

Chief Minister opens men's shed in Melba

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Chief Minister Jon Stanhope today opened a new activity-based centre in Melba for mature-aged men who are no longer working full-time.

The Melba Shed is a non-denominational initiative of the Rotary Club of Ginninderra and the North Belconnen Uniting Church in Melba.

"The Melba Shed is a friendly meeting place where men can share skills and enjoy hobbies such as pool, darts, cards and chess," Mr Stanhope said. "It is a gathering place for men who are no longer working full-time to find companionship and support."

The Melba Shed will operate on Fridays in the community centre rooms at North Belconnen Uniting Church in Melba. The centre provides a pool table, dart board, cards and chess and draught sets, as well as a library.

Participants are asked to make a gold coin donation at each visit.

Mr Stanhope acknowledged the importance of services such as the Melba Shed, which cater for the specific needs of men.

"The ACT Government funds a number of agencies to deliver specialised support to men, including the Canberra Men's Centre, Menslink, supported accommodation services for men who have primary care for their children and the Services Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault.

"I was very pleased to provide an extra \$150,000 per year to the Canberra Men's Centre to expand its counselling and support services in the 2008-09 Budget.

"But the funding of services can only go so far. Community partnerships like the one forged by the Rotary Club of Ginninderra and the North Belconnen Uniting Church are enormously important in building a community of inclusion and support.

"I commend the initiative and drive shown by the Rotary Club of Ginninderra and the North Belconnen Uniting Church for establishing this Shed for the men of North Belconnen."