

THE SHEDDER

For every man, and his Men's Shed.

The Shed WIRELESS

Discovering all
things Men's Sheds
and other interesting stuff

Returning to the
shed after
COVID-19

SPIRIT OF MATESHIP
SHINES THROUGH BUSHFIRE
RELIEF EFFORTS



Australian
Men's Shed
Association

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

AUTUMN 2020

1300 550 009 | amsa@mensshed.net | mensshed.org

LISTEN UP! TUNE IN!

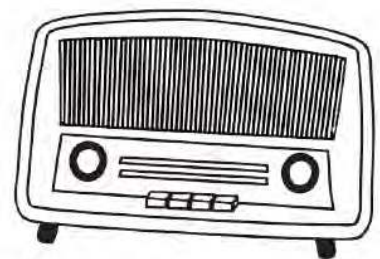


THE SHED WIRELESS

AN AUSTRALIAN MEN'S SHED ASSOCIATION PODCAST
WITH AARON KEARNEY
RIP WOODCHIP • AND SPECIAL GUESTS

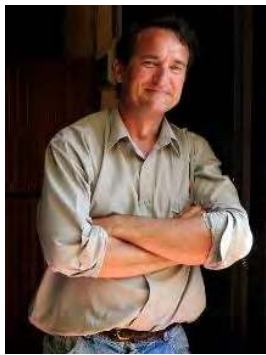
The Australian Men's Shed Association brings you The Shed Wireless: a weekly podcast detailing and discovering all things Men's Sheds, and other interesting stuff.

The first five episodes will see your host, award-winning broadcaster Aaron Kearney, and special guests, take you on a highlights reel of the journey of Men's Sheds from their very beginnings to today. Featuring interviews with Men's Shed historian and AMSA Patron Adjunct Professor Barry Golding AM, men's health expert and AMSA Patron Professor John Macdonald, international guest Barry Sheridan (CEO, Irish Men's Shed Association) and His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (Retd) - as well as shedders from around the country - the podcast will be delivered weekly to your lounge room, kitchen table or even the backyard shed. The destination is up to you.



NEW EPISODES
EVERY THURSDAY
2P.M.

VISIT MENSshed.ORG/THESHEDWIRELESS



Men's Sheds in a "post COVID-19" world

David Helmers, Executive Officer

Dear Shedders,

The last few months have been like no other as we have all had to deal with COVID-19.

As an organisation we have had to quickly move our operations online, which I'm sure you can acknowledge has been a challenge. Men's Sheds are very much an "in-person" activity, but this new way of delivering value has been thrust upon us, and we're doing our best to quickly adapt and find new ways to support the ongoing development of the Men's Shed movement.

As you may know, we've recently introduced "The Shed Online" as one part of our strategy to keep as many of you as connected as possible. **This week we launch another phase of this program: "The Shed Wireless".**

The Shed Wireless is a weekly podcast, intended to be an informal exploration of all things Men's Sheds. For now, you can listen to episodes of The Shed Wireless at mensshed.org/theshedwireless. You'll be able to listen from "wherever you get your podcasts" very soon.

AMSA staff have also been conducting hundreds of "welfare calls" to member Men's Sheds.

These calls aim to check in on how individual sheds, and their members, are coping with the situation. We are also encouraging Shed Committees to make similar calls to all of their members (which many are doing). This program has been hugely successful and I wish to acknowledge all of the good work being done by Men's Shed Committees in looking after the welfare of their members.

As we move through weeks of reasonably strict social isolation measures, some states have seen recent relaxation of social distancing. Subsequently, **we have received numerous enquiries asking (you can probably guess...) when can we get back to the Shed?**

Unfortunately, we still don't have the answer. But, we continue to liaise with Federal and State Governments and monitor the situation. The relaxation of social distancing does not include the reopening of Men's Sheds at this stage.

We will continue to keep you updated with any information as it comes to us.

We are however, already looking forward to our "post COVID-19" world.

We've commenced work on a number of resources for Men's Sheds to use as guidelines when we are all allowed back in the Sheds. We expect there will be health advice and distancing measures applied to any gatherings of people for some time to come.

These resources will be available once Sheds have been permitted by authorities to reopen, and we have a clearer understanding of distancing restrictions will be advised.

We're also working on a larger piece of work.

Following the turmoil of the past few months there is a much bigger question at hand... what will Men's Sheds look like in a post COVID-19 world?

This is a question I am personally putting to the entire Men's Shed community via The Shed Online for discussion and ideas. You can visit The Shed Online to participate in the conversation: mensshed.org/theshedonline/whats-the-role-of-mens-sheds-in-a-post-covid-19-world.

With anticipated higher unemployment I believe there will be increased demand for participation in Men's Sheds. And there will be a number of new opportunities for Sheds to increase membership and to attract younger men.

There will be a greater need for activities that will socially engage men, and possibilities for training and educational programs.

There will also be new opportunities for Sheds to strengthen their community links and partnerships with external organisations.

However, as with all opportunities, there also comes risks and threats but these can be overcome if we accept change and plan our way forward effectively.

We would like to hear your opinions and ideas on how Men's Sheds can overcome the obstacles and shine in adapting to a post COVID-19 environment. I encourage as many of you to participate in this constructive discussion over at The Shed Online.

Talk to you soon.

David

Four fresh faces welcomed to the AMSA Board

The Australian Men's Shed Association Board of Directors welcomed four new faces at a recent Board meeting – adding deep experience in Men's Sheds, external relations and fundraising to further strengthen AMSA's ability to deliver on key pillars of Men's Shed support, advocacy, men's health and community development.

Appointed to the Board of one of Australia's largest male-focussed community organisations are fundraising expert Helen Barker and award-winning journalist and broadcaster Aaron Kearney.

"I am extremely pleased to announce these appointments, who will complement our member elected Directors," said Chairman Paul Sladdin.

"Following an exhaustive selection process which saw high calibre applications from across Australia, Helen and Aaron will each bring valuable skills and experience to strengthen our Board Governance."

These appointments represent the Board's desire to ensure the organisation is steered by a diverse set of skills, expertise and experience to ensure continued success supporting the Australian Men's Shed movement and retains its position as a world-leader in its field.

"Historically, the AMSA Board has been comprised of Men's Shed members, 'Shedders' as we fondly refer to them," said Mr Sladdin.

"As the role and position of our organisation has evolved, we have sought to build a Board that reflects both the Men's Shed movement and meets the increasing demands on organisations operating in the Australian, and global, not-for-profit sector."

Helen's background includes fundraising, partnerships and marketing in the UK, New Zealand and Australia where she has worked with organisations including The Fire Fighters

Charity (UK), TEDx Sydney, JDRF Australia and Many Rivers.

Helen is passionate about making fundraising easy for both an organisation to execute but most importantly for an organisation's supporters to participate in.

"With my father in the UK, I saw first hand how important it was after he retired to be active within the community where he created a wood-workshop similar to a Men's Shed with a few friends.

"I'm excited to join the ASMA Board here in Australia and contribute to the next phase of ASMA's growth and support the Men's Shed movement," said Mrs Barker.

Aaron Kearney is a multi-award-winning broadcaster, photo-journalist, sports commentator, and Managing Director of AKS International, with a career spanning newspapers, television, radio and social with Fairfax, Channel Seven Australia, and the ABC (just to name a few) across Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

"I have had a long relationship with the Men's Shed movement and admired the good that it does," said Mr Kearney.

"I am really thrilled to have a small role in shaping the future of the iconic Australian institution."

Member-elected Directors Bill Clifford (NSW/ACT) and Barry Laubsch (SA) also took office following the 2019 AMSA AGM.

Bill and Barry bring insights and experience from rich professional backgrounds as well as long-time members of Men's Sheds and Men's Shed Committees.



Returning to the shed after COVID-19

Today's outlook

Although some State Governments have eased social gathering restrictions, this does not include Men's Sheds and other Community Centres.

It is our understanding, under the various management acts issued by states and territories, **there has been no removal of the restriction to close Community & Recreation Centres**. There is an exemption where these centres are being used for essential public services (according to the Office of the Prime Minister, this is defined as "hosting essential voluntary or public services, such as food banks or homeless services.")

In regards to Men's Sheds covered by the AMSA Shed Insurance Scheme: If members are acting legally, then (subject to the terms and conditions of each policy) they can expect coverage protection.

It is up to each Men's Shed Committee to determine if going to the shed to undertake any activities at all will be a breach of law.

You can contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 (open 24 hrs).

Returning to the shed after COVID-19

When we begin to see restrictions ease and with it the reopening of Men's Sheds, there will be things you can do to allow for a smooth return.

What can we do to make the shed a safer space?

- Encourage all to get the flu vaccination, particularly if COVID-19 runs into flu season (excluding those unable to have the flu vaccination for medical reasons).
- Remind members that if they are unwell, not to visit the shed (this includes: the sniffles, headache, temperature, and generally feeling unwell).
- Supply hand sanitiser and encourage members to use on entry to the shed.
- Encourage members to wash hands regularly (and ensure the facilities are provided to do so).
- Restrict shed visitation to members only.
- Tidy up work benches so members can practice recommended distancing, and regularly wipe down benches where possible.
- Consider whether any training or group events may be breaking distancing rules.

AMSA will provide further resources in addition to these considerations to support Men's Sheds when we have more information about reopening.

Please note: This is advice only and we recommend you contact your State or the National Coronavirus Helpline for clarification on your individual concerns.

What is the COVIDSafe app?

The COVIDSafe app helps find close contacts of COVID-19 cases. The app helps state and territory health officials to quickly contact people who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

The COVIDSafe app speeds up the current manual process of finding people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. This means you'll be contacted more quickly if you are at risk, which reduces the chances of you passing on the virus to your family, friends and other people in the community.

State and territory health officials can only access app information if someone tests positive and agrees to the information in their phone being uploaded. The health officials can only use the app information to help alert those who may need to quarantine or get tested.

The COVIDSafe app is the only contact trace app approved by the Australian Government.

Visit health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app to download the app or find out more.





Staying connected at The AMSA Shed Online

Visiting the shed is an important part of the week for many men and women. Whilst COVID-19 has forced the closure of thousands of sheds across 12 countries, staying in touch and connected is more important than ever. So we invite the Men's Shed community to join in conversation at The AMSA Shed Online: www.mensshed.org/theshedonline.

The AMSA Shed Online is a simple online space for men to stay connected at a time when community connection is increasingly difficult, but still vitally important to our health and wellbeing. The goal of The AMSA Shed Online is help people connect in the same way they do at the shed – over a cuppa and a laugh.

We hope to create a global social community where men can talk and share their experiences – a global information exchange. And whilst The AMSA Shed Online has been built with the Men's Shed community in mind, we're inviting anyone with an interest to join the conversation.

We encourage all your members to register and join the conversation at The AMSA Shed Online: mensshed.org/theshedonline.

DONALD
Phone: 5497 1222
Fax: 5497 1407
Email:
buloket@iinet.net.au
admin@buloketimes.com

The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

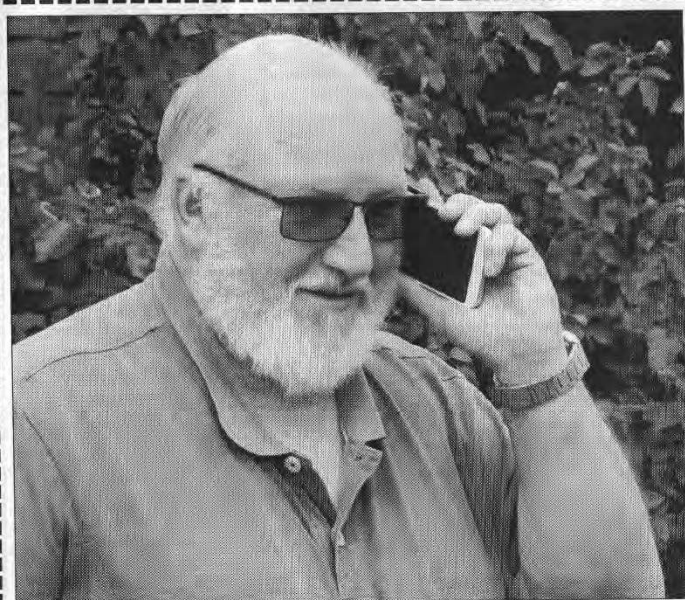
BIRCHIP
Phone: 5492 2735
Fax: 5492 2863
Email:
birchipblc@bigpond.com

Published Tuesdays and Fridays
PP331336/0000 1

Friday, April 10, 2020

PRICE (Inc. G.S.T.) \$2

For the Shire of Buloke, and the districts of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, St. Arnaud, Watchem and Wycheproof



Men's Shed Beats Social Isolation

(By Ray Walker, Secretary, Donald Men's Shed, 0417587450)

The Donald Men's Shed has devised a way of beating the COVID-19, social isolation.

Men's Sheds, by their very existence, are about providing a means for men who, at the tail end of their working life, find themselves at a loose end, and indeed become socially isolated, not through any virus but the amount of spare time they suddenly have on their hands.

• Pictured left, keeping in touch: The new way of communicating for Donald Men's Shed members. Secretary Ray Walker is pictured on the phone to a fellow "shedder".

The Donald Men's Shed has arranged through one of its members a telephone conference call, similar to the CB skeds arranged by the farming community in the 'seventies.

The major difference to today's linkup is that the mobile phone gives a wider variety of options.

The members now want to explore different options, such as video and audio links. From the comfort of one's home three times a week, one can be back at the Shed again with all your mates.

Who said you cannot teach an old dog new tricks? With the oldest of our members (93) and fully aware of video connections with family and friends who knows where this will end?

However, the amount of chat only satisfies part of what Men's Shed are about.

The hands-on jobs to be done are still waiting, and wait they must until the "all clear" is given, and may that be soon, for everyone's sake.

To be part of this contact group, contact any member of the Donald Men's Shed.

How is your Men's Shed staying connected with members during closure?

We have put together some 'Handy Tools to help you stay connected with your shed mates' available at The Shed Online.

Gisborne Men's Shed (VIC) running a 'virtual shed' model to stay connected with members

This Gisborne Men's Shed (VIC) has implemented a few initiatives to help stay connected with members during COVID-19 closures:

- A weekly newsletter with hard copies delivered to those without email.
- Each member is contacted at least once a week by a Committee member to check how they are and if they need any help.
- The Committee of five meets twice week by phone or Zoom to compare notes and keep it all ticking over.

The shed is also continuing with design work for some projects so they can hit the ground running when we get back (and keep highlighting the message to members that there is a future).

A number of sheds have also shared what they're doing to stay in touch with members in the Shed Chatter Discussion Board at The Shed Online visit: mensshed.org/theshedonline/forums/forum/shed-chatter.

The screenshot displays three forum posts from the 'Shed Chatter' discussion board. The first post, dated 30 March 2020 at 2:14 pm by user 'Lloyd Participant', describes a 'Member Phone Support Program' where members get weekly phone calls and 'Shed Buddies' are nominated to provide assistance. The second post, dated 1 April 2020 at 1:36 pm by 'Martin Participant', reports on a successful 'On Line Morning Tea' using Google Hangouts, noting the benefits of being able to hear everyone and seeing those who joined. The third post, dated 2 April 2020 at 6:07 pm by 'Teeck Participant', details the shed's transition to working from home, mentioning the use of cloud storage, mobile devices, and the challenges of remote collaboration. The posts are presented in a clean, white interface with green accents for user avatars and timestamps.

30 March 2020 at 2:14 pm
Lloyd Participant
The Management Committee has put in place a "Member Phone Support Program" in which each member of the shed will get a phone call from another member of the shed about once a week. These calls are to limit isolation, have a chat, check on how members are going and to see if any assistance is required. About twenty shed members have been nominated as "Shed Buddies" to make these calls to fifteen members each. So far it is working well, the Shed Buddies are having some interesting discussions and getting to know members in a different way than they do day to day in the shed. We are also continuing our monthly Newsletter, however next months will have limited content available so we are collecting some of the interesting stories and anecdotes from the phone calls for inclusion in the newsletter. Will also put the link to this forum in the next communications to members.

1 April 2020 at 1:36 pm
Martin Participant
Canada Bay Shed aka Harrys had our first On Line Morning Tea today. We used Google Hangouts (part of Google Suite which we got for free as an NFP). We have around 100 paid up members but our mornings teas rarely have more than 30. We had about 15 join in this morning, with people joining and leaving at will. It was very good to be able to hear everyone and also seeing those that joined by Video. Some of the limitations were
1. Sound was a bit blurry from those that joined by video. Sound very good from those that joined by phone.
2. Works best when only one person talking whilst all others listen
3. Our license may limit us to 10 video concurrent connections
We are going to try out Zoom which has good review. However the meeting convener needs a license at approx \$24 per month. Only one license is required
Google Suite has many features additional to Hangouts. Shared Drives for example allows us to share drives and run the sheds admin remotely. I might post a separate post when I look get more familiar with the other discussion forums
PS Thanks so much to AMSA for providing Shed on line
In addition to conference calls, we have also set up a WhatsApp group for our member and the committee and others try and call members that have not been in touch for some time, that don't mind in for whatever reason.
Stay Safe, Healthy and Connected

2 April 2020 at 6:07 pm
Teeck Participant
We as in all the Committee and shop managers can do to work from home. All the Shed documents are stored in the cloud. We trained the people whom are new to the system and all are finding it great. The Other day we went to Bunnings to chat about doing Demo's and they required a copy of our certificate of Currency(CC) for insurance. Our president whom was given a Tablet for Xmas... Open his Tablet and emailed the CC while we stood in the DIY section. He was very chuffed and the achievements.
All our meeting are in the Calendar and committee get and emails 3 days before the meeting and and at 6am on the day of the meeting. Plus and alarm 15 minutes before the meeting so we all get a cuppa and are ready to GO. the reminder has a copy of the Agenda attached. this all is generated from 1 entry at the start of the year.
We no longer have issues in finding things. It not on someone's thumb drive or computer at home.
We can open documents on the Mobile handset, Tablet, laptop or computer. the learning curve is very slight as the Microsoft training applies> if you know Excel you know Calc all key strokes work and its easy. If you use Open office Sheet once again your knowledge works
The major thing is Emails are now seen by multiple people at the same time Good example id Grants we have a group that looks at grants for the shed. So we grants@ as the outbound email address that never changes for the outside vendors and applicants. So email arrives for grants@ is seen by President, Sec, Treasurer and Grants mens.
All inbound emails for payment are to payables@ so when we change Treasurer we only change the internal delivery point. So the local hardware shop always send the account to payables@ many more feature too

Spirit of mateship shines through bushfire relief efforts during Summer 2019/20

While the current coronavirus pandemic justifiably captures the attention of the world, for those who were not directly impacted it would be easy to forget the bushfire crisis that gripped much of Australia over summer. But, we will not let our thanks go unsaid for the efforts of many Men's Sheds around the country.

The spirit of mateship that runs deep through the Men's Shed community is often highlighted during difficult times. And our community's response to the recent bushfires were no different.

Men's Sheds from all over the country contributed monetary donations and countless volunteer hours to provide an immediate response to help in the recovery – for community members as well as towards the regeneration of habitats for local fauna.

Thirrourl Mens Shed (NSW)

In November 2019 Thirrourl Men's Shed made a decision to donate to the farmers who are disadvantaged by the current drought. We decided to donate 10 IGA (Independent Grocers Australia) Food vouchers to the total value of \$2000. Deniliquin was the area that was chosen and funds were transferred to the Deniliquin Men's Shed who had agreed to help us facilitate this donation. They in turn used the Riverina Regional Network Group to distribute the vouchers to needy families in the area.

Due to the successful fundraising efforts of the members of Thirrourl Men's Shed it was decided to provide some assistance to the victims of the bushfires in the Southern Highlands.

We contacted Mrs Kerrie O'Grady the President of the Picton CWA and asked her what was required and how could we help. Her suggestion was that as most of the outbuildings had been destroyed during the fires people had lost the majority of their tools. She asked if we could help replace these lost items.

We sent out a request to our members for surplus hand and electrical tools, rakes, shovels, crowbars etc anything that could be used around a workshop or garden.

We also purchased 10 off Bunnings vouchers to the total value of \$2500 to add to our donation. After speaking to Bunnings, Bellambi they were only too happy to add to our donation with the addition of approximately \$500 of new hand tools. All electrical tools were tested and tagged before being offered. Bulli Woonona Men's Shed also had a cleanout and were happy to add their tools to ours.

We delivered the tools and the vouchers to a facility at Balmoral and are assured by the CWA that after meeting with the Fire captains in the area the tools and vouchers will go to suitable needy recipients.





Kalamunda Men's Shed (WA)

In November 2019 Kalamunda Men's Shed chair John Baxter and his son Andrew decided they wanted to do something to help support the Men's Sheds devastated by the fires in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

They set up a collection point for local WA Men's Sheds to donate tools that would help these sheds re-establish themselves.

They planned to transport any donated tools, that would be tested to ensure they were in working order, East in their own car by trailer.

All Sheds in WA were contacted about the tool drive and many WA sheds contributed including Mandurah, Claremont, Ellenbrook, GinGin, Pingelly, Armadale, Roleystone, Bassendean, Midland, Mundaring, Forrestdale and Gngara who donated tools to the cause. WORM4x4 (Western Off Road Mates) also donated.

The volume of tools collected far exceeded the capacity of the planned trailer trip and the capacity of the Shed to store it. Thankfully the local Shire, City of Kalamunda, helped out by giving the Shed access to storage, allowing for more donations to be collected.

Kalamunda Men's Shed gathered 13 pallets of tools, ranging in size from table saws, Triton workbenches, drill presses, welders, and a huge assortment of electric hand tools. Ready to be sent East.

BlazeAid, a volunteer-based organisation offered to ensure the tools would get to where they needed to go. All that was needed was a new transport plan.

With the idea of driving the tools by trailer a distant memory and fires cutting off the only sealed road across the Nullarbor Plain preventing trucks getting through a new transport plan was needed.

Thankfully the Federal Member for Hasluck's office assisted. Helping to arrange for Toll Group to move the tools by rail and road at cost.

Kalamunda Men's Shed sent out a call to all WA Men's Sheds seeking contributions to the transport cost.

The money was raised in under a week and exceeded what was needed to cover the cost and Toll Group transported the tools on 15 January 2020.

Additional funds raised were donated to Blaze-Aid to support their efforts.



CABLE LOCATION SERVICE
• DESIGN • INSTALLATION • MAINTENANCE • PUMPS • SALES • SERVICE • MAINTENANCE
email: paul@reticland.com.au
Call Paul on 0815 200 115 or 0815 5182 or 0815 on 0429 515 222

RetiCation and Landscaping
• DESIGN • INSTALLATION • MAINTENANCE • PUMPS • SALES • SERVICE • MAINTENANCE
email: paul@reticland.com.au
Call Paul on 0815 200 115 or 0815 5182 or 0815 on 0429 515 222

ECHO NEWS
Local Business Supporting Local People
Saturday, January 11, 2020

AirCon 1001 9250 8888
SERVICE • REPAIRS • PARTS • INSTALLS
MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC
SUSCEPTIBLE TOXIC
EVAPORATIVE UNIT
FRIGIDOLUX
ECHO NEWS

Tool drive to ease fire toll

Kalamunda Men's Shed chairman John Baxter (front) and members with donated tools for bushfire victims.

BREANNA INFERRERA
drive only a trailer load of tools to the eastern states.

tion at Hartfield Park for tool donations. Mr Baxter said the shed has joined forces with organisation BlazeAid, which helps this into some 'poor bloke's garage in NSW without a decent cause a huge amount of suicides," he said. "We have the same various successions of depression. So we know, in

ARBORMAN
• GARDEN DESIGN • FULLY EQUIPPED AND RESIDENT • 20 YEARS LOCAL TRADITION
9291 7000 or 0409 915 371
www.arborman.com.au

ECHO NEWS
Local Business Supporting Local People
Friday, January 17, 2020

Toll takes tools to fire-ravaged NSW

Kalamunda Men's Shed chairman John Baxter and members with the tools being sent to NSW.

They're just the tools that have been donated to the shed by local businesses and individuals. The shed has been a hub for the community since it was founded in 1980. It's a place where men can come and work on their cars, or just hang out and talk. It's a place where they can find help and support when they need it. And now, it's a place where they can help others. The shed has been a hub for the community since it was founded in 1980. It's a place where men can come and work on their cars, or just hang out and talk. It's a place where they can find help and support when they need it. And now, it's a place where they can help others.

Where there is smoke, there's a Men's Shed... Narooma Men's Shed (NSW)

The Narooma Men's Shed has been supporting the local community from a few different fronts—all including a bit of fun and frivolity!

One week they were out buying and donating generators for people who had no power in Cobargo, and the next working with the small villages of Belowra and Nerrigundah in re-establishing water supply.

And at the same time— going enmasse to different local restaurant to generate some revenue for them in difficult times (*who knew what was to come?!).*

The most fun was had creating water stations for the local WIRES volunteers...

Were they playing the saxophone to brighten us up? Or were they getting ready to take on the Swiss at their own game?



Neither, they were up to something a lot more practical than that!

WIRES asked the Men's shed if we could make 100 water stations for the native animals caught up in the local bushfires.

So the men received the plastic pipes, pipe bends, caps and stoppers donated by REECE plumbing Bateman's Bay and in a matter of a day or two 100 water stations were made and handed over to WIRES.

They simply walked out the door to all parts of the South Coast.

Mind you the men had to be convinced before they started the task that the watering system actually worked... So after 10 of us stood around, many saying, "It will not work as the water will simply rush out the bottom".

Well, thanks to the Archimedes Principle, and the vacuum seal it did work.

Well done to the Men's shed team of volunteers that made it happen especially to Smilie, Tim, and Wayne for managing the smooth process.

With a Billion native animals destroyed in the bushfires and the ones that have survived under stress and attack by wild dogs, feral cats and foxes, any help they can get will be well received.



Wauchope Men's Shed (NSW)

Wauchope Men's Shed assisting Blazeaid, who were camping adjacent to our shed at the Wauchope Showground with fitting out their trailers. The partitioning for 5 trailers was done over 2 days with virtually no notice and no hesitation.



Tumbarumba Men's Shed (NSW)



The Summer fires hit Tumbarumba and surrounds very hard. Many businesses, industries and producers will struggle to recover from the devastation and losses, particularly in terms of feed and livestock.

To do our small bit for the recovery, we have handed over part of the Shed to the Local Land Services (LLS) folk who are providing much needed assistance to fire affected landholders and communities.

The shed is located in the local showground and an ideal centre for LLS to utilise as a centre to store and distribute bulk fodder with LLS.

Tuross Men's Shed (NSW)

The Shed can be proud of its efforts in support of the three RFS Brigades; Nerrigundah, Tinpot and Belowra.

Each is a small community well inside the forested areas. Each community was devastated by fire over the New Year period. As small communities they have little opportunity to raise funds to aid their recovery program.

The Tuross Head Men's Shed Committee is proud of the way the Shed supported the firefighters by approving an initial donation then increasing that amount as the donation tin passed around the Shed.

Additional donations boosted the total donation to \$1468, which was presented to the three Brigades during a Morning Tea hosted by the Men's Shed and catered for by the Tuross Head Carer's who cooked up a storm.

The Community Garden was also represented for supporting the brigades with common garden equipment, hand tools, machine tools and hardware items.

All round, the Morning Tea capped a great team effort and one that makes me very proud of our Shed and the way we have integrated with other community groups to help these three RFS Brigades. It is a great success story and a highlight in the Shed's history to date.



Staying Mindful this May: How *taking notice* can help your physical and mental wellbeing



Time on your hands? Or not enough time? COVID-19 has forced many to slow down, to stop rushing from one place to another. For others, such as essential workers, it's meant having to work harder and under more pressure than ever before.

Whichever camp you fall into, thinking about how you use the time you have is really important to both your physical and mental wellbeing.

Too much time?

One of the silver linings for some people is that COVID-19 has forced us to slow down. So how do we make the most of this opportunity?

Perhaps we can take inspiration from Carl Honoré, a self-professed “speedaholic”. Honoré was always looking for ways to save time, after all faster is better, right? We speed dial, speed walk and even speed date. We have fast food, superfast broadband and we all want to be on the fast track. Let's be honest, even instant gratification takes too long these days!

Carl's “wake up call” came from his son. Every night Carl would come home from work, still in fast mode, in time to read his son a bedtime story. Carl says that he would speed through the story skipping a page here, a paragraph there but his son, who knew *The Cat in the Hat* off by heart, was having none of it. Storytime became a frustrating battle between Carl's speed and his son's slowness. Then Carl read about the most amazing time saving idea – the one-minute bedtime story. How fantastic is that? He would have to try it out. Then he caught himself and thought: ‘What am I doing? Why am I trying to make the most precious part of the day, the one-on-one time with my son, a time saving challenge?’

From that moment on Carl said he started to think about time differently and was inspired to write *In Praise of Slow*, a book highlighting the importance of slowing down in an ever busier world. As he says:

“Sometimes it takes a wakeup call to alert us to the fact that we are hurrying through our lives, instead of actually living them, living the fast life rather than the good life.”

Perhaps COVID-19 is our wakeup call?

To hear more about how Carl broke free from this ‘roadrunner mindset’ and learn about slow food, slow travel, and slow cities you can watch his fascinating TED Talk at: www.ted.com/talks/carl_honore_in_praise_of_slowness

Not enough time?

For some people, COVID-19 has resulted in long hours, stress, pressure and an increased risk of infection. For these people, slowing down might seem like an intangible luxury.

But finding small breathing spaces during the day to notice how you are feeling can be really important. Some people call this being mindful. Jon Kabat Zinn, an America Professor and the founder of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), describes mindfulness as “paying attention in a particular way on purpose in the present moment non-judgementally.”

Mindful living

A range of studies have shown that mindfulness can help reduce stress and anxiety, enhance relationships, increase focus and memory, boost immune systems and may also help reduce compassion fatigue and burnout in healthcare staff.

We don't think twice about the daily things we do for our personal physical hygiene, like brush our hair or take a shower, so why not do the same for our minds?

In the time it takes to clean our teeth, we could practice mental hygiene.

By taking three minutes to create a breathing space or undertake a body scan meditation we anchor ourselves in the present moment. Building these small spaces of calm into our day can help us pause, take a breath and slow down. Why not give it a try?

Your challenge: Take notice

Over the next month, take time to really take notice, still your mind and be fully in the present, whether it's through meditation, prayer, noticing nature or just paying full attention to someone close to you.

Here are some activities, try them out and find the best fit for you.

1. Download a free mindfulness app and practice for 10 minutes each day: smilingmind.com.au/thrive-inside
2. Try this awe walk and take time to notice and connect with nature: ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/awe_walk
3. Find your inner tortoise and experience slow food. Choose a traditional family recipe, prepare it slowly and mindfully, use as many local Australian ingredients as possible, and eat it slowly – noticing the different flavours tastes and sensations in each mouthful. It will taste better! And, share with others at a virtual dinner party.

Be safe, be well, take notice!

Need help?

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis call Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14 or MensLine on 1300 99 78 99.

Want some mindful reminders this May?

During May we'll be delivering weekly mindful tips via the *Spanner in the Works?* newsletter.

Visit malehealth.org.au to register.



This article is adapted from the Wheel of Wellbeing newsletter, supported by the Queensland Mental Health Commission, supporting WoW, Mentally Healthy City Townsville. Word document + study attribution and further resource materials are available on request. Contact Tony Coggins, Lead Associate Population Mental Health, Implemental (formerly Maudsley International) and WoW educator on wow@implemental.org for more information.

Simon's Mens Shed Farewell—A note from a Men's Shed 'visitor'

Hello to all.

Today is a sad day for me because I will be soon not be able to attend any more Men's Shed meetings. The reason – my health has improved and I will be soon be going back to work as a structural engineer.

In the last 10 years I have been diagnosed with five different medical conditions – all turned out to be wrong.

On the mental health side, doctors have regularly mentioned depression and anxiety, but I could never seem to get better. My worst symptom was fatigue which was debilitating. I could barely walk a few hundred metres and not be exhausted for a day afterwards. I tried absolutely everything from psychology, hypnotism, medication, acupuncture to mental health retreats – nothing worked.

However, a couple of weeks ago – something did work . I realised that by default I had a really negative thinking style – I always thought the worst about situation. I changed my thinking to regular positive thinking.

I also started playing Aussie rock music really loud – it worked almost overnight and I started to improve my health. It turns out that depression had been my culprit – but to me it felt normal at the time.

The toll of my health journey has been huge.

It has had effects on my family, at times strained my marriage with my wife who was supportive.

In the last two years alone I went to about 170 health related medical appointments to improve my health.

Many times I was that unwell my wife drove me to the appointments. Financially, I estimate I have lost about a quarter of a million dollars in lost wages and medical treatments in the last two years alone.

There are several people here at the Men's Shed that I would like to personally thank.

First is Jack.

Jack has really gone out of his way to try and help me – I really appreciate that and will never forget how a humble Bishop helped me get better – plus he has a wicked sense of humour . I used to only think a good Bishop was on a chess set but now I know they come in real life – Jack you were my white knight.

Secondly I would like to thank Robert for him giving me some mentoring and advice.

Thirdly I would like to thank Ted for giving me some engineering work to do whilst on the sidelines. That really helped with getting my desire to get back to my engineering profession – a job I truly love.

Finally I want to thank the Men's Shed and members.

Each and every one of you – I enjoyed your company and stories. The mateship I felt here was tremendous. My weekly highlight was always coming to the Men's Shed on Wednesday.

During my time severely struggling with my health I would say the Men's Shed was the number one thing that that helped me. This place is so important to so many of us – keep up all the good work.

Finally I just want to say mental health is real. Support your mates when you can.

It's great to be alive.

Thank you all.

Names have been changed to maintain the anonymity of the sender.