



# Australian Men's Sheds Association Newsletter

Produced by

*"The Shed" @ Windale*  
ESTABLISHED 2006

For the Australian  
Mens Sheds Association

## “MEN DON'T TALK FACE TO FACE THEY TALK SHOULDER TO SHOULDER” MANLY 2007

This quote from Professor Barry Golding was one of many noteworthy statements made during the Manly shed conference, but was certainly the most repeated and of opinion the one quote that sums up most shedders thoughts of their facilities.

How to sum up in words what all of us who were fortunate enough to be present at the 2007 conference felt and learnt for this first National newsletter is now my challenge. From the opening address from Peter Andrews to the encouraging pledging of support from the Federal Minister for Aging Christopher Pyne and who could overlook that memorable and inspirational speech from Mrs. Judy Richardson where we did not know whether to laugh or cry, but I suspect their was a bit of both, definitely worthy of the emotion packed standing ovation that Judy received.

Shedders from all over Australia gathered for what was an intense 3 days of learning and



sharing of information and experience at the 2007 conference. With a busy schedule of very informative workshops combined with enjoyable dinners and lunches allowing delegates to mingle with each other where I am sure many a new friendship was formed.

As many questions were raised as were answered and the delegates sometimes suffering from information overload would have returned to their sheds with a wealth of valuable information as well as the satisfaction of having shared their own knowledge.

Lunch on Thursday was a special occasion with 28 Coordinators gathering for a special lunch time meeting to discuss the establishment for the formation of a National Association for Mens



**Gary Green and Professor Barry Golding at the Dinner**

sheds, this brief but productive meeting produced a mandate for the associations working group to proceed on the formation of an incorporated association to represent all sheds Nationally.

Organizers of the 2007 conference Ruth Van Herk (Uniting Care) & Ted Donnelly (Lane Cove Mens Shed) are to be congratulated for their efforts in organizing such a wonderful conference which ran so smoothly. Also the support of Uniting Care, and Manly Council was greatly appreciated, and a special mention for the Lord Mayor of Lane Cove Cr Ian Longbottom who dedicated his valuable time to Chair the event in a very entertaining manner.

With so much information shared and ideas generated I am sure the organizing committee would appreciate any feedback or suggestions for the 3rd conference in 2009, any such feedback can be forwarded to Ted Donnelly via email, [shedman@tpg.com.au](mailto:shedman@tpg.com.au)

By David Helmers

## Your Newsletter, Your Contribution

ATTENTION SHEDDERS this is your newsletter and your contribution is vital to the continuation of such. I intend to compose the newsletter every six weeks and I am very open to submissions of new articles of interest to other shedders, these may range from what your shed is doing, tools and techniques, Mens Health advice or issues, I would also like to run a free classified section for sheds wishing to sell or swap or purchase

tools and supplies. I shall also be seeking paid for advertising from commercial organizations in an effort to raise funds for AMSA.

Please submit any articles or suggestions via email to [david.helmiers@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:david.helmiers@mn.catholic.org.au)

Articles must be submitted in Word format with photos attached separately.

**Also we need a name for this publication IDEAS WELCOME?**

### How do we contact you?

Sheds are eligible to be members of the Association when we have the following up-to-date information:-

- Name of Shed**
- Name of main & alternative contact**
- E-mail address of contact**
- Telephone number of contact**
- Mailing address of Shed (or contact if different)**

# **AUSTRALIAN MENS SHED ASSOCIATION- CURRENT SITUATION**

## **BY TED DONNELLY**

At the Conference a presentation was made on the development of AMSA over the last few months - what we are aiming for and where we are now. This is a summary of the key points. As the session included many people who were not directly involved with Men's Sheds a separate meeting was held with Shed delegates to get their inputs regarding the organisation and planning of the Association.

### **Background for the development of an Association**

Since the Lakes Entrance conference in Nov 2005 the Shed concept has grown rapidly. Our website database now lists 214 Sheds but we know there are a number of other groups who are not on that list. About 40% of these groups are still in the Researching, Planning or Starting up stages and all are looking for information and advice. Because there was no central reference source a great deal of duplication and "wheel re-invention" has occurred. In addition there is now a lot of interest by outside bodies such as Government depts, Funding organisations, Men's Health groups and of course the Media.

It was felt, therefore, that we should get ourselves organised to help other groups and to promote **our** idea of **Independent Community Men's Sheds** by means of a National Association. In April all the Sheds on our website were contacted and the Aims of AMSA were defined to assess the level of interest. There was a very favourable and positive response to setting up the Association.

### **Establishment of Workgroup**

At the beginning of this year an "ad hoc" work group was set up to get the process going. This comprised people who had been involved in the original Lakes Entrance discussions and were well known for their experience and long term interest in Men's Sheds. To ensure a national interest the workgroup covered most States where the Shed idea is active. The "**Australian Men's Sheds Association**" (AMSA) was incorporated based on the standard "Model Rules" which we will replace with our own constitution.

An early task was to arrange an election for committee members. However, it became clear that a large number of sheds are still in the planning or start up stages and do not have much contact with other sheds or knowledge of people that they may be asked to vote on. This makes a meaningful vote difficult. It was, therefore, suggested that the existing workgroup be approved as the interim committee for a year. They can then co-opt representatives from other States and people who may have particular relevant experience. All of the Sheds who expressed an opinion were in favour of this action and it will be voted on at this conference. The interim committee should have as a major aim to set up the process for elections in 12 months and help to develop regional "cluster" groups of Sheds to improve personal knowledge of who they might nominate as their representatives.

### **Aims of the Association**

The Aims were set out by the workgroup, circulated to all the Sheds that we have listed on the website. No objections were raised.

**To maintain communications between "Sheds"**

**To publicise and promote the Men's shed concept**

**To represent Men's Sheds to Governments Funding sources etc.**

**To provide Start up information, Documentation and assistance.**

**To assist in training, OH&S, funding and insurance advice.**

**To act as a neutral body where overall collective decisions are required regarding the Association.**

**The Association will not have any direct control or responsibility for any individual "Shed".**

*To maintain communications between "Sheds"* AMSA aims to be a communications hub where Sheds can share ideas on projects, training, materials, local events, Committee business and other relevant information. This will mainly be via the website.

The website was set up to be very open but this has led to it being very heavily attacked by spammers. The existing website is very basic and needs a lot of development - from Shed members or anyone else.

An important requirement is a regular Association newsletter and The Shed @ Windale has volunteered their existing newsletter to get this going.

*To publicise and promote the Men's shed concept*

People involved with Sheds agree that the Men's Shed idea works and it is a concept that is well worth promoting. This requires that effective publicity campaigns are developed and maintained throughout the media, locally and nationally.

*To represent Men's Sheds to Governments Funding sources etc.* An advantages of an Association is that our strength in numbers can be used to source both government help and commercial funding or in kind sponsorship. It is far more attractive and easier for large corporations and funding bodies to sponsor a National Association than individual Sheds. Another area where a collective approach is useful is obtaining assistance and clarification with compliance issues such as OH&S in Sheds.

*To provide Start up information, Documentation and assistance.* Lane Cove Shed has used their experience of helping the start up of up to 60 new sheds to produce a Manual on "Setting up a Men's Shed." This covers all the aspects that usually crop up and also includes standard admin and OH&S forms together with signs for the machines and workshop. The Shed sponsors (North Sydney Region of UnitingCare Ageing) have covered the costs and have offered it to AMSA to help new Sheds. All sales proceeds go to the Association.

*To assist in training, OH&S, funding and insurance advice.*

The AMSA manual provides information, forms & templates for OH&S, new member induction and training. This will be backed up with the website which will be used as a Query centre.

Many Sheds have difficulties providing adequate insurance. AMSA has already had discussions with a number of insurance suppliers to obtain a comprehensive Men's Sheds insurance policy. Such a policy would be considerably cheaper than individual sheds can obtain but the cost would depend on how many Sheds would be included. To progress these discussions we therefore need to know if your Shed would be interested in such a group insurance policy.

*The Association will not have any direct control or responsibility for any individual "Shed".*

The function of the Association is to provide advice and assistance to members but it will not have any direct control over individual sheds which will remain totally autonomous.

### **Membership**

The following classes of membership are proposed.

**Individual Sheds** - This includes Sheds that are still in the Planning/Start up stage as well as those that are fully operational. All Sheds that send in their contact details are eligible for membership. Only operating Sheds can vote in Association matters and voting rights are restricted to "Sheds" not individuals

**Independent Supporter** - These would be experienced members who have now formally retired from their Shed but maintain links.

**Associates** - People with an interest in helping the growth of Men's Sheds but may not have any direct involvement in the conduct of an actual Shed. This would include individuals (perhaps representing other bodies such as Universities), Government departments, Community Support agencies, etc.

### **Organization**

The basic units will be the independent Sheds. Many of these are already contacting neighbouring Sheds forming "cluster" groups to exchange ideas, expand training or join together for better purchasing power. These may link up as State groups for access to State Governments, promotions, funding etc. Victoria has already set up their State Association. AMSA then becomes a central source to coordinate these aims, to act on a national basis and to act as a communications hub.

### **Funding**

Setting up the Association requires two distinct sources of funding - one for setup charges and then the annual running costs.

The Set up costs are "one offs" covering the purchase of hardware such as a computer, printer and telephone. We have just obtained a Government grant which will cover these items. UnitingCare Ageing have donated the website and are covering the costs of improvements and the Association registration fees. The initial set up costs, therefore, are basically covered.

How we deal with the annual running costs has still to be resolved. The main running costs will be phone, postage, website operating and annual registration fees. Eventually these running costs will probably have to be born by the member Sheds and the level will depend on the number of members.

However, using volunteers, we plan to run for as long as possible without charging fees to give the Association time to work out what realistic costs will be and for members to assess whether they think membership really is worthwhile. To help us do this we will need donations or Grants. The first donation has just been received from Chamberlain Australia Pty Ltd based in Lane Cove.

All the work to date has been voluntary but it is becoming clear that if an Association of this size and complexity is to progress quickly and efficiently then staff will probably have to be employed. This is an outstanding question that members must decide but it will only be possible if the costs are covered by outside funding.

### **Current situation**

***"Australian Men's Sheds Association" (AMSA) is incorporated.***

***An initial workgroup is in place.***

***The start up costs for equipment have been covered.***

***The website for communications exists but needs improving***

***A Start up manual and Shed documentation is available.***

***An Association Insurance scheme can be available.***

***Decisions are required on Admin structure, Election process and future development plans.***

### **What you can do to help**

The Association is still in an early stage and we need volunteers from members or outside helpers to take on various functions, some of which require specialist knowledge. Topics where help is needed are:-

**Obtaining funding and donations to maintain free membership**

**Setting up the AMSA insurance scheme.**

**Devising and running publicity campaigns**

**Helping with the newsletter**

**Improving and running our website.**

**Lobbying Governments and organizations.**

**Drawing up the constitution.**

**Obtaining charitable tax status.**

**Volunteers to represent specialist groups, eg Indigenous Sheds.**

**Volunteers to monitor specific aspects for the website, "What's On?" and collecting publicity information from other Sheds.**

**We also need interim committee members to represent South Australia and Queensland.**

*If you are willing to help, contact AMSA by emailing [shedman@tpg.com.au](mailto:shedman@tpg.com.au) or write to Australian Men's Sheds Association, 15 Figtree Street, Lane Cove, NSW, 2206.*

## THE SHED @ WINDALE HOSTS TRY A TRADE DAY

On September 21st the Shed @ Windale hosted the first of two Try A Trade days scheduled for 2007. 360 year nine students from 12 Newcastle High Schools attended the day and had the opportunity to experience a choice of 35 different trades on display.

Try A Trade is a very hands on experience for the students participating, they have the opportunity to try their hand at basic trade skills ranging from Hairdressing and Veteri-



Students Participating in Try A Trade

with the students having four 30 minute sessions to attend having pre selecting the exhibits they wish to participate in.

The organizing committee were very pleased with the venue, with the shed having so much varied equipment for the exhibitors to util-

nary Services through to Welding and Brick Laying.

The day aims at encouraging students to peruse a career within a trade addressing the current skills shortages that most industries are currently experiencing.

The day ran smoothly



Mathew Morris Member for Charlestown & Member for Lake Macquarie and Lord Mayor Greg Piper opening

ize as well as being able to use the space next door in the PCYC function room.

The Next Try A Trade day shall be held on November 30

### **DECISIONS MADE AT THE CONFERENCE**

Following the general paper outlining AMSA's current situation a separate meeting was held with 28 Shed representatives who were delegates at the conference. A summary of the main items are:-

Meeting chairman was Gary Green (Orbost Men's Shed)

Motion that this meeting of representatives of active Men's Sheds from around Australia move to form the Australian Men's Sheds Association Inc. Carried unanimously.

Motion that the interim committee remain in place for the next 12 months and that an election will be held no later than October 2008 to elect a national executive. The meeting acknowledges the committee needs to co-opt more people to assist with the growing workload of this interim committee. Carried unanimously.

Motion that the voting procedure for all AMSA meetings would be "one vote per Shed". Carried unanimously.

Motion that the first year's membership would be free, after which in consultation with all AMSA members a small annual fee will be set. Carried unanimously.

Current representatives on the interim committee are Gary Green and Neil Wakeman from Victoria, Ted Donnelly and Stuart Holmes from NSW, John Waters from Tasmania and Bill Johnstone from WA.

Representatives are required from SA and Queensland.

Clarified that it is the Shed organization that becomes the voting member of AMSA - not individuals.

The Windale Shed volunteered to produce the AMSA newsletter.

Lyn Kinder explained the current position of the Victorian Men's Shed Association. This will link in with AMSA.

Discussions were held on how AMSA should be structured and how elections should be organized but no decisions

## **Victorian Men's Shed Association**

Written by Lyn Kinder, Secretary

Spurred on by a series of exchanges and relationships, spring boarding from the 1st National Men's Shed Conference October 2005, The Victorian Men's Shed Association first met on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at the Brimbank Men's Shed. The intention of the first meeting was

...To acknowledge where we are now, to discover where we wanted to be and discuss how to get there...and what would be the next steps. By the meeting in Ballarat 15<sup>th</sup> June 2007 numbers had doubled, the Statement of Purpose was developed and the decision was made to become incorporated. We felt we needed to get organised with the increased interest and recognition of our clout. The third meeting was held in Melbourne on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2007 elected a management committee and Cathy Donovan from the Department for Victorian Communities spoke about funding for Men's Shed's. This meeting was also a celebration of the Launch of Rick Hayes report, Men's Sheds: Exploring the Evidence for Best Practice. The next meeting will be in Bendigo late in November 2007. Our aims are stated in the Statement of Purpose and our Mission Statement is still in the toolbox but in a nutshell we want to work with the Australian Men's Shed Association by providing the "local touch".

## Classifieds

This section of the Newsletter is free to member sheds to advertise for any shed related requirements, such as items for sale or wanted, tools and equipment parts and accessories or even assistance and information. We are hopeful this section of the newsletter shall expand to provide a much needed forum of sharing information, but it is up to you the shedders to contribute, remember this publication is National and has a growing circulation. For Classified listings please email details to david.helmerts@mn.catholic.org.au

### "Setting up A Shed"

*These informative handbooks contain over 90 pages designed to assist those who are currently working towards starting a shed project.*

*Ted Donnelly & Ruth van Herk have written this publication for AMSA utilizing their many years of experience from being involved with Men's Sheds.*

*The contents of the handbook are listed on page 7. For further information or to order contact Ted via email at [shedman@tpg.com.au](mailto:shedman@tpg.com.au)*

### Shed Tip - Never Say No

A useful tip for shedders never say no to donations of old tools and equipment. I know we all get bombarded sometimes with people being good Samaritans and trying to palm off what can only be perceived as old junk to the benefit of a shed, but a recent experience at the shed @ Windale with the donation of two antique welders. The machines in question were too old and would have been an OH&S issue and they weighed around 300kg each. Upon further investigation around 40kg of this was copper and brass fetching \$6.20 per kg this proved a good money maker for the shed. So always investigate donations thoroughly you may be surprised what they can bring.

## GREG MILLAN ON MENS HEALTH

Greg Millan has kindly volunteered his services to contribute to our newsletter by writing a Mens Health Feature, Greg is a qualified Social Worker, Health Educator and Trainer who has worked in the area of men's health promotion for over fifteen years developing and implementing many workshops, programs and resources covering a wide range of men's health issues. He has worked for various Government and Non-government organisations and is currently a Men's Health Consultant working out of Newcastle and is a Director of the Confederation of Men's Organisations, Australia's peak National body for men's health and wellbeing. He is a Member of the International Society for Men's Health (ISMH) and a Member of the Board of Advisors of the Men's Health Network USA and Toronto Men's Health Network, Canada.

He was employed by Hunter Health in 2003 to deliver the Hunter Health Men's Health Plan, a first in Australia for any Area Health Service. He is currently involved in both national and local projects and has been a men's health writer for various publications over the last five years



Mens Health Consultant Greg Millan

## BUILDING A CALMER MAN BY GREG MILLAN

Welcome to our new Men's Health feature. In every edition of the newsletter I will be writing about issues of importance to all men. I believe that men are very concerned about their health and well being these days and part of making men healthier is providing more information about men's health concerns.

Lets start by looking at some ways of staying calm and relatively stress free in our lives.

Stress is what happens to us when we get threatened by some *change* in our lives, and life is changing so rapidly that we can feel stressed every day. It's not the changes in our lives that we can deal with that bother us, but the changes that we feel we can't deal with that produce a sense of stress. Sometimes these can be changes to our health or our mobility as we grow older. Stress can be short lived and manageable but long term it can lead to disturbances of physical, mental and emotional health, so it's good to try and develop a plan for staying calm over the long term.

Eating well and reducing your intake of sugar, salt and saturated fats will help you feel better and more able to cope. Resting, manage time better and taking some time out for yourself is the way to stay calm and relaxed. It's also alright when we feel stressed to rest and sleep more, it's the bodies clear message to you that it needs time out to repair and rebuild.

Spending time talking with friends about what's going on has been proven to have one of the most significant impacts on reducing stress and restoring good health.

Simple exercise, like walking more, swimming or running can help to keep you calm. So can meditation, yoga or Tai Chi. It's good to have a range of techniques that you can use to increase the level of calm in your life and whatever way you choose to relax, make sure what you do works *for you*.

And don't forget to keep a sense of humour and try to have a good laugh at least once a day. Like a good workout at the gym, laughter actually releases endorphins, the body's own natural painkillers, and makes you feel better.



Delegates at the conference eating well and spending time with friends are vital contributors to remaining healthy

## The Mobile Men's Shed

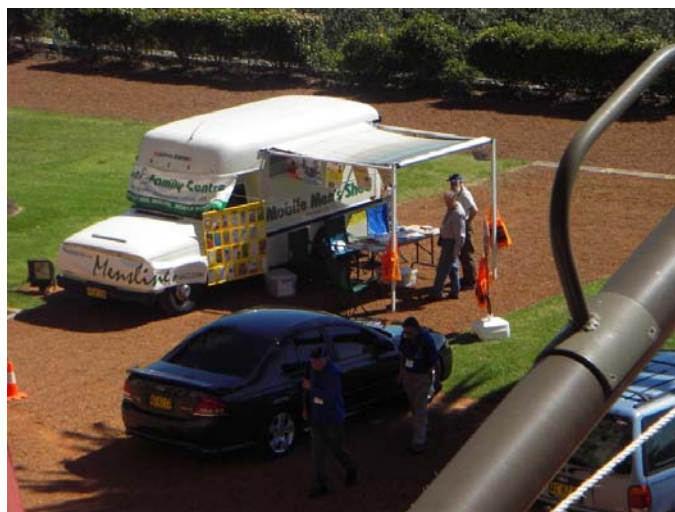
By Bill Taylor

The Mobile Men's Shed, "Arty" the "Heartful Dodger" traveled to Sydney in convoy with "Chiffers" a "salubriously" appointed support vehicle/motor home. The convoy, driven by Andy, Maddog and sometimes Bill, on the trip from Lismore to Sydney was a Men's Shed-Crawl. Sheds visited on the way were: the Grafton Shed; overnight at the Nambucca Shed; the Port Macquarie/Wauchope Shed at "Timber Town"; and overnight at the Shed @ Windale. Then on to the Lakeside Holiday Park at North Narrabeen for the duration of the conference.

Whilst resting at the Holiday Park, the interesting, but relatively uneventful trip, suddenly turned serious when we discovered the brake and clutch fluid had been topped up with gearbox oil. Maddog made a start on repairs but quickly discovered it was a bigger repair job than we could handle.

Consultations at the evenings Function referred us to a Brake and Clutch Repair Specialist. Early next morning the NRMA winched "Arty" onto its tow truck and off it went for repairs. By midday we were back on the road, but unfortunately too late for the TV publicity etc. However, bringing "Arty" to the Conference was a great opportunity to show others what our project is about, and particularly our "Skilled Mates" program. Our return trip was relatively uneventful, apart from a terrifying electrical storm as we arrived at Buledel-lah, and Maddog's late night fire fighting efforts, which averted a potential serious threat to highway traffic, after a young person had lit a fire and then left it unattended.

The hospitality shown by the visited sheds was most appreciated, and the energy and enthusiasm demonstrated by the various members of the sheds was inspirational. For those who weren't lucky enough to attend the Conference, the following is some information about our particular Shed project



The Mobile Men's Shed at the Manly Conference



The Mobile Men's Shed being famously towed away for repairs

**The Mobile Men's Shed (MMS)** is an outreach service of the Men & Family Centre. It is based around a converted 1974 Dodge, ex Victorian ambulance, that has been designed to carry "tools" to assist men to build the life they desire.

The MMS is operated by a team of "Skilled Mates" (trained volunteers) who keep it on the road with ongoing maintenance and improvements, and "man" it on its outings. It provides an opportunity for men to give something back to their community.

The Mobile Men's Shed began operation on a voluntary basis with a donated vehicle, a 1974 Dodge ex-ambulance, in 2003. It has attracted a great deal of interest at community events like Primex and local markets. The MMS has been developed on the successful Mobile Men's Shed model of the Tweed Family Centre.

The MMS provokes men's curiosity, & provides a venue in which they can inquire about services for themselves and their families and talk through some of the issues they are facing. It serves as a platform for men's health promotion and a referral

point to services in the Northern Rivers

### Men & Family Centre

The Men & Family Centre Inc. is a non-profit, charitable, community organisation for men and families encouraging respectful and fulfilling relationships. The main projects of the Centre are:

Northern Rivers Mensline, telephone peer-support

MEND for men concerned about their abusive behaviour

WEND for support of women who have experienced violence

BUILD group programs including Self-esteem, Loss & Grief, Women & Anger

Dads & Kids Playgroups,

MATES weekly support and discussion group for men

Mobile Men's Shed, an outreach vehicle for community events

These projects are team-based with members of the teams making most of the day to day decisions. While some projects have all-male teams, the MEND team has men and women working together to support families to end violence and abusive behavior and create respectful relationships.

The Centre began in 1993 with Northern Rivers Mensline under the auspices of Lismore Family Support. This grass-roots initiative offered support to men and families via the telephone. In the early years a large number of men called Mensline with concerns for their own anger or abusive behaviour. These calls inspired the Centre to begin MEND our became the first government funded project.



## The Mobile Men's Shed Continued

### Skilled Mates training

Skilled Mates is a skills-based program for people who are interested in learning more about working with, and supporting men in their relationships. The course acknowledges and recognises the challenges that men face in today's world of changing social roles and responsibilities, and provides a space for participants to develop a range of skills and knowledge. No previous experience or knowledge is required —only a willingness to learn, explore and listen.

The course combines theory and practice with a central focus on developing knowledge and skills (**tools**). Skilled Mates is a 10 session, 35 hour course (plus an additional 10-15 hours for those wishing to achieve a TAFE statement of attainment), and has been designed to give participants a range of skills and knowledge in a variety of areas:

- Interpersonal Communication
- Dealing with interpersonal conflict
- Men's Health
- The "Skilled Helper" Model
- Group facilitation
- Effective oral & written communication

### **NATIONAL MEN'S SHEDS INSURANCE**

AMSA is discussing this with a number of insurance suppliers, to provide cover at a lower cost than individual Sheds can obtain on their own.

However these companies can only quote when they know the numbers involved so, if you are interested in such a scheme (either now or when your renewal is due), could you contact AMSA on [shedman@tpg.com.au](mailto:shedman@tpg.com.au)

### The Australian Mens Sheds Association Newsletter is supported by



Ageing - Northern Sydney Region

Produced By



## "SETTING UP A SHED" A NEW AMSA MANUAL

By Ted Donnelly

This 91 page manual has just been released through AMSA and is based on the experience of nearly 60 start-up operations. It explains the various planning and start-up stages, what will be involved and how to carry out the project. The appendices include basic forms for admin, training and OH&S procedures (including machine and workshop safety signs) which can be copied for immediate use.

Whilst it has been written primarily for organizations thinking about starting up a Shed, a lot of the information is also useful for existing Sheds. The contents are given below and for further information (or to order a copy contact Ted at [shedman@tpg.com.au](mailto:shedman@tpg.com.au)

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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 Shed Association (AMSA), representing independent Community Men's Sheds, and the Company "Menshed Australia Ltd".

There is no relationship between AMSA supporters Centacare and Uniting Care and the company

