



Shed Torque

**The Official Newsletter of the
Mount Beauty & District Men's Shed**

Issue 10 – February 2025



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Here we are again, another year, another shed torque, so I wish all of you a "Happy and prosperous New Year."

It's been very quiet on the news front from the Shed due to Christmas and New Year, so let's start with a smile, courtesy of Spike Milligan:



Welcome to new members

- Barton, Glenn
 - Terry, Don
 - Merritt, Glenn
 - Pizzolitto, Paul
 - Hansen, Michael
 - Bauer, Michael
 - Connelly, Ray
 - Behrendorff, Graham
 - Wilson, Ian
-

Important Dates & Events

1. **Murray/Hume Cluster Meeting** (Myrtelford Men's Shed): **Wednesday, February 19th**, 10:00 a.m. The Shed would like to invite a couple of representatives to attend. Interested?
 2. **Future Shed BBQs**—The committee has decided to discontinue monthly BBQs and hold them for special events instead.
 3. **Committee Meeting** (March) — There will be no meeting in March.
 4. **Launch of the 4M's Video recently produced** – **Tuesday 25th February** at 10:00 am at the NH Centre. Refer to page 5/6 for details. You are most welcome to attend.
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A new Shed initiative ... Open ALL Hours

The Shed **Opened ALL Hours** from Wednesday, **4th December 2024**.

The committee decided to open the Shed more often to get more usage out of the facility.

We have a great resource—the Shed and recreation room, equipment, machinery, and tools—but it needs to be *used more effectively* so members can access it at other times.

The two regular operating days only suit some members. We will be '**Open ALL Hours**' to cater for those who would like to attend at their convenience.

As well as the current two days per week (Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm), the Shed will be open to members from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm **seven days per week** (including Tuesday and Wednesday).

The **attached [POLICY](#)** has been developed and must be read by all members. Click the link.

In summary

1. Hours are 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, seven days a week.
2. For **safety and insurance** reasons, two people must be present, one of whom must be a member. The non-member can be a woman.
3. The main door will be locked **with a code**. *Contact the secretary secretary@mountbeautymensshed.org.au to get the door code.*
4. The door will have a **video camera** above it, so whoever enters will be recorded. The committee can access the recordings.
5. Members wishing to use **specialised tools and equipment** must be assessed by one of our Workshop Panel members and checked off in our system. This assessment must be conducted on a Tuesday or Wednesday when Panel members are in the Shed. Protective gear must be used as appropriate.
6. Members (and the second person) using the Shed *outside of regular days and hours* **must sign the sign-in book and record the project they are working on next to their name.**
7. On leaving, ensure the lights, heater, air conditioning, and urn are off, all doors are locked, and **you have signed out.**

The working group for this project included Paul L'Huillier (Convenor), Peter Donnan, Ian Howley, and Phil Armitage. We thank [Mal Darwent](#) and [Warwick Mitchell](#) for installing the lock and [Gerardo Altman](#), a local audio/video consultant, for installing the video camera. [Peter Donnan](#) arranged the lock purchase and negotiated with Gerardo regarding the video camera.

SMILE by Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious, you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I walked around the corner, and someone saw me grin,
When he smiled, I realised I had passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile and then realised it was worth it,
A single smile like mine could travel around the earth,
So, if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected,
Start an epidemic and get the world infected.

Go on, give yourself a little Smile.

I asked a really old bloke, why after 90 years, he still called his wife, "Love, darling, or Honey".

"Well 10 years ago I forgot her name and I'm now too scared to ask her".

Linesman – Les Bevan

Remember the last Issue? We featured our linesman, **Les Bevan**. Well, this photo proves his beginnings.

We asked him to restage the incident, but he gave a very brief refusal.



Teardrop Feather Banner

Here it is: our two new collapsible, waft-able, portable, and removable feather-type banners, so we know where we are and that we are in attendance. They will be used at events we attend away from the Shed.

It was a good idea at the time.

About four months, three committee meetings, and 25 emails ago, everyone but the dog contributed in some way, although I reckon he just lifted a leg when it was initially proposed. But no one



can deny that it has been worthwhile after all the careful consideration, time, and effort invested in the project.

Poor Old Santa!

He has kept Mount Beauty in mind, as it was Christmas, and the money raised will be donated to a worthy community organisation.

The Shed collected \$500 from businesses that hired a Santa or an Elf for six weeks around Christmas.

But none of this would have happened without the shed volunteers, who delivered, picked up, and stored the items until the next time.



Thank you all, especially *Peter Donnan* and his colleague *Henry Ziemnicki*, who have been involved with this project for the last three years.

Off Cuts – projects at the Shed

- Cutting Boards to be sold at the Information Centre (Irvin & Larry)
 - Table restoration and repair (Don)
 - Repair small cabinet and fish tank for Opp Shop (Don)
 - *Big Lips* Sunglasses Holder (Mal)
 - Air Compressor hose installation (Mal & Vaclav)
 - Software updates – Microsoft 365 and new email client. (Paul)
 - Wood Lathe repair (Michael)
 - Raised Planter Box (Warwick)
 - Guitar making (Phil & Don)
 - 3D Printing (Paul)
 - Guards for Grinder (Barry)
 - Safety Audit (Ian)
 - CNC Machine sign making (Paul)
 - Duty Rosters (Cleaning & Mowing) (Noel)
 - Alarm System reset (Dick)
 - Wheels for metal band saw (Les & Peter M)
 - Producing a new belt sander from spare parts (Les & Peter M)
 - Shed Torque – February '25 (Irvin)
-

A community initiative

Dick Puttyfoot has got involved with a new initiative regarding us old folk, which involved him, *Barb Talbot*, and *Dr Laura Zagorski* making a video in and around the Shed.

I requested an interim report from him; this is what he sent:

I have the new brochure to scan for you.

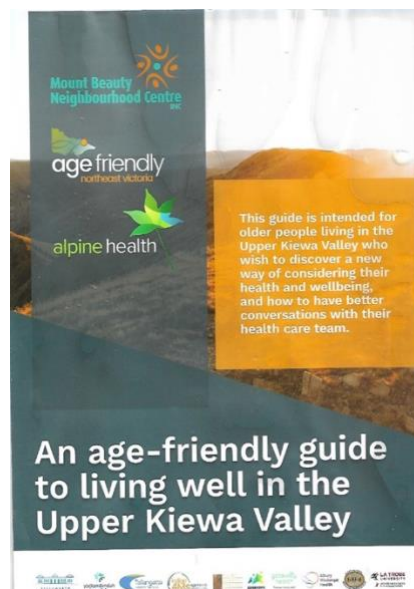
Red Productions filmed the video over two days, with the crew working a full day each day. *Barbara Talbot* and I were available for half a day on both days. *Dr. Laura Zagorski* participated all day Friday.

The crew was highly professional, and it was hard work to get the words, actions, smile and keep looking at the camera.

The main message from this Media Production is advertised as the **4M's**.

- What **M**atters to me
- **M**obility
- **M**edication
- **M**ental Health

The video will be launched at the NH Centre on Tuesday, 25th February, at 10:30 am. You are welcome to attend.



Did you know?

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used?

Well, because that's the way they built them in England, and English engineers designed the first US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the wagon tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

So, why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that same wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break more often on some of the old, long distance roads in England . You see, that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since.

And what about the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match or run the risk of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome , they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Therefore, the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

Bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder 'What horse's arse came up with this?', you may be exactly right.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses. (Two horses' arses.)

Now, the twist to the story: When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah . The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.



So, a major Space Shuttle design feature, of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system, was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's behind!



Mal Darwent – Profile



I was born in Adelaide in 1943. The family moved to Melbourne after the 2nd World War and built a family home in Kew. I attended the Kew Central School, followed by Richmond Technical School. In 1959, I was accepted into the P.M.G. as an apprentice carpenter in the postal workshops.

After 10 years, I was ready for a change and had made steps towards gaining entry into teaching through R.M.I.T. and Melbourne Teachers College. My first posting was at Mount Beauty HS in 1970, and I never left. I spent 28 years there and was fortunate during this time to be able to extend my knowledge and interests through courses in manual arts.

I married Wendy in 1972, and we had three children: Joel, Erica and Evan. The years passed quickly, working on our house and then a holiday house in Lake Tyers where we spent a lot of holiday time with friends and family.

After I retired from teaching in 1999, I did general carpentering maintenance in the Valley for the next 10 years.

When the kids had grown up we saw much more of Australia. I have developed a lot of interest and spend a lot of time thinking up and working on projects, usually making 'silk purses out of sows' ears'. I have no trouble keeping busy.

I have a big shed at home but still enjoy the company of the BIG SHED at Mount Beauty.

Previous Editor's note (2020) — *With Mal's skill set and interests, he is a very sought-after resource in the Shed. He is ever-obliging, and nothing is too much trouble for him. His last project was making six bee hives, all sold. He is the team leader for the current Neighbourhood Centre Project.*

Further comment from Vinnie (2024) — *I have worked with Mal on many occasions and have appreciated his expertise in everything he does, as well as his sense of humour and camaraderie.*

Some of Mal's latest projects

Our *Workaholic* member Mal Darwent has been busy again setting up things in the Shed using highly skilled labour. This time, an air compressor hose to get it off the floor on in the main Shed and the other in the West Wing.

Maybe the thought was that the 'SHOUT' would be loud enough when he fell off. Mind you, " Who else would have done the job".

I get dizzie going up the front door steps!



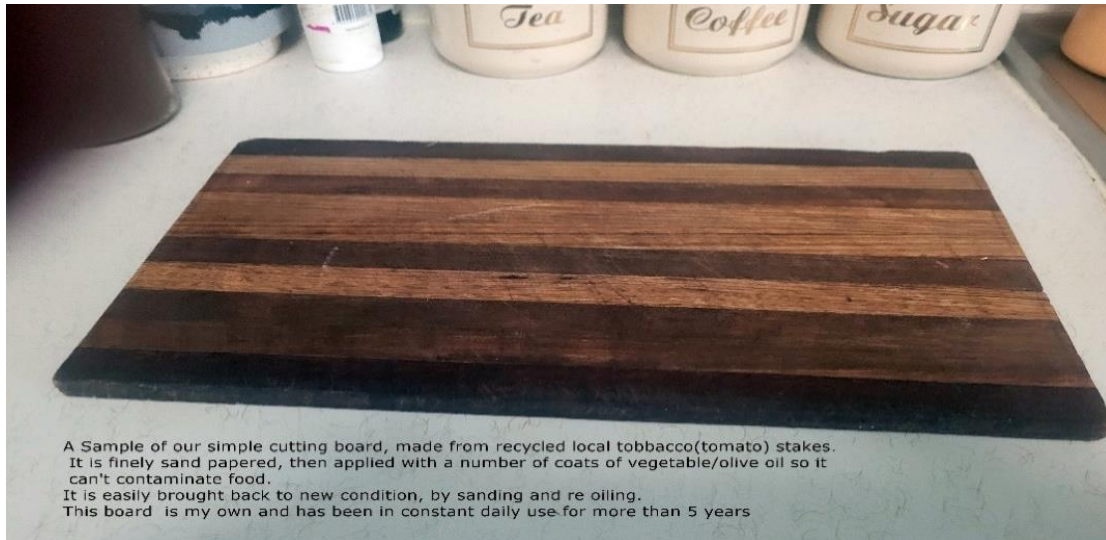
Mal at work, assisted by Don Terry



Left: Vaclav Marcak & Mal Darwent installing a compressor cable and dust extractor.

Now, he's at it again with **another strange project**, but this time, he needs everyone's help. We need to come up with a suitable name for his creation.





Not to be outdone, *Larry and I*, have been busy making **five cutting boards** like this one for the Information Centre.

Time to laugh!

1. "There is only one cure for grey hair. A Frenchman invented it.
It is called the guillotine."
 2. "I'm at an age when my back goes out more than I do."
 3. "Q: How can you increase the heart rate of your over-60-year-old husband?
A: Tell him you're pregnant."
 4. I blame my Mum; she fed me Rice Crispies for breakfast.
Now, when I get up, my bones go Snap, Crackle and Pop.
-

Congratulations to Dick Puttyfoot, who gained a **Certificate in First Aid**.

*"I know who to go to first when I run out of breath.
Dick can waft his certificate in front of my face."*

Statement of Attainment – 23rd December 2024

A Statement of Attainment is issued by a Registered Training Organisation when an individual has completed one or more accredited units of competency from nationally recognised qualification(s)/courses(s)

*This is a statement that **Richard Puttyfoot** has fulfilled the requirements for:*



HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation

HLTAID010 Provides basic emergency life support
HLTAID011 Provide First Aid

The First Aid Code of Practice in the Workplace states that refresher training in CPR should be undertaken annually, and first aid qualifications should be renewed every three years,

I found this little gem of information in my files, and I thought it explained why we all enjoy our "Men's Shed" and why we go there.

There is no meaning in sitting and doing nothing.
Get out there, **do something.**

"The proper function of Man is to Live, not Exist."

How to Find Meaning in Older Age

Carry your life purpose into retirement and reap the benefits.

The **National Ageing Research Institute** asked 23 retirees aged between 69 and 93 what gives them meaning and purpose now and whether this has changed.

1. Most said little had changed: *they'd learnt their core values from their parents* and tried to live up to them.
2. *A sense of community was key to them now*, whether it was a family, neighbourhood or local group of interest.
3. But by far, the most important thing *was feeling that they could make a contribution*, whether by volunteering, caring for others, helping families, doing odd jobs, or even taking care of themselves so they didn't rely on others.
4. They said that doing things for people *"satisfies a need within us for being worthwhile"* and *"increases our sense of self and value"*.

5 Ways to Live with Purpose

1. **Discover your passion.** In later life, you might have more time to dedicate to your interests, whether they are artistic, creative, political, spiritual, or recreational.
2. **Plan for it:** Start thinking about how you might like to spend your time when you're older.
3. **Adapt to your circumstances:** If your job or career has given life meaning, you could volunteer in the same sector or act as a mentor.

4. **Make the best of your situation:** During retirement, you might be thrown into a scenario you never envisaged, such as caring for a parent. It's an opportunity for giving that can be a privilege and provide great satisfaction.
5. **Make a contribution:** Whether as a home handyman or soup kitchen volunteer, "*giving back*" benefits everyone.

While you are thinking about retirement and other things, here's a poem I composed 20 years ago when I first retired;

Community Projects



The new sign at **Rotary Park** is now in place.
From left: *Bob Flower* and *Dr. Mark Zagorski*.

The sign was made using our CNC router, thanks to *Phil Armitage*.

Donation to the Upper Kiewa Valley Support Group

The funds the Shed raised (**\$500**) by hiring out Santas over Christmas to local businesses were donated to a worthy cause. Pictured at the handover are from left: *Henry Ziemnicki, Helen McDougall, Barb Kiek & Peter Donnan*.
The UKV Support Group assists local individuals and families in need.



Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)— Results

The course aimed to empower men with skills to support people they know who might be at risk of suicide. We know that starting conversations about this topic can be difficult. It was a five-hour course held in October 2024 at the Shed. *We had eight members taking part.*



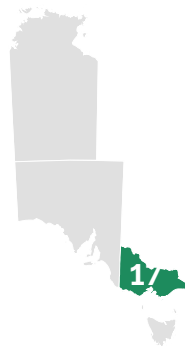
MHFA Conversations about Suicide in Men's Sheds: Key Findings



Who took part in the trial?



Sheds across Australia took part in the trial and **formed 19 clusters**



14.5% had previous mental health training

63.5% had previous experience with suicidality (own/someone they know)



261

Shedders participated in the **MHFA in Men's sheds trial**



31-96

Participant age range, with an average age of 72 years



9

Clusters of sheds were assigned to the **intervention group** – completed two follow-up surveys after the MHFA course



10

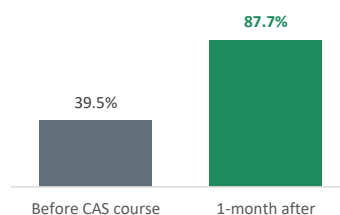
Clusters of sheds were assigned to the **control group** – completed all surveys before attending the MHFA course

What was the impact of the CAS course?

Overall, the MHFA Conversations about Suicide course had a **positive impact on helping behaviours and attitudes** towards someone who is **feeling suicidal**.

The **MHFA Conversations about Suicide course** was found to increase:

1) Intentions to use recommended actions to support a person at risk of suicide






e.g. Ask if John has been thinking about killing himself.



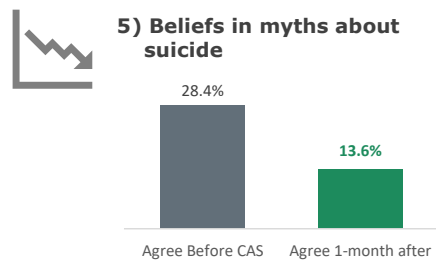
MHFA Conversations about Suicide in Men's Sheds: Key Findings



The **MHFA Conversations about Suicide course** also improved:




-  **2) Support provided** to a person at risk of suicide
-  **3) Confidence to support someone** who is at risk of suicide
-  **4) Positive attitudes** towards people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts

The **MHFA Conversations about suicide course** decreased:




Example myth: There is a risk that asking someone about suicide will make them start thinking about it.

What was most helpful about the course?

-  **Opened up my thoughts and approach** to men's mental health issues and to be a **better carer** for men's needs.
- Participant
-  Learning that it is **ok to ask someone** if they are thinking about suicide.
- Participant
-  On **how to start a conversation about suicide** and what and where help can be found
- Participant

How did we determine impact?

We used a comparison group which allowed us to **compare** what happens in people who did the **Conversations about Suicide course** with people who didn't, so we can be more confident that any changes were due to the course.



The research team wish to **sincerely thank all shedders and the shed coordinators** who took part in this important research.

This research was conducted by the University of Melbourne and was funded by MRFF as part of the Buoy Project aiming to prevent suicide in boys and men.

E: MHFA-study@unimelb.edu.au



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID Australia

A Poem – Retirement

It starts off sometimes when you're young, But most when you get round sixty
You feel you've earned a real good rest, and the feet start getting itchy.

You'll tell the boss you've had enough, it's the last time you'll knock off,
He'll thank you nicely, then he'll smile, and then tell you to just "clock off"

Excited, you go home to the wife, and start to tell her of your plans,
To take her halfway round the globe. She says "just dry those bloody pans"
You thought that you'd have lots of time, to brew some beer, and clear the
shed,
But she'll have a job list that's so long, you'll be hers till the day you're dead

Bite the bullet, be a real big man, there is no good being scared
Tell her you're buying a caravan, and she will have to turn "grey haired"
You're going to see this country, although she thinks you're mad
And she'll just have to live with, being called, an "old Grey Nomad"

You filled out the forms at Centrelink. Then told them what they could do,
They smiled back sweetly, then they said, "Goodbye, Good luck, and up your's
too"

You've got the van, it's all set up, and you have even got the beer
But then SHE says "we can't go yet, Little Billy's birthdays near".

"And our Kylie's six month pregnant, we'll wait for the happy day"
"She had that day six months ago", I can hear you sadly say
By the time this next one's born, the grandkids will number eleven,
And they have birthdays every year. We should just tow the van to heaven.

But then just to show you mean it, you should just bring out the maps
And show the wife which way you'll go. She will look, then say "Perhaps"
The fishing rods go on the roof; the freezer goes in the boot
You've got your thongs and stubbies on, but SHE still doesn't give a hoot.

You hitch the van, and turn the key, but you feel a bit of a jerk,
It really makes you think that you, Consider going "back to work"
"Good God", I hear you scream and shout, "Retirement doesn't come easy"
When wives and kids say you're getting old, and your chest is getting wheezy.

So please, do not let them fool you. Take a breath; fill your lungs with air
You'll retire even if it kills you, and then you really will not care
Think right back how you came to this. Then say, "Before the final bell.
I am going round Australia, and you lot can go to Hell".

Irvin Beeston (Poet)

Final Words

That's my lot for this edition. It's been a bit of a struggle, but I hope I have given you something to fill your time and entertain you until the next one.

Please help by advising me of any interesting or amusing snippets.

Meantime, all the best wishes for the New Year

Irvin Beeston
Editor

Our Supporters. Thank You!

