



1. Orbost Men's Shed

1. Orbst Men's Shed

Orbst Regional Health and Orbst Rotary

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"I feel that a shed is a man friendly environment where men feel relaxed and comfortable to go to. It's about the social support and mateship more than the physical surroundings, but men often need an excuse to get together so a shed offers that excuse... they can help others, they can 'make do' with what they have, they can contribute to their community – all of which men love to do"

Gary Green, co-ordinator.

The Orbst Men's Shed is found in a rural setting and comprises two areas in which the men can actively engage in social and task-oriented activities. Its processes are facilitated by a co-ordinator and are fairly relaxed. There is a step-down process in the Shed, in that men can move from an 'action group' located in the work shed, to a 'sitting group' as they age.

The Orbst Men's Shed was established in 2001 based on an idea from the Orbst Regional Health Men's Health Steering Committee. Its main focus is to provide socialisation opportunities for older men. Men who attend the Shed can participate in a range of activities. These vary from working on projects in the work Shed for those who are able (the action group) to chatting over a BBQ in the smaller Shed for those who are older (the sitting group). Through health checkups, along with discussions about health issues that men may not have the opportunity to discuss outside of the Shed, health issues are also addressed.

The Shed is very relaxed in its processes, and it is run predominantly by the participants themselves (ORH 2006). For many men, the simple opportunity to socialise or to get into the community provided enough of a stimulus to draw them into the Shed. This has occurred to such an extent that in 2005 the Shed had up to 33 people attending at any one of the sessions.

The major concern for health workers in Orbst was that men were doing nothing at home. These men, when socially isolated, are at higher risk of mental health issues in particular. One of the Shed participants noted that "men who are mentally active are more likely to be physically active and less inclined to be hospitalised." It was out of frustration at the lack of services suitable for men of this age that the Men's Shed was formed.

The Shed seeks to reach out to men of all ages, and it is for this reason that both the action and the sitting groups are present. This ensures that physical limitations are no hindrance to participation. Having both groups allows the men to generate long-term connections with the Shed and other participants, especially as they move from the 'working' era of their lives to the 'retirement' era, and find themselves unsure of what to do and how to stay socially connected (ORH 2006). Shed participants comment that this is important for single men in general, and for the sitting group participants in particular, so that they can have social interaction with males in a similar life circumstance.

The Shed uses a step down process whereby the men participate in physical activities as well as non-physical activities. The importance of this is that it allows participation by all in attendance, while still providing the ability to contribute to the social support of other men, despite their physical limitations. The further benefit of the action group is that it participates in community action through engaging in and completing community projects that benefit the broader community as well as specific individuals within the local area.

The Shed is also looking at ways to draw upon a much larger range of ages other than its main age group of people in the 60+ year old category. It is working on including more young people in the Shed. This is done so that the older men can assist them in their life skills and learning experience. This is currently being done using a 'hands on' approach rather than

the typically purely academic perspective. The Shed has been enabled to do this by establishing a partnership with Orpost Secondary College.

The Orpost Men's Shed has a heavy emphasis on partnerships with local organisations and services. They work strongly with the local Secondary School and Rotary Club, as well as having a strong link with the Orpost Region Health Services. The partnership with the Orpost Secondary College works with a key principle: the salience of developing personal skills in a supportive informal learning environment. This is facilitated through both observation and discussion. In doing this, the literacy skills and capacities of both the students and the Men at the Shed are enhanced.

When the students arrive at the Shed on Wednesdays, they are invited to participate in the activities of the Shed. This allows them to develop their domestic skills, their attitudinal skills in 'seeing the job through' and their practical skills as well as communication skills. This provides encouragement in the areas of social health, as well as interaction abilities. Additionally, it provides the men at the shed with the opportunity to develop their own skills in teaching through using informal means. It also increases their ability to communicate with those of the younger generation.

The heavy reliance on the partnership between Rotary and the Men's Shed is fundamental for the full functioning of the Shed. Without it, the initial idea of the Men's Shed would not have been actualised. There would be no volunteers to assist with food preparation, there would be a decreased pool of resources, and the Shed would have a "much more limited menu" (Delphi 1). This partnership alone has contributed greatly to the current success of the Orpost Men's Shed.

A further strong aspect of the Shed is its emphasis on community building through its strong reliance on this sort of volunteerism beyond Rotary. For the Shed to run, it requires at least one registered volunteer from the Orpost Regional Health Service, which allows the Shed to be covered under the banner of Orpost Regional Health. These volunteers are quite often Shed members themselves. They have a vision to see the Shed continue to reach out to those males who are in need of a community, regardless of their individual abilities.

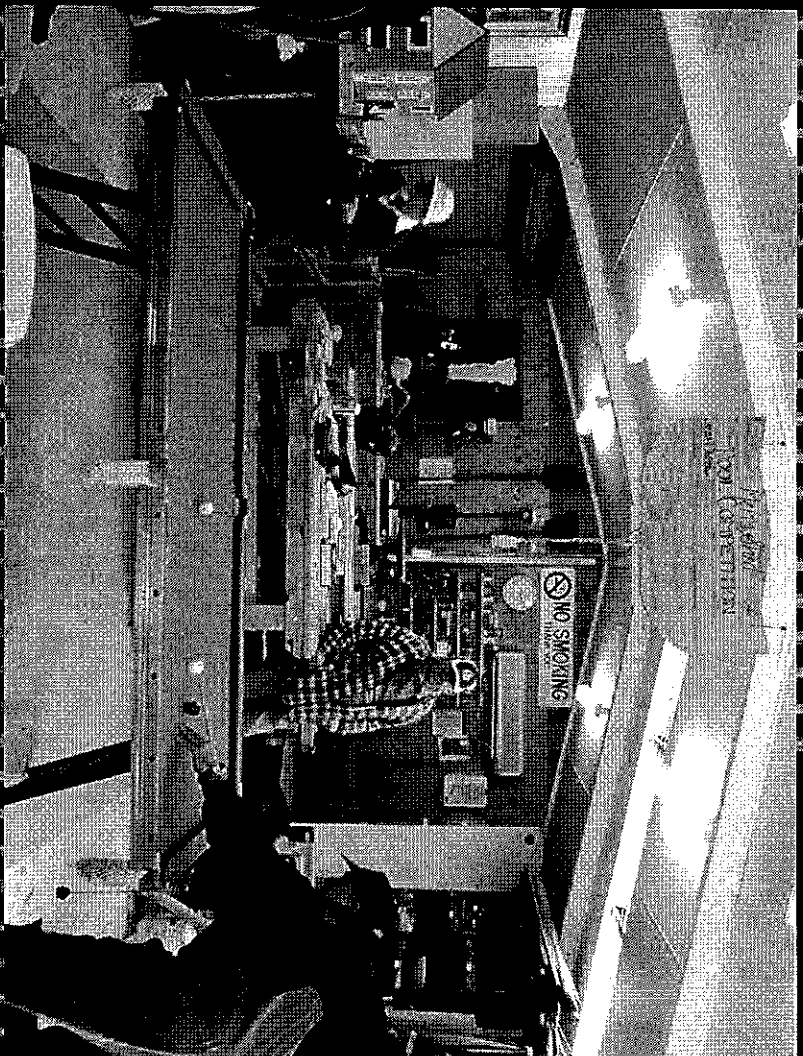
The capacities of the volunteers that are being used include producing a monthly newsletter and, initially, supplying the tools for the woodwork areas of the Shed. The tools are now supplied by acquisition of small grants for funding from organisations such as Orpost Op Shop. So, volunteers now focus on funding and this allows for greater flexibility in gaining resources. Orpost Regional Health Service continues to be an important source of funding for this purpose.

The health promoting capacities of the Shed are also currently being used, as some health services are provided for free. This includes health checks. Additionally, there are activities that specifically promote both physical and mental health for the men in the Shed. It operates on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm.

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Comments from Delphi One Survey conducted for Office of Senior Victorians



2. Darebin Men's Shed

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Darebin Community Health
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In 2002, Darebin Community Health discovered a need to address depression, social isolation and suicide in its local male residents. In discussions with men from Darebin, the need for a 'men's only' space was identified. This was supported by information gathered through *The Men's Health Strategic Framework* (Hayes 2001) and the *Men's Access to Health and Resource Services Project* (Thomas et al 2002). The Shed was initially intended to engage suicide issues by reducing depression and social isolation in (particularly older) men and now offers services to men over 50 years of age. It operates in an urban setting and its ethos could be considered relaxed. The aim of the Shed is to connect men with health and welfare services. It also seeks to raise awareness of men's health issues amongst the Shed participants.

The Shed has been in operation for four years. Ben Norden, a Health Promotion Officer who assists in the Shed, believes the success of the shed is due to the "commitment of the men, the project worker and expertise of health professionals" (Norden, Delphi Two, 2005). This three-fold approach finds alignment with community development strategies where the group participants have ownership of the Shed and participate fully in its planning and processes. The Shed currently runs two days a week and an Aboriginal Men's group runs one day a week. Activities in the shed are facilitated by a project worker and the more active members of the group who take on leadership roles.

The Darebin Men's Shed works closely with NEAMI, a psycho-social disability support service, and invites men from NEAMI's programs to participate in the Shed alongside the other participants once a week. It has also formed partnerships with the Department of Veteran's Affairs, the City of Darebin and the North East Migrant Resource Centre, and it receives referrals from many other agencies in the area (QIPPS, 2005).

The Darebin Men's Shed addresses a number of key concerns, as outlined in program objectives; reducing social isolation and depression, increasing self-worth and confidence, developing a community of men from diverse cultural backgrounds, improving understandings of mental health issues, and increasing access to health services (QIPPS, 2005).

Social isolation is of particular importance as it contributes to negative health outcomes. In particular, it is associated with mental health issues such as depression and, consequently, suicide. The Shed aims to provide a safe space in which men can develop their social networks. Ben Norden writes, "The shed is great... particularly [in terms of the] social – social health is one of the main reasons why it was established. Men can participate on any level; they can attend for social reasons and chat with others, or they can also be more active and share their skills & knowledge... Being involved in the shed on any level generally helps with emotional wellbeing and Nic (shed coordinator) certainly keeps an eye out for guys needing emotional support. The men themselves also bring up issues that they may want to chat about i.e. issues about caring for a loved one, problems with unemployment etc. Physically, the shed encourages active participation to get the guys moving in any way. Be it gardening, cooking, woodwork or actually participating in a men's exercise group run by the physios at the same time."

The inclusive and relaxed nature of the shed invites the men to participate fully in the shed processes such as decision-making, and conflict resolution. The leadership in the shed is found within the group. This has an empowering effect for the men involved. In "Getting in

touch with the bloke within,” a presentation made by Nic Morrey, the community development aspect of the shed is highlighted. This has significance both within the community of the shed and extending out to the wider community.

For instance, men are able to participate in woodworking activities that link directly into the community, where the items are sold through the Darebin Community Health Co-op and through community markets. Additionally, Ben writes, “Some of the ways our guys have been involved include: building toys and selling them at the food cooperative at DCH (money raised goes to charity); participating and performing at community events (singing and playing instruments, etc.); building a compost bin for the local school; men involved with Darebin Council working groups (Good Food Alliance); mowing lawns for people in the area; and building/fixing unwanted bikes and giving them to people in need. The possibilities are only limited by imagination (and sometimes resources)” (Norden, Delphi 3, 2005).

Through the shed’s processes, the confidence and self worth of men can be raised.

The Men’s Shed works towards developing a community of men from diverse backgrounds, including Koori men. However, it has the capacity to further develop its diversity through overcoming language and cultural barriers within the group. Currently, the Koori Men’s group runs on a different day to the general men’s group, and the Iraqi Men’s group uses the space occasionally. The Shed may in the future be able to further integrate these groups, and other minority groups through its activities.

As stated earlier, one of the major aims of the Men’s Shed is social connectedness in order to reduce depression and suicide in the community. The Darebin Men’s Shed engages this issue particularly through its partnership with NEAMI. On Tuesdays, men from NEAMI come to the Shed to work with the regular group. This gives men with mental illness an opportunity to work alongside others to provide a sense of normalcy, “the Shed also allows mental health sufferers to interact with a variety of men and socialise in groups without having a ‘mental health’ stigma attached” (QPPS, 2005).

Further, due to the normality of the setting, the men are subtly encouraged to behave ‘normally’ as others disregard unwanted behaviours. The interactions allow the regular participants to develop greater understanding of mental health issues. The Shed has had positive outcomes in terms of increasing social connectedness, “many participants have blatantly reported that if it weren’t for the Shed, they would be dead” (QPPS, 2005).

A further concern that the Shed seeks to improve upon is the difficulty of accessing health services. The Shed is located at the rear of Darebin Community Health Centre’s East Preston site and within its walls there are numerous information leaflets available. Also, the men are able to chat informally with workers from the centre, and provide information and support to each other within the group. Initially, structured information sessions and tours of the community health centre were going to be offered. However, the men preferred the informal nature of the Shed. So, health information is shared through chats amongst the men in a relaxed manner.

The benefits flow both ways. As an organisation, the staff and stakeholders at Darebin Community Health “are beginning to understand how to build relationships with men. This is particularly useful for a health service that men don’t traditionally access as well as women. The men in the Shed certainly like to interact and think about their health and wellbeing, but they aren’t necessarily forthcoming about it. The benefit of the Shed is that they attend for the activities and company of the other guys, but their emotional, social and physical health is also being taken care of” (QPPS, 2005).

“One of the main downsides is that the Shed has to shut [its doors too often]. It could be useful to have culturally specific programs for older men from CALD groups – at the moment the Shed is predominantly Anglo – but does not discriminate” (Norden, Delphi Two, 2005). Given sufficient funding, this shed would benefit from longer opening hours.

This would enable the shed to expand it services into more specific cultural groups, and perhaps into other areas such as physical disability or cross-generational programs.

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Comments from Delphi Two Survey conducted for Office of Senior Victorians



3. **Manningham Men's Shed**

3. Manningham Men's Shed

Manningham Community Health Service

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"Without the men, it's just a shed in a paddock,"

Ric Blackburn – Shed Co-ordinator

The Manningham Men's Shed was one of the first of its type in metropolitan Melbourne. In 1995/6, Manningham Community Health Service (MCHS) sought out areas of opportunity and with the guidance of the CEO, Neil Wakeman, began to explore Men's Health as an area in which MCHS might be able to provide leadership. As nothing was being done in the Manningham area for men's health, MCHS (in conjunction with Manningham Council, the Whitehorse Division of General Practice, and local Rotary clubs) conducted a number of Men's Health Information Nights. At the first of these, 410 men attended.

There was no funding at first. So, having read an article about a Shed in Goolwa South Australia and inspired by his own interest in woodwork, car restoring and other handyman type activities, Neil applied for funding from the usual prospective sources. Eventually, a successful submission to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program to start a Men's Shed provided the necessary funds. MCHS received \$35,000 which allowed them to find an appropriate location, buy a concrete slab and a shed, and fund a staff member for 2 days a week.

The Shed was established in 2000 for older men and young men with disabilities. In subsequent years, funding was sought to expand the service. This has allowed providing services to men from diverse cultural backgrounds (an Italian Men's Group), men from special accommodation homes in the area and through Planned Activity Groups funded by the Manningham Council through their HACC Program. The Shed is now open six days per week, and some of the men have been attending since the Shed's inception.

It is a multi-dimensional program located in an urban setting and its processes may be described as informal. For younger men who are able, it offers a staged process of rehabilitation (from client, to volunteer to work). This eventually leads men back into the wider community. For older men the process is reversed. They are helped to transition from the broader community into other health services offered through MCHS to sustain quality of life.

The Shed provides opportunities for socialisation in a 'male' environment. This is particularly important for older men. The Shed has grown considerably. It is able to run six days per week and is facilitated by the paid staff working well above contracted hours. Each participant attends once a week. Thus, across the week, some 60 men are able to attend the service. The Shed currently has one full-time staff member and two 0.2 FTE staff. There are 20 volunteers who support the program. Clients are assessed according to HACC funding criteria and they range in age from 18-92, and come from highly diverse socio-economic backgrounds and abilities (Williamson 2005).

The Shed offers the opportunity to participate in projects that provide diversions from pain or stress, and opportunities to build skills. It also provides links and referrals to other programs offered through Manningham Community Health Service and wider community services. The Manningham Shed plays an important role in cross-generational socialisation and communication through its mentoring program. The Shed has good relationships with secondary and tertiary education institutions through which students can participate in placements and visits.

Although the Men's Shed is predominantly a male space, there are regular visits from the (female) staff at the adjacent activities centre, children and partners. It is "situated within a

neighbourhood and is part of a cooperative and a community” (Williamson 2005). “No one is excluded from the Shed, and being a member of the Shed means the individual is a member of the wider community also” (Williamson 2005). The community building and social connectedness aspects are important to most of Men’s Sheds. But, it is of particular importance to the Manningham Shed which intends for its members to be reintegrated into the wider community when possible.

On Mondays the group comprises men who are socially isolated, living in special accommodation, financially compromised and lower functioning. Wednesday tends to be for older men, and Friday tends to be a younger, more boisterous group of men with acquired brain injury and psychiatric issues. However, these are not hard and fast classifications. Ric likes to ensure that the groups are fairly mixed. This helps to reduce the stigma associated with attending any particular group. People can talk freely and there is a high level of acceptance amongst the participants.

There is a lack of services for men in general and, particularly, older men. These services are needed to address concerns such as social isolation, inactivity in retirement, and depression, particularly for those men leaving the paid workforce. Ric says the Men’s Shed exists within a wellbeing model. It offers a complete package to the participants in terms of their social, mental and physical health.

Informal health education sessions are run on a conversational format, with the support of handouts. The conversational method, rather than the medical approach, is considered more credible, approachable and comfortable for the men. Ric is able to facilitate the right connections for men with health services, ensuring their particular needs are met. There are visits from Allied Health staff such as podiatrists, dieticians, counsellors, and referrals come through these avenues.

The men in the Shed determine the activities of the Shed. For instance, in the Saturday group, some of the men spend time working on lawnmowers. However, other groups do not participate in this activity. It is purely due to the interest and/or trade background of the men present on the day. The Shed allows the men just to ‘be’. The space is such that, if the men want to do nothing, they are enabled to do nothing. There is a strong capacity for inter-participant support and acceptance of each other’s needs and issues (Williamson 2005).

The Shed also allows people to work within their own capacities. It does this without challenging them further than they are already challenged by life, unless otherwise required. For instance, when the co-ordinator could see potential in one of the men to return to work, he gave the man extra encouragement to assist him back into the workforce. That Shed participant now runs a small business with another man with disability. Another of the men has moved from being a less active participant to taking a greater leadership within the Shed. He has recently undertaken a business venture of creating a short film on some of the men’s stories. The 15 minute film subtly demonstrates the importance of the Shed for the men who attend (Dobrejcer & Ristov 2005).

There is further a focus upon the frail aged and younger people with disabilities. These people have a high risk of social isolation and associated issues. So, the Shed provides opportunities for interaction and skills development. Ric Blackburn, the co-ordinator, was initially involved in the Shed through referring and supporting people who were not ready for employment and who had problems with socialisation, communication and self-esteem. Over 3_ years ago, he became the co-ordinator and has brought skills in disability support, vocational training, advocacy, organisation and funding support.

The vision of the Shed co-ordinator allows for expansion of the Shed and its wider services. Ric has already begun consulting to nursing homes and offers referrals to those he cannot accommodate due to a catchment-based intake system. If the men cannot come to the

Shed, he suggests that agencies make available a 'tool-cupboard' filled with tools, wood and projects for men to participate in.

He estimates that he receives referrals about every two days and many of these must be referred on to other services. Referrals come through word of mouth, local newspaper advertisements (some of which were cut from the paper years ago!), rehabilitation hospitals, ACAS and Councils. Following the referral, Ric has a phone conversation with the prospective Shed participant. Then, he arranges a visit. There is a trial day to ensure that the comfort of the Shed is maintained. If it goes well, the man is welcome to continue.

Ric hopes that they will soon have access to the building adjacent to the Shed. This will allow the program to offer more services to the participants. These will include complementary services such as: exercise and health activities, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy. These will be run on a one-to-one and group basis. Another opportunity for expansion is in the provision of day trips off site to places of interest to the men. However there are currently staffing issues, particularly supervision, that will need to be addressed before this can occur.

Funding is a major barrier to many of the possible expansions of the Shed. However, Ric has a strong advocacy role in the Shed. He actively promotes the Shed through presentations and discussions with agencies and organisations. He is also offering support to other the Sheds that are emerging around Victoria.

Ric has played important roles in promoting men's health research and 'would like to see men's health build capacity to promote its programs and activities as successfully as other sectors' (Williamson 2005). There is also frustration in the area that there is a "lack of research in the area of men's health and therefore lack of lobbying power" (Williamson 2005).

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4. Brimbank Men's Shed

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Sunshine Mission UnitingCare

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The Brimbank Men's Shed is relatively new. It is now in its third year of operation and began in March 2003. It is located in Sunshine in the western suburbs of Melbourne. It has a coordinator who works four days a week using community development and strengths-based processes (Marshall 2005:24). So, although it is a welcoming, laid back environment, the programs are well planned and evaluated. Any man over 18 is welcome.

The Brimbank Men's Shed began because there were more men coming through the Mission's door than women. Yet, there were fewer resources available for them to access. Men with relationship breakdown, mental health, loneliness/socialisation, homelessness, financial, recreational and other issues were seeking the Mission's assistance. Balwyn Rotary had donated a large truck Shed to UnitingCare Sunshine Mission, which could be used as a suitable venue. There were also some resources donated for a Men's Project, such as a lawn mowing service utilising volunteers at the time (Martin 2006).

Jo Smith, the Community Development Worker at Sunshine Mission initiated meetings with health and other community workers in the Brimbank area. From the small monthly meetings of four workers (Jo, Angelo, Philippa and Nick), by June 2003, the vision of having a Men's Shed at the Withers Street site operating like the successful Darebin Community Health Men's Shed was born.

It was decided that it was crucial to have men from the community on the working group – initially there were two representatives, and this has been increased to a minimum of three. Other agencies were enlisted to work collaboratively, and in July 2003 the larger group was briefed on the Darebin project. The Working Group has met monthly and bi-monthly as necessary since, to identify needs and resources, and research the demographics across Brimbank.

Historically, the Brimbank community has a number of key demographic issues, including welfare and health concerns. First among these is the social isolation and poor health status of disadvantaged men. "Compared with men in other areas, men in Brimbank have a higher rate of unemployment, lower income, and lower education levels. There are higher rates of depression, loneliness and isolation in men in Brimbank. There are also fewer resources for men than women in the area" (Williamson 2005).

In the 2001 census, 43.1% of the population were born overseas with 40.1% of these coming from non-English speaking backgrounds. The residents of Brimbank also appear to have a higher and earlier drop out rate from school before year 12. This leaves a gap in education levels between this and other areas. Income levels were also lower in Brimbank than in the Melbourne area.

Additionally, the census showed that the municipality had an unemployment rate of 11% compared with other Melbourne areas of around 6.6% (Antignani et al 2005:4). Mental health is also an area of concern. This is especially the case in regards to social isolation and the separation from culture, family and lifestyle which many immigrants face (Antignani et al 2005:5). "There is also a need for some vocational activity for men over 18 years who are unable to work for physical/mental reasons" (Antignani et al 2005:6).

Therefore, the community recognised the need for a place for men who were disadvantaged in various capacities, including living in a low socio-economic region of high unemployment, a history of established migrant resettlement, or recent new arrivals and

refugees settling in the area. The Shed was therefore conceived of as 'a meeting place' for men, where they could just 'be' rather than do (Antignani et al 2005:9-11). The target groups of the Brimbank Men's Shed are men over 18 years of age, and particularly those who are older, men from CALD backgrounds, men with mental health issues, Defence Services Veterans, under and unemployed men and men from diverse social backgrounds (Martin 2006)

A community forum was held in March 2004, following several months of planning by the Working Group. It sought to identify the issues and needs in the area, including a vision for the Shed, target groups, resources needed, and networks to enhance and develop. Interested parties also undertook visits to other Sheds, such as those in Darebin and Manningham. The initial ideas surrounding the establishment of the Men's Shed focused on the Shed being able to provide a workshop space for men.

However, different "venue set up" and operational processes were identified in the 2004 forum outcomes. As a result, the emphasis became the creation of a place for men: to gather, to yarn, and to give back to the community. Additionally, the Shed would be a place where men have their own space in which to gain life skills and computer skills and to discuss men's health issues.

The Shed aims to improve people's social connectedness and their health and well being. This is complemented with opportunities for recreational activities, fun outings and handicrafts. Since its inception, the Working Group determined it would use existing assets in the area. This meant engaging in such activities as visiting the gym and swimming pools, and other recreational activities and learning opportunities on a frequent basis. Cooking has also been included as a regular program (Antignani et al 2005).

In terms of resources, the Shed currently uses buses resourced from other agencies including ISIS Primary Care, Western Region Health Centre ABODE, SCOPE and MRC North West. Additionally, they have access to the local Swimming Centre facilities and staff who are available for a 2-hour program once a week at a reduced fee. A Computer Club is also being run at Mellon Street and Charity Computers.

At present, the shed runs as follows: Computer club is held on Mondays and Thursdays, with a Sudanese Men's group on a Tuesday evening. Wednesday is a gathering day for all men, with the Walking Out West Walking group, Gym and Swin and other recreational activities, plus other activities including computer use, cooking lunch, men's time and sharing ideas. A second computer class is currently running, and OM:NI [Older Men: New Ideas] recently had its first gathering with 12 participants.

Another successful men's forum was held on the 10th May 2006 and one of the outcomes of all programs and activities is the review and evaluation process, which is being taken up by the men who gather, the coordinator and the working group. Another new initiative is currently being planned with The Western Bulldogs Spirit West Services.

UnitingCare Sunshine Mission is the lead agency for this partnership project. The project received significant funding of \$271,780 for its three-year partnership pilot project from the DVC Community Support fund. "This will assist men in the local community to plan, implement and evaluate the development of an ongoing Men's Shed" (Department for Victorian Communities 2006). The anticipated outcomes of the Shed are sevenfold:

1. create opportunities and experiences for men from socially and culturally diverse backgrounds living in the City of Brimbank, to contribute in their local community and reduce the level of their depression and social isolation;
2. provide a safe supportive environment, where men over the age of 18 can actively participate in a range of activities to achieve social connectedness

3. improve participants' knowledge and access to mainstream and community services by facilitating links between the group and other services and developing community advocacy and broad based community alliances;
4. enhance the participants' life skills, social, recreational and vocational opportunities;
5. enable men to rekindle the joy of life and laughter and their potential to build healthy relationships by fostering sharing and companionship which enhances their physical and mental wellbeing;
6. demonstrate increased participation in, and enhanced benefit to community life within the City of Brimbank and surrounding suburbs in the West;
7. secure ongoing funding before the end of 2007'. (Adapted from Martin 2006)

The core strengths of the Brimbank Men's Shed include the development of partnerships between Government and Non-Government organisations. This was first seen when ten key local agencies formed a partnership called the Men's Shed Working Group. With these participants, a Community Forum was held so men could come together and talk. Forty local men attended, and most expressed interest in the establishment of a meeting place where they could connect with others in a useful and meaningful way (Marshall 2005:24).

The ability to create partnerships is of vital importance to the Brimbank Men's Shed. They have formed partnerships with:

- Workers from nine different agencies such as RDNS Homeless Person's Program
- ISIS Primary Care
- ABODE Western Region Health Centre
- Centrelink Sunshine
- Mid West Area Mental Health Service
- North West Migrant Resource Centre
- *UnitingCare* Sunshine Mission
- Brimbank Council
- Western Division of General Practitioners
- The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
- Department for Victorian Communities
- Department of Veterans Affairs

Other partnerships and agency connections include: VU, Wesley Employment Footscray, Scienceworks, Melbourne City Mission, Western Bulldogs and their Spirit West Services. They also have established linkages with other Men's Sheds at The Salvation Army Werribee, Frankston, Manningham, Darebin, Lakes Entrance, Geelong, and with Dr Barry Golding and his research unit in Ballarat (Antignani et al 2005). These partnerships have a great impact upon the capacities of the Shed as they bring funding, expertise and referrals. Further, the Shed participants have greater opportunities to give back to the community through its activities.

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5. Frankston Men's Shed

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Peninsula Health

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The Frankston Men's shed opened in February 2005 as a joint project between Community Health and Psychiatry at Peninsula Health. It was originally developed via a Men's Health steering committee, and partnerships were later formed with Bunnings, Rotary, Local Council and other organisations. The current governance structure is now made up of Peninsula Health Community Health and Psychiatric Service key personnel, with an Advisory Committee of community stakeholders to be re-established soon.

In a regional setting, the Shed is a safe, non-judgemental and alcohol-free place for men to participate in activities such as woodworking, computer use, gardening and socialising. Its major focus is to establish community involvement for men who are socially isolated, experiencing depression, recently entering retirement, unemployed, or experiencing drug and alcohol issues. Further, it aims to draw on the vast experience and skills of older men, to provide opportunities for them to share these skills with others, particularly younger men who are experiencing health and lifestyle issues³. Its location was carefully selected to be easily accessible to public transport and parking, yet independent of the hospital setting.

The Shed was formed in accordance with the social model of health to empower participants and encourage self-help practices. Its group processes are enabled by a facilitator with the help of volunteers. Decisions are being made by the participants. This is empowering for them and builds a greater sense of community. Its objectives are to: "increase social connections for isolated men, those men who are at risk of depression and other mental illness, or following treatment for substance abuse; provide options for leisure and recreation that promote men's health and improve quality of life; utilise early intervention and prevention strategies to reduce alcohol or medicinal abuse and hospital admissions; and initiate a mentoring program whereby older men's skills and life experience may be shared with younger men who have health and lifestyle issues" (Holding & Satchard 2003).

Of particular concern to the Frankston community was a need for spaces and programs for isolated and marginalised men. They are needed to develop better access to community, social and mainstream mental health services, and to develop community capacity and connectedness. A needs assessment in 2002 revealed disturbing images of men's health in the area. Frankston had a higher than average percentage of men with mental health and alcohol issues.

The Shed has a unique capacity to address these issues. According to Health Minister Bronwyn Pike, "Besides local drinking holes, there were very few common meeting places for men in the Frankston area to gather and feel comfortable discussing their social, mental and physical health. Many men were turning up at Frankston Hospital's emergency department because of drug and alcohol issues or attempted suicide. Now men in Frankston can gather and participate in activities like woodworking, gardening, cooking, computer and pottery programs, as well as take part in mentoring and group work in an environment they feel comfortable in." (Hart 2005:n.p.).

As the Frankston Men's Shed is still very new, it has much yet to do to fulfil its objectives and address its community's concerns. It aims to link into the wider community through local projects, such as "raised garden beds for local aged care facilities" (Holding,

³ <http://www.frankston.net/mensshed.htm>

Delphi One, 2005). It also has the capacity to assist men to access services, “to come together, mix and socialise while participating in innovative activities” (Holding, Delphi One, 2005).

It can further expand community capacity by developing volunteer networks to support the shed, with retrenched workers, tradesmen, Vietnam veterans, and local artisans. “The Men’s Shed is the catalyst for an active, though largely informal, network for men to get together to address these issues in their own lives. The shed promotes mutual support for the growth of self-awareness, self-esteem, and active self-responsibility... It provides a reason to get out of bed... in a... safe environment for blokes. Where they can be blokes, do bloke’s things, talk bloke’s talk and share aspects of their lives...” (McDonald, Delphi One, 2005).

The Shed benefits a wide range of clients and stakeholders including:

- men following treatment for drug or alcohol issues
- socially isolated or aged men
- frail, early dementia or men with mild physical impairments (stroke, sight impaired, alcohol dementia)
- males and females with ABI or following rehab after stroke
- retired, unemployed and men who lack family supports
- younger men devoid of instinctive male development
- men who are homeless; men with a variety of disabilities, related to depression, mental illness or drug and alcohol issues
- local GP’s
- community day groups referring clients to the Men’s Shed program
- Peninsula Health
- Salvation Army
- Youth and Family Services
- psychiatric services (adult and aged case managers)
- Centrelink

The above list is by no means exhaustive. The Shed has the capacity to address many of the community’s concerns. For instance, if supported by Adult Multicultural Educational Service instructors who could encourage participation in culturally acceptable Men’s Shed activities, it could also benefit men from Non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Frankston Shed operates four days per week. It serves men who are socially isolated, retired or unemployed and men looking for recreational or social activities. Two of these days have an emphasis for clients of the community mental health service with support from appropriate staff. The programs offer and focus on interaction, sharing of values and goals, involvement in diverse and interesting projects, learning new skills, and mentoring with a focus on positive mental health and wellbeing.

Volunteers also play an integral role in the shed program, and assist the coordinator with the running of the shed. The numbers of men attending both programs is up to 40 men per week, with referrals coming from many community agencies. The shed is yet to secure recurrent funding to at least maintain current levels of activity.

References:

- Holding, G. & Scatchard, C. (2003) *Frankston Men’s Shed Project Report*—with the assistance of collaborating organisations and Community Steering Committee.
- Hart, B. (2005). ‘*Peninsula Health Scoops State Awards*’, 25th November 2005. [Last accessed 23 May 2006 @ <http://hmb.dhs.vic.gov.au/web/pubhbf/medtel.nsf/0/9c2620261be98094ca2570c7000990f6?OPendDocument>]
- Comments from Delphi One Survey conducted for Office of Senior Victorians (Ken McDonald and Greg Holding)

Appendix B: The Hayes-Williamson Typology of Men's Sheds

According to this typology of Men's Sheds, there are five types based on ethos: Occupational, Clinical, Recreational, Educational, and Social. There can be a number of models for each type. Exemplars of each model are given and some attempt has been made to specify a function and indicate the type of support that may be provided to the men. The function and support columns are approximations and could be argued over at length. They are included to give some idea of what is happening at the present time and what may be of value. Further research will be required to determine how useful these columns might be for understanding Men's Sheds. The types and models should be taken into account when considering the establishment, continuation and evaluation of the various sheds. As all men are not alike, neither are the sheds that they prefer.

Ethos Type	Model	Exemplars	Function	Support
Occupational (Informal)	Workshop	Lane Cove Community Men's Shed	Social	EMOTIONAL; Instrumental
Occupational (structured)	Plant	Port Augusta; "Men in Sheds" Bendigo	Utility	EMOTIONAL; Instrumental
Occupational (supervised)	Rehab	Manningham Community Health	Utility	Instrumental; Emotional
Occupational (crewed)	Franchisee	Menshed Pty Limited NSW	Social	Emotional
Occupational (structured)	Work-start (Rare)	Lake Macquarie Men's Sheds and Sustainable Employment Programme	Utility	Instrumental
Clinical (semi-structured)	Therapeutic	Frankston Men's Shed, Peninsula Health	Utility	EMOTIONAL; Instrumental
Clinical (semi-structured)	Coordinated	Brimbank Uniting Mission; The Men's Shed, Centrecare WA	Utility	Emotional; Instrumental
Clinical (structured)	Behavioural	The Men's SHED	Utility	Instrumental
Recreational (Individual)	Residential	Sundale Garden Village, Nambour	Utility	Emotional
Recreational (group)	Social Club	Darebin Community Health	Social	EMOTIONAL; Instrumental
Recreational (group)	Select Club	Lakes Entrance Health Service (RSL)	Social	Emotional
Educational (Informal)	Study Group	OM : NI (Older Men : New Ideas)	Social	Emotional
Educational (structured utilitarian)	Learning Centre	Castlemaine Community House, Yarram Community Learning Centre	Utility	INSTRUMENTAL; Emotional
Educational (sessional utilitarian)	Circuit (Rare)	Stuart Wilder, Western District Health Service	Utility	INSTRUMENTAL; Emotional
Education (Informal developmental)	Mobile (Rare)	Tweed Heads; Richmond Valley	Utility	Emotion; Instrumental
Educational (structured developmental)	Entrepreneurial	Nick Theophilou, Mentor Men's Network	Utility	Instrumental; Emotional
				(contd. next page)

Educational (Inter-generational)	Mentoring	Nambucca Heads	Social	Inspirational
Communal	Service Club	Nowa Nowa Men's Choir	Social	Emotional, Inspirational
Communal	Grange Hall	Orbost Regional Health, Mallacoota DHSS	Social	Emotional, Instrumental
Communal	Healing (Rare)	Budda's Men's Shed, Uncle Reg Blow (Darwin), Paul Wright (Welcome to County)	Social	Inspirational

DEFINITIONS:

Ethos:

This column tries to capture the sort of underlying vision and values of the environment. It is a key organising characteristic that groups the various types of sheds. Some of the Sheds deliberately seek to create an occupational environment.

Others are more clinically or educationally orientated. A leisure or recreational stance is taken by still others. Finally, a few have a more communal feel to them.

In effect, the varieties of sheds capture the various settings that most men living in Australia throughout their life-course have experienced at one time or another: work, education, recreation, health services and the community at large.

These environments can be more spontaneous or informal, or they can be much more structured. Some emphasise a group oriented ethos. Others are utilitarian in orientation.

Finally, a very few emphasise the session or occasional over the continuous and regular.

Function:

This column has to do with the function of the shed project or program. Is it primarily to help the agency attract men to its services or to make it easier to reach men in the community? If this is the main reason for starting and running the Shed, then it is serving a *utility function* even if the project or program has social aspects. If the hosting agency has primarily responded to the desires of the men for a space to get together for their purposes, then it is serving a *social function*.

Obviously, there can be a combination of functions in what might be considered a win-win situation. However, in terms of the social function, it is likely that the men could go to another physical space without serious loss to an agency's programs. In terms of the utility function, if the men should leave, the agency would probably have to try another strategy to "access" the men.

The more that the project or program is truly a grass-roots event (requested by the men who are involved more fully in the assessment, planning, implementation, resourcing and evaluation) the more it may be said to be a social function. No value judgment is intended by the use of the terms social or utility. The designation merely identifies a tendency towards either usefulness (utility) or conviviality (social).

Support:

At present, support is typically conceived as either instrumental support (e.g., infrastructure, information, instruction) or emotional (affective and supportive feedback). It would seem important to add a third type of support: inspirational. Both terms instrumental and emotional support have an intimation of deficiency.

Inspirational support would be the support that helps us to flourish as individuals and groups. It would probably involve story-telling and role-modelling processes and would be a form of positive social facilitation.

Again, it is possible to have both instrumental and emotional support being given and received at the same time. When one or the other of the words is capitalised and associated with the other, it means that the capitalised word is the primary focus. However, it is likely that the other support would also be available.

If both are linked, but neither is capitalised, then it is likely to be the case that both could be expected to be available. When they are both capitalised it is likely that the same program will probably provide very different support to different people.

THE 5 TYPES ELABORATED:

A. Occupational Ethos

The common denominator among the types in this group is the intention for men to feel as if they are in a formal or informal workspace. Side-by-side interactions are privileged and allow for both instrumental and emotional support. Tools and other materials relating maintenance, craft, or production work are strongly featured in these sheds. Minimal Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) guidelines and policies are needed for these Sheds due to the very real danger of accident and injury.

Workshop: Informal work that may or may not produce items for sale or maintain property and furnishings.

Plant: More formal and structured work experiences that very often produce items for sale or are part of a planned maintenance system. They operate with a large plant and extensive range of tools that could rival some commercial operations. Financial self-sufficiency may be an important goal.

Rehab: Work is informal, yet supervised. The intention is more or less to provide opportunities for a significant portion of the men to engage in activities that are being used to regain or maintain a variety of life-skills through work-like activities. Other men may only observe the activities and enjoy the sociability of the environment having passed the point of being able to safely engage in work activities.

Franchisee: Similar to either workshop or industrial types except the basic format has been carefully systematised and made available to other groups of men somewhat in the manner of the "Jim's" franchises. There can be a fee for membership and the programs are controlled by the members. There can be a "crew" atmosphere that develops.

Work-start: These sheds act as mediating structures to help ease men, often younger, into paid employment and may be part of a formal employment network. There may be some profitable to investigate the usefulness of creating links between such sheds and local learning and employment networks associated with secondary colleges in Victoria. This type appears to be rare as yet.

B. Clinical Ethos

The common denominator among these types is the likelihood that men involved in these projects or programs will feel that they are in a "clinical" setting or that they are involved in health or welfare processes.

Therapeutic: These sheds offer semi-structured activities to assist the men attending them to develop personal and social skills that enhance their ability to enjoy greater interaction with others and satisfaction with their personal life-projects. Social connectedness may be a focus for reducing isolation and, thereby, enhancing physical

and mental health. While this is incidental in other sheds, it is a primary concern in sheds with this ethos.

Coordinated: These sheds are similar to the therapeutic sheds. However, they are more likely to deliberately seek to link a variety of services to the shed either through in-house processes, or by making arrangements with external organisations.

Behavioural: These projects or programs are designed to help men engage issues in their lives that have a largely negative influence on their relationships with others. A focus on personal development is incidental to the primary focus on what are deemed to be acceptable changes in behaviour. The activities are usually highly structured or programmatic.

C. Recreational Ethos

A leisure focus is the common characteristic of these sheds. Tools may be around, but it's more like having a workbench nearby than being within a workshop. On the other hand, there may a variety of recreational equipment and activities offered in these settings.

Residential: This type of shed seems to be an increasing trend in retirement facilities that recognise that men might need some respite from a typically "over-feminised" environment where the majority of both residents and staff are women. Typically a space is set aside for men to withdraw from the larger environment to engage individually in activities where creative outlets provide therapeutic possibilities. It is the closest to the older idea of the shed as a place to isolate one's self from others, especially the missus and the kids.

Social Club: Many unemployed, underemployed, semi-retired and retired men lack opportunities to get together with other men for a bit of socialising. These sheds provide recreational opportunities in a supportive environment that is less competitive or threatening than other public spaces that often require considerable financial outlay to participate. This type of social club usually attracts a broader range of participants than the next club.

Select Club: This type of shed usually attracts or even only allows participants who share a similar background or who have shared a similar significant life-experience. The classic analogy is the Returned Serviceman's League. But, it could also be a recreational setting for men who have had similar work, educational, or clinical experiences.

D. Educational Ethos

Men involved in these types of sheds would probably associate them with various learning environments that they have been involved in through their lives, especially the primary school and secondary school years. Bad experiences or poor outcomes in previous learning situations may make these types of Sheds less appealing to many men unless considerable work is done to make them "male-friendly". This means being comfortable to men in terms of contextual, content and process issues.

Study Group: This type of Shed affords men opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that help to enhance a life that may be relatively satisfactory. They provide an informal context for learning with others which can be very appealing to some types of people, but not others. Adult learning processes are emphasised.

Learning Centre: This type of Shed is more structured than the previous shed. In fact, while the previous Shed might be more virtual than actual, this Shed is usually very much concrete. It is, in fact, often associated with a neighbourhood house or community learning centre. The knowledge, skills and attitudes to be gained are more utilitarian and intended to fill gaps that hold people back in life. Adult learning processes may be valued, but expediency may mean that some learning is more programmatic.

Circuit: Like the previous type, this one is focused on a more utilitarian approach to education. It is sessional in that the “expert” travels a circuit around the country and appears on a scheduled basis. Participants may have more or less influence on the subject matter and the manner of its presentation. The participants need to schedule the facilitator and arrange for a venue. This type is relatively rare; but, a model worth considering more widely in rural and remote regions.

Mobile: This type is similar to the last. However, the territory covered is not likely to be as extensive and it is the Shed that is mobile and not just the facilitators. It may be able to make more frequent visits to a specific location. The processes are typically more informal and interactive. The focus is on development and growth. This is particularly true if younger people are involved in the Shed. In Tweed Heads, the Mobile Men’s Shed has been part of a larger strategic approach to strengthening families and communities. This type is also relatively rare.

Entrepreneurial: In this type, the emphasis is on a structured approach to learning that facilitates personal development and growth in a programmatic fashion. A facilitator creates a “temporary” group at a specified location for a period of time and moves on after the allotted interval. More or less frequent rescheduling of programs within a particular locality is possible. There are usually some “commercial” costs to be paid by the participants or a hosting agency. This type might be described as mentoring of adult men by other men.

Mentoring: This type of Shed typically offers time limited opportunities for younger men to be mentored in a variety of areas by older men. The programs remain in a particular locality and seek to meet the needs of young men in a larger social context. There is more accountability among the mentors and between the mentors and the community than in the previous type of Shed. The mentoring is more process oriented that personality dependent.

E: Communal Ethos

Service Club: The members of the Nowa Nowa Men’s Choir might be surprised to see themselves listed as an exemplar of this type. In fact, they could probably think of a few better candidates. Perhaps we could if we tried harder. However, it is just this type of modesty that needs to be honoured and appreciated—it can be inspirational. They are reflecting what is intended by the designation of communal. As members of a local community they gather to enjoy each other’s company through singing.

Yet, they offer their services to the larger community’s benefit on an informal basis. Other Sheds may operate in a manner like the more well-known service clubs such as Rotary, Apex and the Lions. One key difference between the Sheds and these Clubs is the local nature of their origins and the more limited scope of the influence of the former. We would dearly love to get the Nowa Nowa Men’s Choir out of East Gippsland occasionally.

Grange Hall: This type of Men’s Shed is similar to the previous shed. However, it is less focused in its activities and is more permanently attached to its community in facilities easily located and accessed by a wide-variety of people, including women. It is more likely to provide some amount of instrumental support. The folks attending this type of Shed probably wouldn’t get too fussed about things such as inspirational support. However, they are often quiet heroes worthy of communal respect.

Healing: This type of Men’s Shed is the sort that is often deemed to be of great importance to Indigenous men. It is communal in that the participants are or become keenly aware of the connectedness with their communities through story-telling and mentoring processes that seem to enliven a relationship with a larger tradition. In some cases, this type of Shed is relatively fixed in terms of location.

At other times, those who are facilitating the processes will move from region to region to make the various resources available to people who would otherwise be unable to participate in the process of healing. While there can be instrumental and emotional support, it is probably best to give recognition to the importance of the inspirational.

More Information:

Nowa Nowa Men's Choir

http://cmv.customer.netSPACE.nel.au/showarchives/2003_06_june.pdf

Tweed Heads Mobile Men's Shed

<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20050407034>

Richmond Valley Mobile Men's Shed

<http://www.welcomelocountry.com.au/people/index.html>

Men in Sheds, Bendigo

http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.asp?Page_Id=344&h=1

The Men's Shed, Centrecare

<http://www.centrecare.com.au/shed/default.asp>

Lane Cove Community Men's Shed

http://ageing.nsw.uca.org.au/sydnorth/mens_shed.htm

<http://www.mensshed.org.au/index.html>

Orbost Regional Health

<http://www.orbostregionalhealth.com.au/services/chs.htm>

Mallacoota District Health and Support Service

<http://www.mallacoota.org.au/mens%20shed%201.htm>

Castlemaine Community House

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/qvln/g/appeal_details_form?appealId=66

Darebin Community Health Service QIPPS Page

<http://www.qipps.com/viewProgram.cgi?id=129>

The Men's SHED

<http://www.afic.gov.au/research/cvp/register/projects/cpr-62.html>

Creswick

<http://www.abc.nel.au/melbourne/stories/s1323047.htm>

<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/cresms/web/index.html>

Nambucca Heads

<http://www.lukehartsuyker.com.au/detail.asp?ID=49>

http://bikes_project.tripod.com/shed.html

Mensheds Pty Limited

<http://www.mensheds.com.au/index/learn>

Lake Macquarie Men's Shed

http://www.pm.gov.au/news/media_releases/media_Releases609.html

Yarram Community Learning Centre

<http://www.yclc.com.au/pages/shed/shed.htm>

Paul Wright

<http://www.welcomelocountry.com.au/people/index.html>

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