



# **Koowee Shed**

## **Supporting Rural Men's Health**

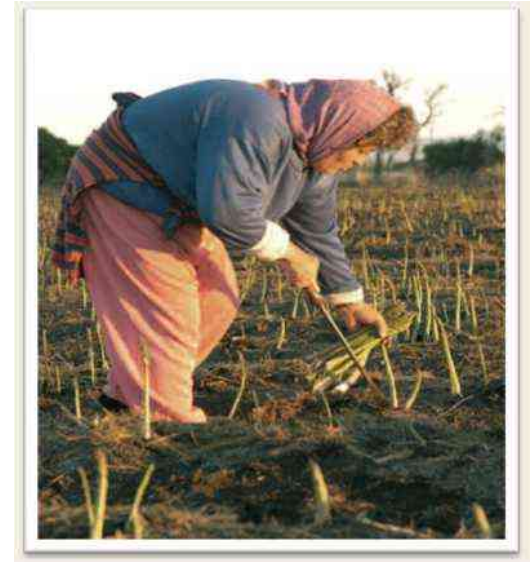
### **NO BULL**



Presentation  
August 2009  
Rick Wakelin

# Koo-wee-rup, Victoria Australia

- Located 75Kms SE Melbourne
- Reclaimed Marshland
- Recognized as major farm area in shire
- Mainly Asparagus, Potato, Dairy, Cattle



# Kooweerup Regional Health Service



- Multi service agency – acute ,extended care, community
- Vision statement. “Towards a Healthier Community”
- Reorientate the health service to be more Health promoting and community focused
- Paradigm shift from Medical Model to Social model

# Why build a shed?

- Second highest level of social disadvantaged in Victoria
  - Older population 11.7% over 70, 22% 50-59yrs
  - Large % no educational quals 65.5%
  - 5.8% with no vehicle
  - Lack of public transport
  - Led to increase in Isolation & Boredom
  - Drought affected area
- (Source: Jesuit Social Services "Unequal in Life" report 2004)

# SAVE THE ~~M~~ WHALES



Photography: Belinda Mason-Lovering

While you read this and view this image, a man somewhere is about to throw a rope around the beam in his shed, another is attaching a hosepipe from his exhaust to the window of his car and yet another is about to turn his wheel into the path of an oncoming semi-trailer.

**5 males suicide in this country every day.**

Whatever the reason, it's too many. If 5 whales beached themselves on Bondi Beach it would be front page news, broadcast all over the world, enormous money, effort and resources would be utilized in trying to save them.

**Yet we lose 5 males a day in this country  
and we seem to accept that.**

- Being sociable can add years to your life

**“a faithful friend is the  
medicine of life”**

**King Solomon**

# Shed Journey

- Land identified within Kooweerup Health
- Public meetings held – community interest
- December 2008 – slab down
- January 2009 – shed erected
- February 2009 – electrical work
- March 2009 – public launch
- April 2009 – first program run
- Programs ongoing

# Men's Shed



# Pit Stop



For men who like to see their family firing on all cylinders;

- Local Health and mediator networks
- EPU
- Open to all men (Dads, Gran-dads, New dads, Step dads etc)
- Assist men to engage with family especially children better



# Community Garden Project

- Community garden
- Workshops
- Students, Men, Community work together
- Remembrance Garden



# Community Art



# Other Projects;

- Active Environments
- Walk & Talk
- Shed Therapy
- Farmers Forums
- Money Minded Workshops
- Beating Burnout sessions
- Other Men's issues

# So Where to from here?

- Which direction? D.mpeg
- **How do we continue to fund our shed?**
  - Self Funded by members – Fees
  - Projects that create revenue
  - Grants – (when available)

# New Challenges

- **Is our shed Sustainable?**
  - We believe it is Sustainability will come if we continue to;
  - we build stronger community partnerships
  - Consolidate our existing relationships
  - Create a greater awareness of the importance of sheds and the benefits to men's health & wellbeing
  - Look at creative ways to engage with our community men better
  - Continuous evaluation (pre & post)

# Ponder this?

- How many sheds is too many?
- Do we need a shed in every community?
- How best do we utilise our resources?
- How do we provide evidence to Governments for future funding or support?

# Take home message

- We are not alone – we are all in this together
  - Suggest continuous evaluation
  - The goal is for a space where men can continue to come and be men
    - Not every one likes wood work!
- So maybe change needs to be considered!
- Resisting change is like holding your breath – your succeed you die”.



**Life is too short with No shed!**

**Live  
Long  
Live  
Well**

**Now, that's a manifesto a man can live  
by!**

**Questions?**