



# SHED chatter

ISSUE OCTOBER 2023

## Welcome to Shed Chatter

Welcome to the latest edition of "Shed Chatter," it's hard to believe 2023 is nearly over!

Last month was an exciting time for Sheds across the country as we celebrated 30 incredible years of Sheds in Australia during Men's Shed Week (3-9 September). It was fantastic to see so many Shedders come together to celebrate. Make sure you check out some of the great Men's Shed stories shared in this issue (p14) that appeared in the media. It was great to see the Men's Shed movement be so strongly supported with positive publicity.

Our AGM is scheduled for Thursday, 30 November, and we encourage any interested Shedder to attend. Not only is it an important opportunity for members to have their say, but it is also a great chance for us to all get together and share a cuppa and a chat.

The creativity and innovation of Men's Sheds across the State are once more highlighted in this edition. And if you have ever wondered what goes on behind the doors of a Shed, check out "Just Another Tuesday at Maroochy's Shed".

This edition also delves into important topics, such as the benefits of using official rather than personal email accounts for your Shed, tips for being a good listener, and the importance of self-care for blokes.

We hope you enjoy reading "Shed Chatter". Thank you for being a part of our community, and here's to many

more years of growth, camaraderie, and shared success. Happy reading!

To share your celebrations, stories, successes and challenges with other Shedders, take a photo or two, share your story and email it to [shedchatter@qmsa.org.au](mailto:shedchatter@qmsa.org.au).

## FEATURES

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*The Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the article's author and are not necessarily, the opinions of the QMSA State Executive nor the Editor.*



# President's jottings

## *Greetings Fellow Shedders,*

We have now entered the final quarter of the year. This is ample reason to review the progress made by the QMSA over the preceding nine months. As an association with a primary focus on the provision of support and assistance to our Queensland Men's Sheds we are delighted with the growth and maturity that is so abundantly evident. The criteria that can be used to judge this success is whilst visiting Sheds one observes the caring environment, support and mateship that is demonstrated within the Shed. The value of clusters and other gatherings present an opportunity to expose our leadership groups and individual Shedders to presentations by competent and capable people in such matters as Male Health and Wellbeing, Shed Governance and Administration, Shed Succession Planning and Inter Shed Forums that provide the opportunity for exchange of innovative ideas and programs.

I have been extremely impressed by the number of Sheds that have offered to host Clusters and promoted inter shed visits and other activities. Additionally, an increasing number of Sheds have gained recognition by engaging in, initiating, driving or being major partners in significant events including health forums, fund raising and support for organisations who provide relief for the under privileged in our community.

My colleagues, as members of the QMSA executive and ably supported by our Zone Representatives have been diligent and worked extremely hard in applying their many skills in advancing the Shed Movement in Queensland. However, there remains

Zones that still are without representation on the Management Committee. To compensate for this shortfall, we have instituted a series of Shed Presidents Forums and established a Zone Sub Committee to promote a more effective working interface between the Sheds within each of the Zones.

During the later part of November, the QMSA will conduct the Annual General Meeting (AGM). To comply with the time constraint imposed by the constitution there will be a number of retirements that will cause the need for a number of vacancies to be filled. On page (4) of this "Shed Chatter" there is, what I consider, to be a persuasive case put forward to encourage Shedders to put themselves forward for a position on the Management Committee. There are many shedders out there who could nominate with confidence to serve a term and advance the movement here in Queensland.

I am pleased and proud to advise that the work done by Men's Sheds in our proactive support of Mental Health in the community is recognized by an invitation to attend a formal dinner at Government House.

Kindest regards to all

*John Greatrex*  
President QMSA

# Our team

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**President** John Greatrex  
*Ipswich Shed*

**Vice President** Lawrie Bingham  
*Samford Shed and Dayboro Men's Shed*

**Treasurer** France Du Buisson Perrine  
*Samford Shed*

**Secretary** Robert Collins  
*Spring Hill Shed*

Like to Contact QMSA  
or a Committee Member?

Visit [qmsa.org.au/contact-us](https://qmsa.org.au/contact-us)



Or, scan our  
QR code

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*All members of the Executive Committee, and*  
**Metro North Zone Rep**  
*Rodney Hansen Burpengary and District Men's Shed*

**Downs & South West Qld. Zone Rep**  
*Merv Kahler Pittsworth Shed*

**Capricornia Zone Rep**  
*Ron Steen Gladstone Shed*

**Far North Qld. Zone Rep**  
*Ken Robertson Edmonton Men's Shed*

**Sunshine Coast Zone Representative**  
*Steve Phillips Noosa Men's Shed*

### Vacant

Metro South Zone Rep

North Qld. Zone Rep

Fraser Coast & Bundaberg Zone Rep

Gold Coast & Scenic Zone Rim Rep

## QMSA Patrons

QMSA values and recognises, Her Excellency, the Honourable, Dr Jeanette Young, AC, PSM, Governor of Queensland and her husband, Professor Graeme Nimmo, RFD, as our joint Patrons.



A State Association member of AMSA. Funded by Australian Government and Queensland Government





## Nominate for a Leadership Role in QMSA

Is your Shed a QMSA Member? Are you passionate about making a difference in the lives of men and their communities across Queensland? Would you like to play a vital role in shaping the future of Men's Sheds in our beautiful state?

If so, we invite you to consider nominating for a leadership position at our upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM).

QMSA has been at the forefront of fostering camaraderie, wellbeing, and community engagement for men of all ages.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to provide a forum for Queensland Sheds to network, exchange ideas, share experiences, and promote overall general wellbeing. We aim to promote a safe environment where Queensland shedders are happy and healthy contributors to their local community.

As a leader in QMSA, you have the opportunity to contribute to the growth and sustainability of Men's Sheds, making a positive difference in the lives of Queensland Men. As a leader, you can help us expand our support network, ensuring that Men's Sheds can access the resources and knowledge they need to thrive. Your dedication and enthusiasm for the Men's Shed Movement could inspire others to get involved and contribute to QMSA's collective mission.

Your voice, ideas, and passion are invaluable and could help build a stronger, more vibrant Men's

Shed community in Queensland and impact the lives of Shedders across the State.

Don't miss this opportunity to be a driving force behind the Queensland Men's Shed Association. Nominate yourself today, and let's continue our great work together!

For more information on available positions and how to nominate, please contact [Secretary@qmsa.org.au](mailto:Secretary@qmsa.org.au).



### INVITATION QMSA Annual General Meeting

When: 10am Thursday 30 November

Where: Venue to be confirmed

RSVP: by Thursday, 16 November to [secretary@qmsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@qmsa.org.au)

All interested Shedders welcome.  
Each financial member entitled to one vote.



## The benefit of using official email accounts for your Shed

Setting up official email addresses will help you stay connected with your community, streamline your communication and help ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities within Sheds.

QMSA recommends setting up specific email accounts for your Shed such as info.MenShedName@... as well as key office bearers such as "President.ShedName@..." to centralise important communications.

There are many benefits to having official Shed email accounts, including:

### Smooth Transition:

When new office bearers are elected, having official email accounts ensures they receive all relevant information and access to past conversations. This facilitates a seamless handover process and allows for the continuity of important discussions.

### Easy Access:

Official email accounts create a central hub for storing and retrieving important Shed-related emails, sparing office bearers from searching through personal inboxes. In the case of absences or illness it also makes it easier to share inboxes.

### Professionalism:

Using official email accounts adds professionalism to your Shed communication.

### Staying Connected

Having official email accounts means important communication gets to the right person when it should.

### **How can I set up official email accounts?**

There are a few different options available. One of the easiest is Gmail - a well-known, user-friendly, free email platform. You can set these Shed email addresses up in the same way you do a personal email.

Alternatively, your Shed may be eligible for free or discounted business solutions such as Google Workspace and Microsoft Office 365.

### **Read our User-Friendly Guide**

Access our QMSA "[Set up emails for your shed](#)" Resource Guide for easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions on how to set up Gmail accounts for your Shed. [Read Guide.](#)



## Building Connections at Beenleigh District Men's Shed



by Beenleigh District Men's Shed

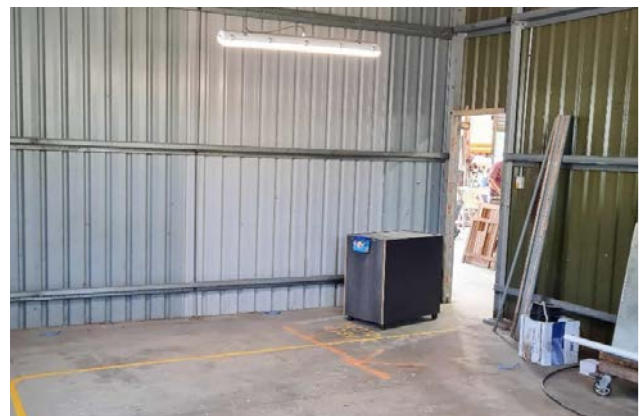
Hi to all Shedders! We were established in March 2016, and our journey began with our first workshop at Beenleigh State High School.

Today, we are grateful to call the old Beenleigh Logan City Council depot on Plantation Road Mount Warren Park our home, all thanks to the council's generous support, allowing us to use the site at a minimal cost.

Recently, the council undertook a thorough refurbishment of the site, giving a fresh coat of paint to all the buildings within the compound, including our shed. In addition to this, they installed a monitored security system, erected an awning over our office, and replaced our lighting with energy-efficient LED lighting throughout the Shed. This significantly improved the safety of the working environment.

One of our current projects involves renovating a timber storage room, which we plan to transform into a welcoming social area. Here, our members will have the opportunity to relax, read a book, play cards, watch a movie, or use computers and the internet. We are thrilled to have the Logan City Council actively involved in this project, providing both financial support and building contractors to complete the job. We've also applied for a grant to outfit the room once it's completed.

This addition will greatly improve what our Shed can



offer the community, by providing an opportunity for members who may not be interested in the trades to connect and socialise with like-minded men.

The photo (inset top right) shows our members enjoying morning tea before the challenges of COVID-19 altered our routines. Since then, we've been gathering at the front of the workshop for our catch-ups. The new social room, once finished, will provide a much nicer space to relax, with air-conditioning and other comforts.

In closing, I wish all Men's Sheds the best for the future. Hopefully, we never experience again what Covid-19 did to our lives.

## Innovation

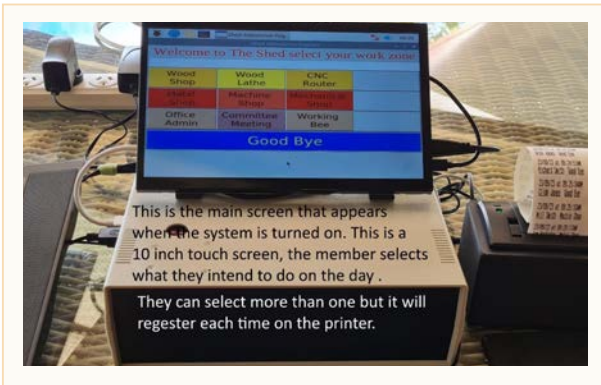
# Shed Attendance Solution



*Hello from Gregory Pobar, Secretary of Beenleigh District Men's Shed.*

I would like to let Sheds know about the convenient and easy-to-use automated system we use for signing in members' attendance.

This system is ideally suited to Sheds with large memberships. It allows members to select their activities upon arrival, with the ability to select more than one activity. Using this system helps us collect valuable data for all Shed activities.

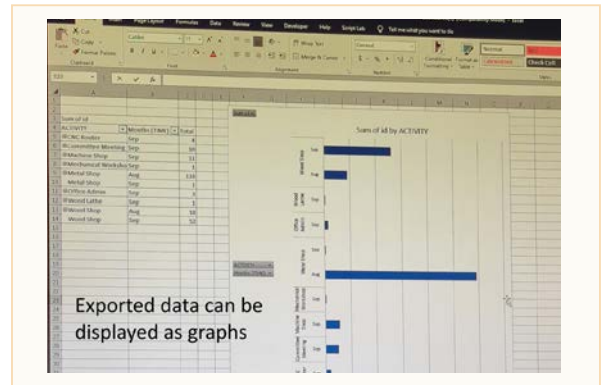


### Benefits of Data Collection

While many Sheds may not prioritise data collection, having access to this information can greatly benefit Sheds. It helps us allocate funds more effectively based on the areas our members use the most. It can also help support grant applications by providing insights into members' interests and shed activities.

### Database and Data Visualization

The system records what a member does at the Shed in a database, which can then be easily exported into an Excel spreadsheet. Using Excel, this data can also be visually represented in graphs and charts - offering an appealing and effective way to view data.



### Installing and Customising the System

The system is both cost-effective and user-friendly. Anyone interested in electronics can assemble it in just a few days. I have developed the software program, which is available free as open source, and is easily understood by anyone with basic coding skills. Someone with expertise in the field would make short work of it - and could perhaps also improve on the design.

Sheds can customise the names on the buttons to suit their specific needs, with the flexibility to include up to approximately 20 different items. If more options are required, a standard computer monitor can be used (in this case a mouse will be needed to select buttons).

An Internet connection is needed for setting the time on the system and connecting to the database to export collected data.

### Getting Started

You can download my easy to follow [instruction document](#) with a full list of parts required.

If you would like to know more about the system, or would like to implement it at your Shed please get in touch with me at [beenleighmensshed@gmail.com](mailto:beenleighmensshed@gmail.com).



## Capricornia Region



## Men's Sheds turns 30. Capricornia parties!

by Ron Steen, Capricornia Zone Rep, QMSA

September has always been a good month for celebrations, with Father's Day and Men's Shed Week, and in 2023, we also celebrated the 30th anniversary of Men's Shed in Australia. All in all, our Shed Community in Capricornia had quite a few reasons to celebrate.

Gladstone Shed hosts a belated Father's Day lunch every Monday following Father's Day. Almost 40 members and their partners attended this year's lunch celebrations, making it a wonderful gathering. As we prioritise our health and wellbeing, it's only fitting that we followed lunch with a game of Ten Pin Bowling.

We all managed to fill in the rest of the week by going to our Sheds for the odd hour or more before Boyne-Tannum, Calliope River, and Gladstone got together to hold a Gladstone Region Shed Get-Together on Saturday, 9 September, at Ward's Brewery. (Continued page 9).



Image top banner: Boyne Community Shed at Nagoorin celebrate in style. Images above: Regional Shed Get Together.



## Capricornia Region

This marked the first time all three neighbouring Sheds in the Gladstone region got together at a central city location to promote our respective Sheds. The event provided a great opportunity to socialise across the whole membership and share the activities offered by different Sheds in the region with the wider Gladstone community. Sheds proudly displayed and sold their hand-crafted products, showcasing their talent and chatting with community members about what Men's Sheds can offer. We were honoured to have the Mayor of the Gladstone Regional Council, Matt Burnett, and the Member for Flynn, Glenn Butcher, join us for a chat.

We were thrilled to receive a lot of positive publicity before and after the event. One of our local newspapers promoted the event with a large feature beforehand, and another paper prepared a follow-up article to appear after the event. Additionally, we received community notices broadcast by our local radio station and an online event listing and social media promotion from QMSA. We were delighted with the positive publicity received for our event and the Men's Shed movement in our region.

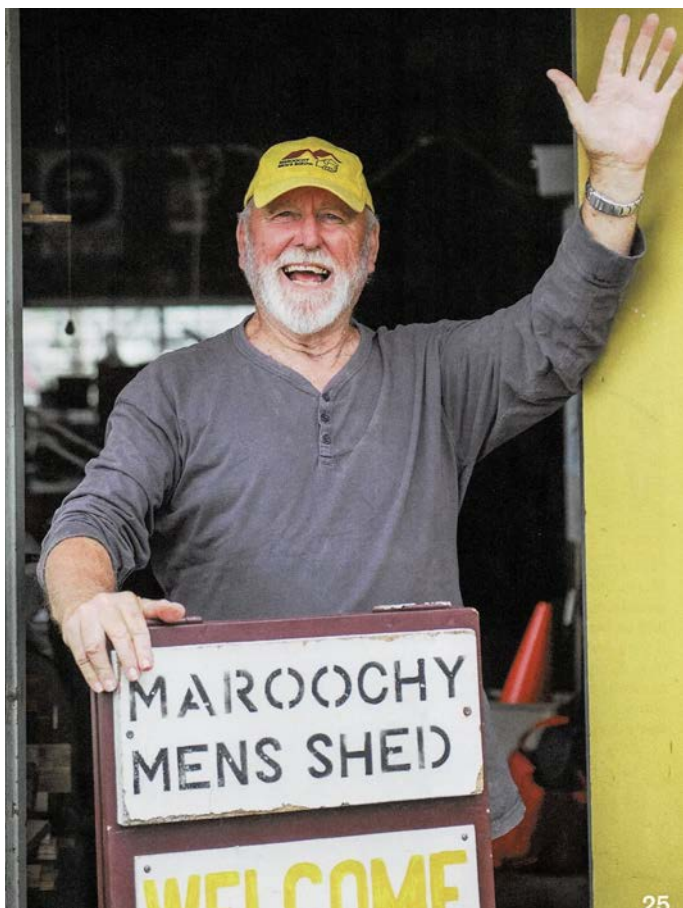
Unfortunately, the Shed Get-Together coincided with the annual showcase weekend supported by the Boyne Valley Community Shed. From the photos of some of the crafts on display and the music provided by popular shedder Jack Viljoen, there is no doubt they also had a great Men's Shed Week.

Meanwhile, just up the road in Rockhampton, the AFS Men's Shed celebrated their tenth birthday on the same weekend with a dinner at a historical homestead, providing an ideal setting to reflect on their Shed's achievements over the last ten years.

Overall, it was a fantastic series of celebrations for Men's Shed Week in Capricornia.



*Image top: Gladstone Shedders with our MP, the Hon Glenn Butcher (bottom right) Image middle: Calliope Shed president selling raffle tickets to our Mayor Matt Burnett (front left). Image bottom: AFS Men's Sheds 10th Birthday Celebrations.*



Then "*Jimmy the Barber*" from Bli Bli, who understands the importance of addressing mental health issues and values our work, kindly presented a cheque to our Shed. Jimmy believes that being involved in the community makes a positive and lasting impact and is part of social responsibility. Jimmy's community involvement includes participating in and sponsoring community events and organisations. Maroochy Men's Shed appreciate Jimmy's ongoing support of our Shed.

When Ian Mackay closed the meeting, some Shedders returned to the workshop and gardens, and over 45 Shedders attended our Discussion Group to talk about topics important to them.

Nothing could be better for our mental health than to listen to our mates giving us their views on the happenings of the day; we discussed politics, sport, family relationships, poetry and any subjects our mates wanted to talk about.

Our Shed is a truly wondrous place where we can find companionship, engage in meaningful discussions and regain our sanity.

## Just another Tuesday at the Maroochy Men's Shed

by Bill Glasson, Maroochy Men's Shed

I never stop being excited by happenings at our Maroochy Men's Shed.

A recent Tuesday at the Shed was no exception. After our Shed Song, which seems to sound better and better every week, we listened to our President and then our Secretary give their reports. They both spoke about the participation of our Shed members in raising funds at our local pub raffles, Sunday Fisherman's Road Markets, and car parking duties on Father's Day.

One of our Shed members, John Saez, affectionately known as 'Blokey', went down to cook breakfast for our Shedders with Shed mates as he usually does. It is exciting to see the camaraderie that continues to build at our Shed.

## Share your Sheds story

Stories from your Shed can help inspire others, build a strong Shed network and contribute more broadly to the Shed movement in Queensland and beyond.

We'd love to hear from you!

**Submissions close for the December edition of Shed Chatter close on Thursday 30 November.**

Send your submissions to [shedchatter@qmsa.org.au](mailto:shedchatter@qmsa.org.au)



## Boonah Activity Shed inspires creativity

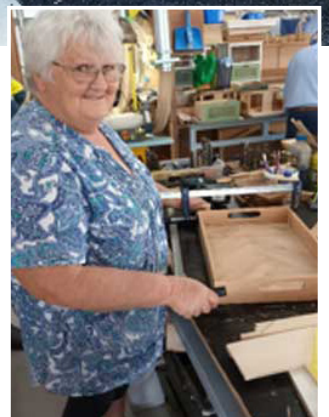


by Boonah Activity Shed

The Boonah Activity Shed was formed about three years ago and offers an inclusive space for both men and women. We are making great progress thanks to the contributions of all our members. Our ladies get involved with Pyrography, Ceramics, Woodwork, and Painting, often using their Pyrography skills to enhance the woodwork made by the men. Woodturning is very popular with the men, but they also enjoy several other activities. Our members proudly display new skills learned at the Shed in the images pictured.

We work closely with local organisations and have an excellent working relationship with the Boonah Rotary Club. Recently, we shared a BBQ with Rotarians, where we helped celebrate them receiving funding for a new Bobbin Sander. Previously, we had received similar funding to buy an Orbital Sander, a piece of equipment our members put to good use.

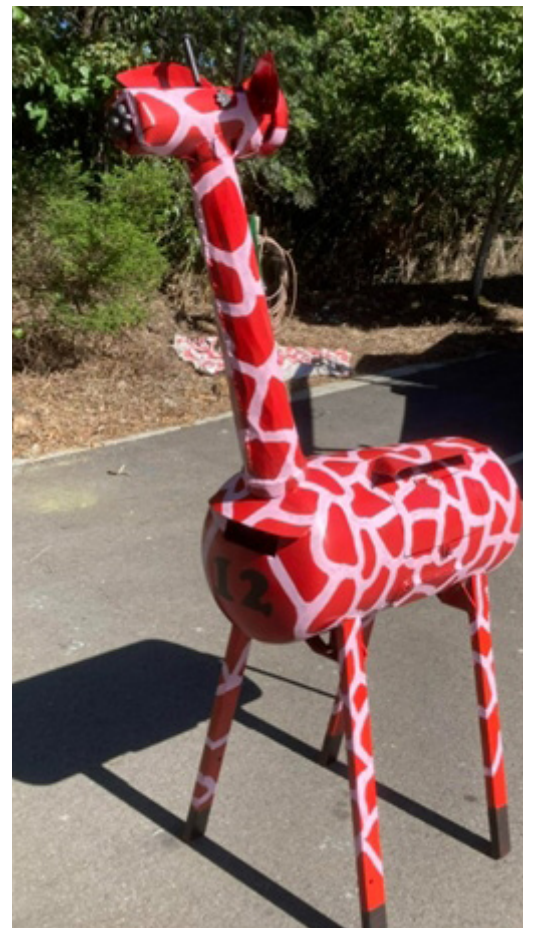
We have been extremely fortunate to receive support from several Mens Sheds throughout South East Queensland and private individuals, for which we are grateful. We were recently pleased to 'play it forward' when we were able to donate a wood lathe to a neighbouring Brisbane Shed. We hope it will enhance their woodworking capabilities.



Top banner: Pictured is our Shed entrance with signage painted by our member Peter Broderick. Top: Dennis Huff displays his latest creation after being shown how to use the lathe. Middle: Shonna proudly displays a serving tray made completely by herself. Bottom: Our youngest member, Zak, made this very nice pine table.



## Samford Men's Shed



## Fostering Creativity and Community at SAMS

Recently, Samford Men's Shed (SAMS) proudly continued its tradition of contributing to the local community. Shedders "Podge" and "Macka" used their skills to install specially crafted possum boxes at the Birralee Childcare Centre in Ferny Hills. This initiative was brought about by concern for a resident possum who began taking refuge in one of the centre's sheds. SAMS designed and installed purpose-built possum boxes, hoping to entice the possum to relocate to a safer and more appealing home.

During the installation process, a group of the centre's children carefully watched with keen interest and asked very thoughtful questions about the process. Their radiant smiles were infectious, and the joy the possum boxes brought was all the thanks Podge and Macka needed.

This enriching experience reaffirmed SAMS' commitment to contribute to meaningful



community projects and to raise awareness of the positive impact of Men's Sheds.

SAMS is also a vibrant hub of creativity. Within our diverse membership, you'll find talent spanning traditional woodwork (The Woodies), art, photography, metalwork (The Steelies), and much more. Some of the wonderful steel creations are pictured above.

Meanwhile, multi-talented Shedder, Brian Slattery, recently penned "Down at the Shed," a poem that encapsulates the unique essence of Sheds as special places (*reproduced with permission p13*).



# POETRY

## Down at the Shed

By Brian Slattery, Samford Men's Shed

*When life seems cold and lonely  
And there's not much else to do  
When you've been "put out to pasture"  
And you're feeling old and blue  
While the body shows signs of wearing out  
And getting old fills you with dread  
There's always relief at hand  
Down at The Shed*

*There's this place where you're welcome  
It doesn't matter who you are  
Who, cares about the size of your house  
Or the brand or type of your car?  
It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor  
Or the colour of your skin  
It's all the same to Shedders  
You're always welcome in*

*And if you're feeling a little nervous  
About meeting someone new  
If you're feeling out of place  
And your tummy's in a stew  
Be brave and take the step  
Right through the Shedder's door*



*Remember, you're not the first one  
We've all been there before  
So, get up off that sofa  
And out of that armchair too  
Throw off that "old man" mind-set  
And shake off feeling blue  
Why not get a move on  
Get out of that cost bed  
Take a walk down the road  
And meet the men at The Shed*

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## A love for our Country

Musings by Bill Glasson, Maroochy Men's Shed

I recently listened to a mate recite "My Country" by Dorothea Mackellar at a Maroochy Men's Shed and it reminded how much I love my country.

It's worthwhile going to YouTube to listen to Dorothea Mackellar recite her famous poem about how much she missed Australia while in England with her father. It is amazing that a young woman of 19 could write such wondrous prose. [Listen](#) as the author reads the full poem ...



## Celebrating 30 Years of Men's Sheds

This September Men's Shed Week was a double wammy of celebrations as we also commemorated the 30th Anniversary of Men's Sheds in Australia. It has been an incredible journey that has transformed lives, fostered friendships and nurtured creativity.

The celebrations, lead by the Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) stretched across the country.

It was great to see so many positive stories appear in publications across the State and around the country. Catch up on just a few of the news stories below ...



## Sheds in the NEWS ...

Scan the QR code or click the hyperlinks to read news articles online.



[Menai Men's Shed open day to celebrate 30th anniversary of Australian Men's Shed Association](#)



[Australia celebrates 30 years of men's sheds as Robertson's thrives..](#)



[Mens shed celebrates birthday](#)



[Central Queensland Today: Men's Shed milestones](#)



[Charters Towers Women of the Outback Shed helps women combat loneliness and learn new skills](#)



[Men's Sheds Celebrate 30 Years](#)



# Regional Coordinator Visits

Our Regional Coordinator, Frank, has been on the road, saying hi and sharing news with Men's Sheds around the State. Check out some recent photos from his visits to Sheds in Killarney (top), Stanthorpe (middle) and Warwick (bottom).

Frank's visits are part of the [Men's Sheds Regional Coordinators Initiative](#). They help connect and strengthen our Shed community and are also a great opportunity to exchange ideas.

Frank is available to help all Sheds in Queensland with:

- Providing health and wellbeing information and resources
- Seeking funding from the National Shed Development Programme
- Forming partnerships with health providers
- Helping sheds to organise and promote regional health events to benefit men and their communities
- Ensuring grant information and applications are available to Men's Sheds.

Stay tuned for more updates from Frank's Shed-hopping adventures.

**Like to know more?**

Contact Frank at [regionalcoordinator@qmsa.org.au](mailto:regionalcoordinator@qmsa.org.au).



## Nambour Men's Shed Gets Reprieve

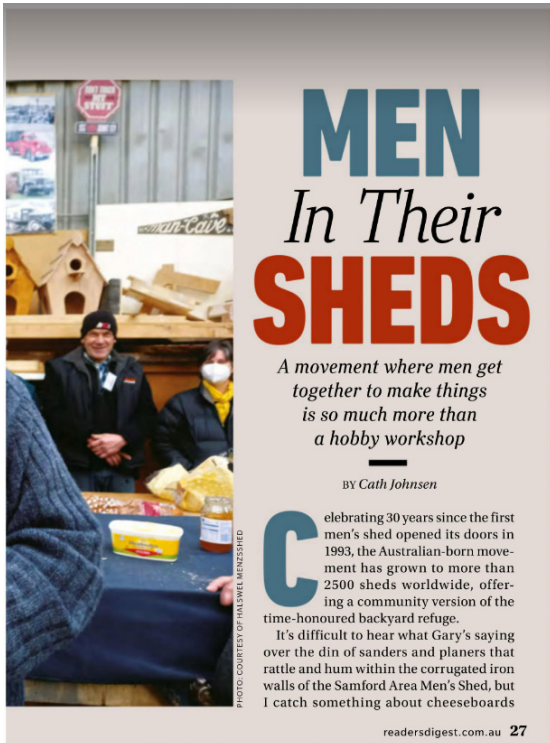
Great news for the Nambour Men's Shed and the Sunshine Coast community. The Shed was faced with the prospect of closing due to the need to vacate their state government-owned premises for a rail corridor upgrade. However they recently received the welcome announcement from Minister for TMR, Mark Bailey, and State Member for Nicklin, Rob Skelton that they have received a five-year extension to continue to operate in their current location.

This extension comes with additional support as TMR will contribute to repairing their damaged roof.

For the full story, read more [online](#).



Scan QR code to read the full news article online.



## Readers Digest Australia: Men In Their Sheds

Article appeared in Australia Readers Digest October-November edition.

Samford Men's Shed have hit the big time with their Shed featuring in a story appearing in the current Readers Digest. The article, written by local freelance writer, Cath Johnsen, celebrates 30 years of Men's Sheds in Australia. Cath writes:

"Communities like this one have become vital to ensuring men's health, both physical and mental, and form part of a much larger network of men's Shed communities across the country and, more recently, the world".

You can read the full article in the latest edition of Readers Digest. Available [digitally](#) for a nominal cost, or check at your local library.



Scan QR code to find Readers Digest online.



Image Credit: John McBow at work on the wood lathe at the AFS Men's Shed. Published in CQ Today

## CQ Today: Men's Shed milestones

Article appeared CQ Today 9 September 2023

This article by journalist Matthew Pearce shines the spotlight on the AFS Shed and their triple reason for celebration this September. First, to mark the 30th Anniversary of Men's Sheds in Australia, second to celebrate Men's Shed Week, and third, their special reason to celebrate was to commemorate their 10th Anniversary.

The group, located under the Rockhampton PCYC, has grown post-COVID from 20 to 38 members. They engage in various activities, including woodworking, metalworking, and artistic projects, and they have been involved in community fundraising efforts, such as their 'Snag Wagon.'

The article emphasises the importance of Men's Sheds in providing a sense of community and support for retired individuals. Read the full story online for more details.

[Read the full article online.](#)



Scan QR code to read the full news article online.

# Building rockets and friendships: 30 Years of Men's Sheds



Image Credit: Members from the Cooma Men's Shed. (ABC South East NSW: Adriane Reardon) Photo published by abc.net.au

### Enjoying comradarie and making lasting friendships at the Men's Shed.

For men, establishing and maintaining strong bonds can sometimes pose a unique set of challenges.

However, for the past three decades, Men's Sheds have been sprouting up all across Australia, providing a haven for creativity and camaraderie among men throughout the nation.

Today, there are more than 1300 Men's Sheds in Australia, making them as common as a certain popular fast-food chain.

In a recent conversation, radio personality and presenter, Sarah Macdonald, had the opportunity to chat with David Helmers, the Executive Officer of the Australian Men's Sheds.

They delved into the fascinating world of these local hubs, where activities range from

woodworking and metalworking to even building rocket ships and beyond. Murgon Men's Shed get a special mention for their amazing trains, and Penrith for having potentially the largest physical Shed space in Australia - including having a heliport behind the Shed.

Interview appears on abc.net.au and was broadcast on Tuesday, 5 Sep 2023 at 8.30am. Presenter Sarah Macdonald.

Listen to the full interview [online](#) to get more insights into the amazing world of Men's Sheds.

Scan QR code to listen to the full radio interview.







## Listening while you work: A 'Super-hear-o Skill' for Shedders

When it comes to mental health, wellbeing and just plain feeling good, being a good listener for your mates is a superpower.

Australian blokes are not known for jumping straight into deep and meaningful chats over coffee. In fact, when it comes to important stuff, many blokes may find it difficult to start a conversation. That's where the famous phrase "Men don't talk face to face. They talk shoulder to shoulder" comes in. Sheds give men a place just down the road where they can drop in, do some work and enjoy a chat and a cup of tea.

At the Shed, you are surrounded by mates and activities, which gives blokes the space to open up gradually while working side by side on projects. These talks may begin small, perhaps about the task at hand, but they often evolve into deeper and more meaningful discussions. By actively listening to these casual conversations, you can lift someone's spirits,

make them feel valued and help them open up to more conversations.

At Men's Sheds, listening can be the unsung hero. It's more than just hearing words; it's showing that you care. It's about being there, fully present with your Shedder mates, letting them know their stories matter.

Here are some easy tips to follow to practise your listening superpower while hanging out with your mates:

### Pay attention and listen actively

Reflect on what is being said by paraphrasing, for example, "sounds like you are saying", summarise the speaker's comments periodically, clarify you understand what is said, and use silence as a tool – staying quiet can help you listen to the speaker and help them feel heard.

*Continued page 19.*

## Be patient and calm

Greet the other person warmly with a calm and relaxed demeanour.

## Empathise

Listen patiently to what the other person has to say, even if you disagree. Listening in a non-judgmental way with positive affirmation can help the speaker open up.

## Be encouraging

Show you are listening using your body language. Nod your head, smile and make sounds of encouragement. Use gentle questioning to encourage further talking. You can use a mix of closed and open questions to build rapport and encourage further discussion.

## Follow up the conversation

Check-in later to follow up on the conversation

Learn more about active listening, tips for better conversations and building [relationships at mensline.org.au](https://www.mensline.org.au)



## Self care for blokes

A lot of us belong to a generation where talking about mental health was a sign of weakness and self-care was a foreign concept. Fortunately, times have changed, and we now recognise the importance of self-care in maintaining good mental health.

As we age, the demands of life can become increasingly challenging. Retirement, loss of loved ones, health concerns, and loneliness are just a few of the hurdles we encounter. In the face of these challenges, self-care emerges as a valuable ally. It involves taking deliberate steps to nurture your physical, emotional, and psychological health.

For older men, self-care might involve regular exercise to boost endorphins, maintaining strong social connections through shed participation, seeking professional help when needed, practicing mindfulness, or simply setting aside time for leisure activities. These activities can reduce stress, combat loneliness, and foster a sense of purpose and contentment.

In conclusion, self-care is not a luxury but a necessity for us as we age. It empowers us to confront the unique challenges of aging with resilience and vitality, ultimately promoting better mental health and a happier, more fulfilling life.

So, shedders, remember to prioritise self-care - it's the key to a healthier and happier journey through your golden years.





I've travelled a long way and a not all the roads were paved

The oldest computer was owned by Adam and Eve.

It was an Apple with very limited memory.

Just 1 Byte and everything crashed!



### Understanding Engineers

- |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PERCUSSIVE MAINTANCE     | I hit it and it started working |
| CYCLE POWER TO THE PANEL | Turn it off and on again        |
| HIGH IMPEDANCE AIR-GAP   | I forgot to plug it in          |
| ORGANIC GROUNDING        | I got electrocuted              |
| THERMALLY RECONFIGURED   | It melted                       |
| KENETIC DISASSEMBLY      | It blew up                      |
| THERMAL SHOCK            | It burned                       |

