

Welcome

To the Belconnen Community Men's Shed Opening Day

Thursday 27th March 2014

Thank you for visiting us today. Limited time will only allow us to describe to you a small part of our journey to establish a Men's Shed to serve the men of the local community.



In particular we want to acknowledge the tremendous support we have received from the community. This includes individual donors, other community organisations, small and large businesses who have been extremely generous with gifts of support, materials and even labour, the Federal Government for a volunteers grant, our own local labour Assembly Members who have assisted in many ways, the Mosaic Baptist Church for auspicing arrangements, providing funding and loans and lastly but not least our many volunteers who have provided thousands of hours in undertaking construction tasks, electrical work, paving and painting.

Thanks to Our Valued Donors

Rotary Club of Canberra North

Baptist Community Services

Rotary Club of Ginninderra

Mosaic Baptist Church

Valued Donors from the Community

Valued Donors from Mosaic Baptist Church

In Appreciation of Our Valued Supporters

Mary Porter AM, Member ACT Assembly
(advice & valuable assistance)

Dira Horne – Belconnen Community Services
(advice & valuable support)

Thanks to Our Valued Partners

ACT Smart Electrical & Solar

(electrical installation work)

Airfactive

(fitting reverse cycle air conditioning)

All-Ways Trees and Gardens

(tree chipping)

Amber

(pavers)

Appliance Gallery

(kitchen sink and oven)

ASI Locksmiths

(security door locks)

Belconnen Concrete

(concrete pumping)

Bunnings Belconnen

(kitchen units, materials, etc)

Canberra Sand and Gravel

(paving sand, etc.)

Capital Insulation

(insulation)

Chubb

(fire extinguishers and equipment)

Corkhill Brothers

(materials for under floor slab etc)

Dulux

(paint)

Duncans Plumbing

(plumbing assistance)

Elvin Group

(concrete)

Entire Garden Landscaping

(site preparation)

FAW

(loft timber)

Fletcher Insulation

(insulation)

Gaffey Excavations

(driveway and excavator)

Herzog Steel

(reinforcing mesh and shade poles)

IMB Belconnen Branch

(marquee and support)

ITW Proline

(fasteners and screws)

John R Turk

(electrical cables and supplies)

Kennards Hire

(equipment hire)

M & G Supplies

(equipment moving)

Mitchell Aluminium

(security screens and doors)

Northrop Consulting Engineers

(engineering services)

ProDraft

(hydraulic design)

Project Lighting

(electrical fittings etc.)

Recon

(lockable cupboards and chairs)

Reece Plumbing

(plumbing supplies)

Repc Auto Mitchell

(donation and support)

Ricmatt Sheds

(shed supplier)

Sapphire Coast Tree Removal

(tree removal)

Selleys

(adhesives and sealants)

Small Quinton Coleman

Architects

(architectural services)

Southside Lighting

(lighting and electrical)

Stramit Queanbeyan

(Zincalume wall cladding)

Stratco Fyshwick

(good Neighbour® fencing)

TFH Hire

(temporary fence)

Tharwa Sands

(red granite)

The Laminex Group

(wall lining)

Turners Building Supplies

(fibre cement)

Wild Digital

(signs)

Working Gear

(clothing)

Developing a Men's Shed



What you see is a shed in the final stages of becoming an operating shed. The vision and plans have become reality. We therefore need to report what has been achieved thus far and our plans for the near future.

Men's sheds in Australia have been established progressively over the last twenty years. At present there are about three hundred men's sheds and the number is rapidly growing. About a third of them function as community sheds and are not attended exclusively by men. It is commonly accepted that a men's shed should be a safe place for men to congregate and talk, offer various forms of activity (usually woodworking) and if utilized properly deliver opportunities for learning, social contact, and better health care. The benefits of men's sheds in assisting mentally ill (in particular those depressed), or vulnerable men is well documented.

Our Vision

Our vision was that a properly run men's shed located at the BBC Community Centre would be an asset able to be utilized by the community in general (both men and women), and able to develop and deliver support programs as they are needed. We believed that such a shed would be actively supported by the community and existing community service groups in Belconnen and this has proved to be very true.



Raji proudly displays his handiwork

What Has Been Accomplished?

The Men's Shed was initiated about 3 years ago. Currently we have achieved the following:

- Support and encouragement from Mosaic Baptist Church.
- Permission from Mosaic Baptist Church to build on an area at their Community Centre
- A paid up membership of 27 at this time and many others interested (approx 80).
- A Committee of 5, including Shed Manager, Secretary & Treasurer.
- A Seed Grant of \$5,000 from Baptist Community Services
- A substantial grant from the Federal Government to assist our hard working volunteers
- Other funds donated, amounting to approx. \$25,000
- Gifts in kind from our valued partners totalling at least \$40,000.
- Woodworking equipment donated and installed (worth probably \$7,500)
- Metalworking equipment and lathe donated and installed
- Grant application under evaluation for funds for safety equipment.

Our Immediate Future

We have a working shed, however there are still some needs in front of us.

- Concrete driveway yet to be installed
- A dust extraction system (probable cost \$4,000)
- Secure gates and fencing at the front of the shed (probable cost \$4,500)
- Bitumen layer or concrete to replace gravel parking area in front of shed.
- Plants and shrubs for landscaping (probable cost \$500 to \$1,000)

Building a Community Men's Shed

By Gordon Cooper

For me, building a shed is less daunting than capturing the history of the journey, or writing an article such as this. Conversations built the shed. Conversations that were preceded by short prayers before talking to men who mostly wear fluoros, (or safety clothes), men who have experience of life and know the heartache of men who for some reason or other take drastic measures rather than asking for help.

These conversations needed few words once the topic of the men's shed was introduced, because so many gave willingly knowing that when men talk and work together lives can be changed, men and marriages saved.



Many of these conversations touched me deeply, and have resulted in humbling generosity from Canberra Industry and Suppliers, as well as some National Companies, for the provision of goods and services for the Shed. Every offer of material, labour, and equipment to build the shed seemed to arrive at just the right time. From contributions of a few dollars to many thousands of dollars, a shed has been built, each contribution important and valuable.

These conversations only achieved what they did because one man, Paul, had a vision for a shed and he spoke to others. A grant was received, a generous donation was given and the vision entered a planning and design stage. MBC gave approval for the shed to be sited on the Community Centre property. Momentum grew and cash donations started to trickle in. We were ready to start the build.



As we began to clear the site -cutting down trees and ripping out other vegetation - we faced opposition. However, this was slowly turned around as we let people know what we were doing; some people even became supporters, while others just remained interested observers. Hindsight now tells us that once lock-up was achieved and the safety fence was removed we actually started to grow into an operating men's shed. The number of those involved from MBC was soon to be overtaken by men from the community becoming involved through working bees that have been held on Wednesday and Saturday mornings for at least the past six months. Some men came and looked, some came and helped, some came because of 'pressure' from loved ones, a few looked and left, some started talking about their shed, and today we have a strong core of **shed 'owners' who have** found a safe place to belong. The conversation moved on... from "when are we going to open" to an understanding that *we are already open* and well on the way to achieving our aims.

Who are these men?

- There's Bob, who has quietly gone about assembling the kitchen cupboards;
- John, who has completed much of the electrical work and adapted well to late inclusions and design changes;
- Paul and Howie, who have built our website;
- Mark, who keeps the paper trail and flow of information;
- Dean, who puts his hand to most things, and brings good morning tea snacks, as do Bob and many others;

- Tenzin, from Bhutan, who helped us for many months - willingly crawling under the Community Centre to drag the three phase power cable through to the new switchboard - and who received our first BCMS shirt;
- Scott, who has given so much time from his own busy life to wire in the new switch boards, liaise with ACTEW, and speak to suppliers about donations for the shed;



- Barry, who dug trenches and connected the sewer mains and other plumbing; and
- Many more, who have painted, cleaned up, pushed the scaffold along for the ceiling workers, sat and talked, given opinions and entered discussions and rung the bell for morning tea.

All who enter the shed encourage us to keep going until we are "open"; but *we are already open* because men are working shoulder to shoulder and talking with each other. Men have been changed and found a safe place to be. The real potential is still to come when we officially open and start pushing the shed into the community - this shed that is our gift to them.

We have the street light that was going to cost us thousands to have moved, till after many conversations we finally found the 'right' person to talk to. I was asked how I wanted to be treated; my reply was "professionally and generously". Today we have two street lights. The three phase power has been installed to the new Community Centre switchboard by ACTEW at no cost and we are grateful... grateful to many, and particularly our local MLA Member, Mary Porter.

The ACT Government in early February, 2014, initiated a meeting of all the Men's Sheds in the Ginninderra electorate to hear our stories and to find out how they can help us, as they now realise the potential of men's sheds to positively change men's lives.



How has the shed been built?

It has been built by transfer... transfer of wealth from one place to another... transfer that I have grown to understand comes from God. As I have read and journalled through the Old Testament, I was caused to reflect on the number of times that wealth was either taken away from - or given back to - Israel, from the initial provision by the Egyptians just prior to the Exodus to the last provision when Ezra returned from exile in Persia with the contributions from the Persian people and the return by King Cyrus of the Temple articles that were taken by King Nebuchadnezzar.



I have come to realise that we don't actually own anything. At best we are custodians of what God has blessed us with, and we are to be conduits through which God's blessings flow. His blessings have flowed towards the Belconnen Community Men's Shed and we need to give Him all the praise and all the glory. Please have a conversation with God and give Him thanks.

Gordon Cooper - BCMS Project Manager/Shed Manager

Photos (clockwise from left):

- John works on the lights while Peter and Frank assemble shelves.
- Bob works on the kitchen. Note the hot water service which was formerly in the Community Centre, the lights and the wiring box ready for ACTEW to connect power.
- A welcome tea break. (Working Bees are not all work!)
- Howard, Dean and Ian work on the kitchen area.
- Our first AGM in the Shed with Mark as Chairman.