

Australian Men's Shed Association Newsletter

The official publication of the "Australian Men's Shed Association"



CLUSTER GROUPS ARE WORKING

The coming together of individual Sheds with their neighbours into a Cluster Group is growing rapidly as shown in the reports on pages 2 & 3.

One of the benefits of Clusters is that they have a bigger impact on outside organisations as illustrated in the report below on the visit to the Hunter Valley Group by a State Minister. As well as the recognition given, the Cluster was presented with a cheque to help with future developments. It is doubtful if this money could have been obtained by individual Sheds.

Minister Supports Hunter Valley Cluster Group

Members of the Hunter Valley Shed Cluster Group were pleasantly surprised when Kristina Keneally MP, Minister for the Aged, visited the Shed @ Windale (Lake Macquarie and a member of the cluster) on May 26 to look at the Shed's operation, meet the participants and make an announcement.

The Shed and Cluster Group members were all very thrilled to host a Ministerial visit. The Shed was given a bit of a scrubbing up and members of the Women's Guild planned the food and refreshments.

With the Member for Charlestown, Matthew Morris, the Minister inspected the Shed, chatting with many of the guests and asking relevant questions as she went. Matthew Morris officially introduced the Minister who described her interest in the "Men's Shed Concept", addressing men's health issues and the need for organised but low level/achievable activities for mature people.

After congratulating all concerned for the achievement in developing the Windale Shed, the Minister presented a cheque for \$5000 toward the administration and setting up needs of the Hunter Valley Shed Cluster Group. David Atkinson the Group's President responded and thanked Minister Keneally for her generous contribution and kind words.

We were pleased that the Minister had allowed sufficient time from her busy schedule to enjoy the BBQ lunch and refreshments.

Roger Greenan - Secretary HVSCG



2009 Men's Shed Conference

The dates for this conference have now been confirmed as 27/28 August 2009 in Hobart, Tasmania. The choice of venue is now down to two locations and will be finalised shortly.

The administration and planning groups are now well established and are concentrating on the subjects and content of the presentations and discussions. This is the Men's Shed Conference and they would like to hear what members of Sheds and allied groups wish to have included in the conference.

Send your suggestions, ideas or comments to John Waters (e-mail bridgewatershed@bigpond.com)

Regional AMSA Contacts

A number of enquiries that are sent to AMSA require local knowledge and, therefore, to improve the flow of information, some members have agreed to act as regional contacts.

Names of Contacts with email and telephone details are listed on page 3.

AMSA Membership Application

For AMSA to be considered seriously by Governments and Funding organisations we need to show that we have a large base of **registered** members who have elected to join the Association.

We are therefore asking all Men's Sheds to complete an application form to join the AMSA - at no cost.

(Details on Page 5)

To contact us please use this email address for all Association business:- amsa@tpg.com.au
Previous Newsletters are available on the AMSA website - www.mensshed.org

SHED CLUSTER GROUP REPORTS

Central/South Western NSW

The Independent Men's Shed Alliance was formed by 5 active Sheds in the Central/South West of NSW: Boorowa, Canowindra, Cootamundra, Grenfell and Temora. In late 2006 the first meetings were held and by September 2007 a formal Heads of Agreement was drawn up and ratified.

Since then, other Sheds have joined: Young, Parkes and Griffith and several Sheds in surrounding areas have benefited from the expertise and experiences of the allied Sheds. Sheds have come from other areas: Cowra, Junee, Forbes to our quarterly meetings and group Insurance is our main endeavour.

A brief run-down of the Activities of member Sheds:

Boorowa Men's Den: is working on repairing bikes, as this has an end market. They have been active in making planters, school desks and other projects for their community. A social area is on the agenda as the workshop has expanded to fill the existing Shed area.

Canowindra Men's Shed: have constructed signs, stands, nesting boxes and made other projects for community organisations. They are working on increasing the membership and April's promotion was "Bring a friend". Apart from hands - on activities they have started share-trading with an initial \$15,000 paper folio, this has developed book keeping skills and is aimed at keeping the mind active.

Coota Shed for Men: opened the extensions to their Shed in February this year. This project was largely built by the members with professional help where necessary. They have re-started their Youth at Risk Scheme which is a challenging mission but very worthwhile and has the support of the local and area Police. They were proud recipients of the Health and Wellbeing Award at the recent Seniors Week functions in Sydney.

Grenfell Men's Shed: is proud to announce the unveiling of a super-sized pick and gold pan to represent the historical aspect of the town. The men work with several school students, teaching them in the areas of wood working and metal working. Apart from this the boys are learning how to socialise with men before going out into the workforce.

Griffith Men's Shed: is a new and growing Shed. They are in temporary accommodation at present but are looking for new premises. They are looking to form a similar Alliance in their area as the number of proposed Sheds are developed. The sharing of ideas and expertise has made it worthwhile for these men to travel the up-to three and a half hours to attend Alliance meetings.

Parkes Men's Shed: has finally moved into their Showground accommodation after the Equine Influenza outbreak. They will be the feature of the Parkes Show in late August. Retired farmers living in town have found the Shed a rewarding destination with social interaction and a place to use, share and develop the skills learned over a working lifetime. The men are organising a Health night on 11th June to include skin cancer awareness, cardiac health issues, diabetes and mateship in the modern era.

Temora Shed 4 Men: have benefited from a Veteran's Affairs grant and have used it to buy much needed equipment. They have built a prototype wheel chair ramp for businesses in the town and hope this project will be adopted by many of the shops. Repaired bikes and walking frames are sent overseas through Rotary.

Young Men's Shed: are busy on community projects such as shelving for museum, sulky repairs (Riding for the Disabled), restoring wooden ladders (Fire Brigade) as well as individual projects undertaken by members.

In our February meeting we discussed the benefits of the Alliance to date. It was difficult to quantify but member Sheds felt that the sharing of ideas, meeting together, and gathering of information has been time saving and enabled the members to access a huge resource of skills and experience that is only now being tapped. Group insurance is our major project for the future and will hopefully save member sheds finances for the more important work of skilling and socialising men in our communities.

Ray Cawthorne

North Sydney Region

Mens Sheds of the Northern Sydney Region under the auspices of UnitingCare continue with their day to day activities. We recently had a wonderful opening of our new Shed at Belrose which was attended by around 80 people.

The exciting news from this quarter is that we are busy looking into the possibilities of another 4 sheds for the region. Sites at Ingleburn, Epping, Ku-ring-gai and Normanhurst are currently being considered. Epping is a formality and the real work of setting up another shed should begin in earnest within the next couple of months - we'll keep you posted.

The proposal of Ingleburn Men's Shed would be a unique one for our group! This will be exclusively a Metalwork Shed, engaged only in Metalwork projects. Although we have some metalwork machinery at our Willoughby Shed, to have a whole Shed devoted to metalwork projects will be new. The best part is that, because the local TAFE course in metalwork is being disbanded, many of the students would like to continue their learning and thought it would be an impossibility. With a couple of TAFE instructors willing to continue their tuition we now have the possibility of a quite different Shed Happening! WATCH THIS SPACE.

Ruth Van Herk - Community Men's Shed Representative for UnitingCare Ageing Northern Sydney region.

SHED CLUSTER GROUP REPORTS - CONTINUED

Hobsons Bay - VIC

Hobsons Bay Mens Shed Network, a cluster of 4 groups from **Altona, Williamstown, Laverton, and Spotswood**, auspiced by Hobson Bay City Council, has been advised they will receive one of the Victorian Government grants of \$50,000 to refit a building for provision of a 'Hub' for use by all 'Sheds' in the district.

The 'Hub' is intended to be the focus of major activities for woodworking, metalworking, boat building, scenery and props construction for art groups etc. etc. in order to concentrate requirements for expensive machinery for use by the community.

Council intends to provide a building and assist in the development of the project commencing in 2008. Facilities for meeting and activities will also be provided.

The city of Hobsons Bay is located on the sea front of Melbourne's western suburbs and the Altona Men's Shed Inc. is a member of the VMSA. It is expected the Network will become a member group at an early date.

Council is to be congratulated for their support, vision, and enterprise.

Bill McPherson - President Altona Mens Shed Inc

Queensland Men's Sheds

The last year has seen a budding of enthusiasm in the development of Men's Sheds in Queensland with many groups developing plans and working toward the establishment of new facilities and programs within existing community venues. As with the other states Queensland is looking at the establishment of support clusters or a network which can help toward the support and development of Shed's in Queensland. This could be through mentoring, sharing of resources and group advocacy for interest from Government, business and service organisations.

This currently consists of an informal data base of contact details through which information can be shared. From Brisbane and surrounding regions there have been a number of bus tours which have enabled men to visit existing sheds to create relationships and find out about how different groups have set up, run and support the ongoing activities of their Sheds.

We have been lucky to drag Ruth van Herk - (Lane Cove Coordinator), away from her well deserved holiday to come and speak to a gathering of Shedder's on Tuesday 10 June. We are looking forward to having this opportunity to meet up with each other, hear Ruth's pearls of experience and plan for the future support of Men's Sheds in Queensland.

If you wish to be added onto the contact list please call Scotia Monkivitch, Brisbane City Council (07) 3027 4490 or email scotia.monkivitch@brisbane.qldgov.au

Regional AMSA Contacts

A number of enquiries that are sent to AMSA require local knowledge and therefore, to improve the flow of information, some members have agreed to act as regional contacts. Their details are given below and they will help with local queries or re-direct the request if necessary.

As the number of Regional groups and Clusters grow this list will be enlarged.

Region	Contact	Phone	E-mail
North NSW	Stuart Holmes	(02) 6568 5090	stuart@nvcsc.org.au
West NSW	Ray Cawthorne	(02) 6343 1289	grenfellmensshed@westnet.com.au
Hunter Valley	David Helmers	(02) 4979 1344	david.helmerts@mn.catholic.org.au
Sydney Area	Ruth van Herk	(02) 9418 8459	lanecovemensshed@usnads.com
Victoria	Gary Green	(03) 5154 6648	gary.green@orh.com.au
Tasmania	John Waters	(03) 6263 5142	bridgewaterhed@bigpond.com
West Australia	Bill Johnstone	(08) 9336 4408	fremanshed@optusnet.com.au
Queensland	Scotia Monkivitch	(07) 3027 4490	scotia.monkivitch@brisbane.qldgov.au

Other enquiries to AMSA - e-mail amsa@tpg.com.au

Shed Reports



Sundowner Avenue Neighbourhood House

Men's Shed, Our Men's Shed began in February, 2008 and has grown to 10 regular attendees.

We are fortunate to have a Volunteer Facilitator Roberto, who has a passion for woodworking and a strong desire to help the Community and welcomes all our men with enthusiasm and new ideas for projects each week.

Our first major project, a wooden workbench, has been completed and takes pride of place in our room. Several small projects have also been completed by the men including wine racks and document trays, with new projects in the planning stage.

We are grateful to the Committee of Management at Sundowner Avenue Neighbourhood House for their financial assistance for the purchase tools, wood, paint and hardware items to enable the men to complete their projects and their support in providing a meeting place for the men to meet and work on their projects.

Sundowner Avenue Neighbourhood House is open every Friday 9am-1pm.

24 Sundowner Avenue, Clarinda, Vic. 3169

The Shed @ Salamander Bay

A recent restoration project at the Shed @ Salamander bay has show great initiative in recycling old tools with this miraculous restoration undertaken by their members.

After 7 months Robbie has finally finished work on restoring the power hacksaw pictured below. The saw was among items donated to the Refused and Recycle centre at Salamander Bay and we now wish we also had a before shot to highlight the detail of Robbie's work.

Originally it was an overhead belt driven and very old saw. Robbie has since converted it to a single phase electric motor driven saw with all new bushes and bearings most of which he made on his own lathe at home.

Robbie also made the trolley on which it is mounted so that it can be moved around the work area. The hacksaw is mainly used to cut heavy steel in which it does very well.

The age of the machine is unknown but now the machine looks and operates as if where brand new.

Allan Sams

The Shed @ Salamander Bay



Members of the Shed @ Windale making the small crosses. During the past two months members of the Windale Shed have been busy doing the normal mentoring of youth, metal fabrication, etc. However, they have been concentrating on fulfilling a contract with Catholic Care Newcastle to supply 4000 small timber crosses to be distributed to the local parishes for the World Youth Day activities.



The crosses are constructed from hardwood decking timber. Each length of timber is cut in half; planed; cut to two lengths (cross size is approximately 360 mm x 230 mm); routed to recess the cross member; sanded and sealed (using vegetable oil). Special timber racks were made to store the crosses prior to packaging.

The project was completed on May 22 thanks to the support and involvement of most shed members., including three of our female members who were on the job as regularly as the tradeologists. Their help and constant nagging enabled us to achieve the tight time frame. The cross project also attracted a lot of media interest from local commercial radio; national radio (ABC) to the Herald newspaper. Link (<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/05/09/2239756.htm?site=newcastle>)

During this period, we were also filling two orders for two full size replicas of the

World Youth Day Cross, one for Bathurst and one for Belmont which added to the disorder in the Shed.

Quite a number of members learned additional skills during the process and now (as a result of their personal agitation), have been able to have their record of skills reviewed and upgraded.

Roger Greenan

Please send your comments, suggestions for future articles or requests for information etc. to AMSA .

Email:- amsa@tpg.com.au

Mens Health Feature by Greg Millan



Preventing Heart Problems

Heart disease is the number one killer in Australia, particularly of men and prevention of heart disease involves having a hard look at a number of lifestyle factors, particularly as we grow older. Ageing can't be changed but lifestyles can be very successfully modified. There are several risk factors which contribute to heart disease but men over 30 need to remember the big five. High blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, physical inactivity and stress.

Lets just look more closely at one of these - cholesterol. There are basically two types of cholesterol, HDL which actually fights against the build up of fats in the arteries and LDL - the bad guy that enters the linings of arteries where they build up with the potential to cause blockages. Cholesterol levels should not be above 5.5 and it's a good idea for most men in their mid-thirties to have their cholesterol levels checked so that you know if you have to make any changes. Drugs can bring down high cholesterol levels but making small changes in what you eat and increasing your level of physical activity is a lot easier and safer than taking pills every day of your life.

What do you do if you have a high cholesterol level? Firstly eat less fat. Start where you can see it. Cut it off red meats or eat more fish. Fish oils actually help to reduce cholesterol levels. Use low fat dairy products and reduce the amount of fat or oil used in cooking. Most foods can be cooked without oil but if you want to use oil try to make it a mono-saturated variety such as pure olive oil.

Secondly look at your weight/height/age ratio and work out if you are carrying some extra weight for your age as this appears to contribute to higher cholesterol and does put a strain on the heart. The good news is if you follow a sensible low fat, high fibre diet and get some regular exercise you will lose weight fairly easily. You need to do 30 minutes of exercise 5 times a week as a minimum. The golden rule is do what you like. If you hate jogging - don't even bother. If you enjoy walking or swimming then go for them. Aerobic exercise such as walking, running, swimming does promote reduced cholesterol and really makes you feel better.

Eat more fruit, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereal in your daily diet and use less salt.

Everyone has very individual food likes and dislikes but you can modify your diet and eat well and still occasionally treat yourself with things you like.

Remember by making small changes, you can feel fitter and be happier.

Greg Millan is a Men's Health Consultant working in Newcastle and he can be contacted at gmillan@bigpond.net.au

A SHED MESSAGE

BY ROGER GREENAN

A men's shed, a men's shed,
try and get your man out of bed.
Tell him what to do tell him where to go,
but don't expect an abide, you should know.

Liberty and freedom is a commonality,
experienced by some, not for all to see.

Free and liberate that man of yours,
provide an opportunity for a good cause.

Get him to being not one of the fools,
but to involve and ingest in the shed and its tools.

A day at the soul of the men's retreat,
could help with a need to often repeat.

So table the lathes the chisels and drills,
place aside the need for those pills.
Get into the comfort of shoulder to shoulder,
allow for the talk to become much bolder.

Become a part of the Aussie way,
and give your time without any pay.
Volunteer your skills your heart and mind,
give it your all it's so rewarding you will find

AMSA Membership Application

The Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) was formalised in 2007 at the National Men's Shed Conference held at Manly with a view to establishing a bonding support base for all member shedders. It is a union of independent Men's Sheds throughout Australia that have acknowledged the need for a national body to facilitate a one-stop-shop for funding by means of sponsorship or grants; insurance and perhaps materials and equipment..

To be considered seriously we need to show that there is a large base of registered members who have elected to join the Association. We are therefore asking all who agreed in principle to the AMSA concept at the national conference, and those who may not have attended but may require support and national coverage, to complete an application form to join the Australian Men's Shed Association at no cost.

Membership is open to all Sheds, whether fully operational, starting up or still in the planning/researching stages. "Independent Supporters" (retired shedders) and "Associates" (from Universities, Gov. and Community agencies) are also eligible to register.

An Application form has been sent as a separate Attachment to the covering email for this newsletter and this enables you to register easily through your email link.

This action will enable the Association to gain an increased credibility and opportunity to act on your behalf.



AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH TAKING SHED'S TO THE WORLD

In 2007 Associate Professor Barry Golding, Dr Mike Brown and Dr Annette Foley from University of Ballarat completed a national study 'Men's sheds in Australia: learning through community contexts' available free for download via <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1780.html>. In 2008/9 they are extending and broadening their research via an international project they are calling *Men's learning and wellbeing, beyond the workplace*. In mid 2008 they are visiting the Republic of Ireland and several parts of the UK as part of the groundwork for a collaborative, international project into the link between men's informal learning and wellbeing that includes several international research teams, researchers and universities.

Their adult and community education research in Australia has focused on the effectiveness of informal learning for men through community-based organizations, particularly for men with negative or limited prior experiences of formal learning. Their most recent research for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has investigated the informal learning associated with community-based men's sheds in Australia that have been found to be particularly successful places for older men not in work to regularly gather, with a wide range of positive wellbeing outcomes.

Mike and Barry are meeting in early June, 2008 with the New Zealand-based research team at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. They are also taking part in a panel discussion on men's learning in Christchurch, organised by ACE Aotearoa and a research forum on men's learning in Hamilton organised by the University of Waikato. While in New Zealand they will also visit the recently opened (first) community men's sheds in New Zealand, in Thames and Hamilton.

Mike and Barry are also meeting with the Northern Ireland (Queens University, Belfast), English (National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, Leicester) and Scottish (University of Glasgow) research teams in Belfast. With Annette they are also doing several joint and individual research workshops and paper presentations at the University of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh (SCUTREA Conference) before meeting with the NIACE (National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education) team in Leicester to plan the English/Welsh part of the international study. Before returning to Australia, Barry is also presenting in Cambridge at a research workshop organised by the Open University Cambridge and London at the Fifth Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning. The University of Ballarat research team is hopeful that the Western Australian and Tasmanian governments may support (and collaborate to identify sites and organisations) for the Australian strand of the international Men's learning and wellbeing research.

Barry's previous research in Australia has confirmed the importance, at neighbourhood and small town level, of men's community-based activity in a range of grassroots, hands-on organizations including voluntary fire services and sporting clubs. Barry, Mike and Annette have recently worked on several research projects with community-based adult education providers in Australia to try and understand - and reverse - the recent trend, observed in many developed countries, for men to tend not to be enrolled in formal adult education programs.

In early May 2008 Barry presented about community shed research at the Learning Centre Link Conference in Perth, that also included an excellent, community shed workshop by Bill Johnstone and Allan Gowland from Fremantle and an informal meeting of some Perth-based shedders. Barry will make contact with some SA based shedders when he presents at the Community and Neighbourhood Houses Conference in Adelaide in late May. Mike, Barry and Annette have made similar presentations about their research at the ACEVic and Assoc. of Neighborhood House and Learning Centres (ANHLC) conferences in Melbourne and Bendigo.

There is a growing recognition through this research dissemination of the potential throughout Australia for community sheds to enhance and broaden provision of learning through a wide range of existing community-based learning organisations. The new, international research aims to better understand where and how men are already learning effectively through a wide range other community-based organisations, as well as how other forms of learning might be enhanced through this improved knowledge.

FEATURE SHED-HAMILTON MEN'S SHED

Following a public meeting on 29th August last year to discuss Men's Sheds and the viability of one in Hamilton, a small steering committee was formed. Following some fairly intense work, a "Business Breakfast" was held on December 4th, with the intention of spreading the word and hopefully obtaining support in the form of money, goods and services from the local business community. We were fortunate in that we had an excellent surprise guest speaker (Gary Green) who seemed to know what he was talking about.

Largely as a result of that morning, we have had incredible community support, with the local newspaper, The Spectator, doing a marvelous job to keep us in the community eye.

We are leasing an ideal facility - an ex-joinery works- which includes a small office, kitchen, 2 toilets, shower, meeting room and large concrete-floored work area.

The Shed was officially opened by the Mayor on 12th March, with about 80 people attending, again with newspaper and radio coverage. As the Mayor pointed out, we had reached this point with no help from State Government or the Shire - all done by the community!

A local businessman has provided funds to cover a year's rent, plus a bit more "for tea and bikkies". We have had donations of fire extinguishers, signage, a security system, electrical work, a builder for a day, kitchen bench tops, loads of wood for bench building, kitchen appliances and so many tools - hand and electric - that we could give Bunnings a run for their money. Local businesses have provided a slide compound saw, pedestal drill, compressor, and much more. Local residents are still bringing in tools, furniture and wood.

About 5 of the original committee have been setting the shed up to a basic workable stage and we had our first real Open to the Public day last Wednesday. We had 16 men working there, most had just come along for a look and have assured us they will be regulars. Our big task is to provide projects to keep them busy until this becomes natural, but we have a local business already providing an on-going contract with us to modify wooden pallets for them. It is all systems go and we were particularly chuffed to hear one of the new chums comment, "Wasn't there a lot of laughter around the place today!" We are very proud of how far we have come in a short time, and proud of the Hamilton community. Of course we have a lot more to do and will no doubt be seeking a lot of advice from those who have trodden the Men's Shed road before us.

Please feel free to call in any time you are passing through Hamilton, especially if it is between 9:00am and 3:30pm on a Wednesday.

James McCallum - Steering Committee, Hamilton Men's Shed.
55722152 // 0408545696



*The Australian Men's Shed
Association Newsletter
is supported by*



In order to clarify the confusion that exists in a number of Men's Sheds and the organisations that sponsor and support them, the following statement is made:

There is no relationship between the community-based "Australian Men's Sheds Association (AMSA), representing independent Community Men's Sheds, and the Company "Menshed Australia Ltd".