

Prime Minister Rudd Launches the Male Health Policy at Whittlesea Men's shed



Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Warren Snowdon, Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural & Regional Health & regional Health Services launched the first National Male Health Policy on May 7th at the Whittlesea Men's Shed. Prime Minister Rudd spent much of his time sharing a cuppa and a yarn with the men of the shed before launching the policy.

As part of the National Male

Health Policy the Prime Minister and Minister Snowdon announced \$3m over four years for the Australian Men's Shed Association. This new funding is welcomed by AMSA and we are currently working with the Department on program details.

The funding will be of benefit to all men's sheds because it supports AMSA to support all sheds. By building the AMSA administration support team, this funding allows AMSA to continue to provide and improve professional advice and assistance such as promoting self sustainability, shed establishment, occupational health and safety and risk management within the shed movement.

Part of the government funding includes provisions for AMSA to hire support staff that will assist communities to establish new sheds. New AMSA staff will be available to help sheds and communities source donations of money, buildings, equipment or land, as well as helping with building approvals. Funding for equipment will also be available for these new sheds, where there is no other funding to assist.

The priority for supporting new sheds will be given to areas where there are no sheds and meet certain criteria such as areas of high unemployment. It will also assist to establish sheds for priority groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men; men in rural and remote areas; men with a disability, including a mental illness; migrant men; and men who are socially disadvantaged. A set of agreed criteria is being developed to identify priority areas or groups and put in place fair process for allocation of this assistance. This will be posted on the AMSA website in June. Note that funding is not available for sheds and communities to purchase or maintain buildings or land.

The National Male Health Policy has been developed through extensive consultations with health services, health professionals, and males themselves in 26 public forums attended by 1,300 people.

It identifies that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males are particularly vulnerable, living on average 11.5 years less than non-Indigenous males.

The National Male Health policy encourages males to take action to improve their own health and recognises that this requires information, assistance and support.



Minister Snowdon and a Whittlesea Shed Member

The policy focuses on taking action in six priority areas:

1. Optimal health outcomes for males – Deliver initiatives and services that take into account the needs of Australian males and promote optimal health outcomes for all Australian males.
2. Health equity between population groups of males – Recognising that not all Australian males have the same health outcomes, and some groups of males have worse health outcomes than others,

like those living in rural and remote communities, and that different initiatives and services may be needed for different groups.

3. Improved health for males at different life stages – Deliver initiatives and services that consider the health needs of Australian males in different age groups and at key transition points from youth to old age.
4. A focus on preventive health for males – Deliver preventative-health initiatives that take into account the needs of Australian males.
5. Building a strong evidence base on male health – Build the evidence base in Australian male health and use it to inform the development of policies, programs and initiatives.
6. Improved access to health care for males – Tailor health care services and initiatives to

facilitate access by males, particularly for population groups of males at risk of poor health. The National Male Health Policy is available at www.health.gov.au/malehealthpolicy



The Press conference

Professor Macdonald was in Whittlesea too for the Federal Government announcement. He was pleased to see the venue was a big shed because sheds are playing a role in improving men's health. “The Men's Sheds Association sets up sheds as meeting places where men can find friends and talk about things like, well,

men's health”. It's uniquely Australian and it's growing rapidly and I'm proud to be one of the patrons of The Men's Shed Association. It's a place where men can come together not only but also after retirement, support one another, do things together, do things for the community.

AMSA shall have more details on this new funding soon, detailing how AMSA can assist sheds more effectively and the terms and application process for financial assistance.