequent response to this question related to having a task to complete ($n = 10$)

“Having jobs to do such as sanding. When there are jobs to do I come to do them”

- Social connection ($n = 10$) was also reported as a motivating factor for attending the shed e.g.

“I like it. I gives you a chance for a good chin wag. We all have problems and we can all talk about it...”

- The third theme for this question related to achievement ($n = 2$) e.g.

“...When I go home I feel I have done something for the day”

“...Provides satisfaction”

Does coming to the Shed make any difference to how you feel about yourself?

- The majority of participants indicated there was clear benefit to their shed attendance ($n = 10$). This benefit was typically experienced as improving sense of self-worth, connection to others and improving mood e.g.

“Yes, it gives me higher esteem of myself where i can see what I have done. I like to help other people”

“Yes, a lot better. Good way to connect friends in town. Come to get vegies from the garden”

“Yeah, you are a lot happier, better frame of mind, something to look forward to”.

- Of the three participants who answered “no” to this question, one indicated they hadn’t had a chance to know of any personal benefits as yet, and one indicated that they still felt good about coming to the Shed.

What would one of your close friends think about your involvement with the Shed?

- While several participants were unsure about their friends perceptions of their involvement ($n = 3$), the majority of participants reported that their friends were positive about their involvement in the Shed ($n = 10$). In some instances participants have invited their friends to attend.

“One of my close friends has become a member of the shed and goes on walks...”

“They think it's good. They think its made me happier. Helps me cope better and concur it keeps our mind off it and on other things.”

If you have a partner, what do they think about your involvement with the Shed?

- A number of the participants indicated that their partner was happy about their involvement in the shed ($n = 5$). Within this theme was the notion that the men's involvement with the Shed gave their partners time for themselves e.g.

“She thinks it's good”

“My wife is really happy with it. She enjoys gardening and has friends or grandkids to visit”

“It gives her time to herself” .

- The remainder of the participants were either unsure about their partners perception of their Shed involvement, or did not have current partners.

Conclusion

Findings highlight the importance of Men's Sheds linking with local health professionals for referral, and the promotion of the activities available at the Shed within the community. Results also suggest an association between men's wellbeing and social connectedness in the context of task achievement, and sense of purpose or usefulness (e.g. the important role of work in men's lives). Barriers to shed involvement were identified as shyness or lack of confidence. Consequently, sheds seeking new members may seek to develop strategies to put potential new members at ease (e.g. Initial sessions where men can attend the shed with their partners / other family members).

The findings of the present study indicate that Shed members experience benefits from their involvement, and that these benefits motivate their continued attendance. Future research may seek to determine factors that cause men to cease attending (e.g. exit interviews).

The Shed members who participated in this study spoke favourably about programs on offer at the shed. This is consistent with previous research (e.g. Ballinger, Talbot, & Verrinder, 2009) and serves to highlight the important psychosocial benefits of Men's Shed involvement.

References

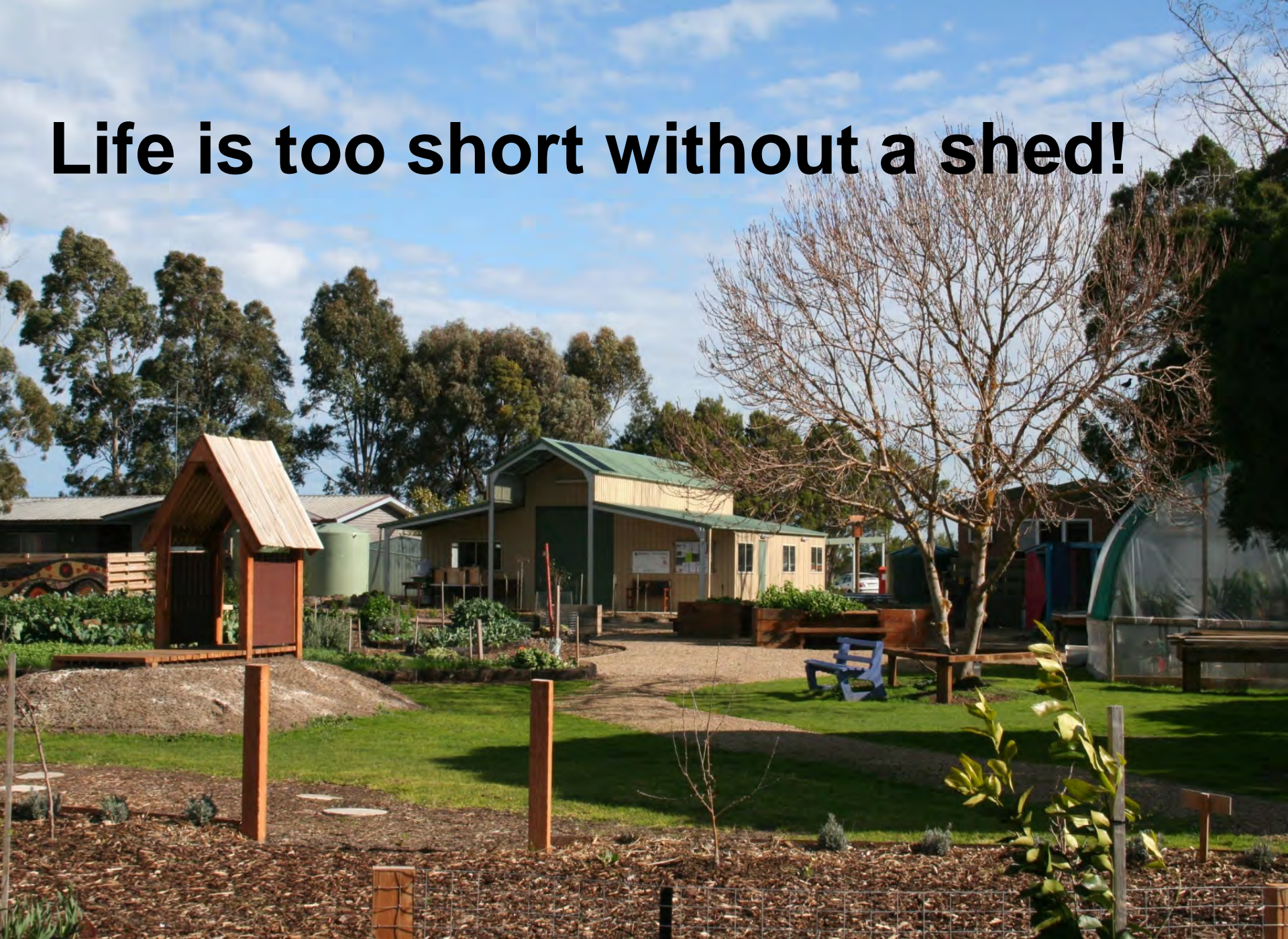
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Men's Shed





Life is too short without a shed!



Thank You
questions, comments, discussion....

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