

ACT ASSEMBLY MEN'S SHED FORUM: 29 APRIL 2014

A quick report on the Men's Shed Forum at the ACT Assembly with Ray Nelson and Billy Williams representing Melba Shed.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Chris Bourke with Mick Gentlemen and Yvette Berry from the Assembly in attendance. Ms Chris Purdon who is doing a report on Men's Sheds in the ACT was also there.

- A report of the seminar will be produced and shared with us
- Chris Bourke suggested another meeting of ACT Sheds be held next year
- A group photo of attendees was taken and will be sent to us for our use

In Attendance

- Twelve Men's Sheds, two representatives from each Shed – Billy Williams and Ray Nelson represented Melba Shed.
- Also ACT Vietnam Veteran's Federation and the ACT Model Railway Association
- Three MLAs - Chris Bourke, Mick Gentleman and Yvette Berry.

Scope of Shed Types

- Most have a workshop or plan to have a workshop.
- For some the workshop activity is the primary activity and for others there is a mixture of activities. For example Hall Shed operates a museum and the Tuggeranong Shed operates as a workshop come social club.
- Melba is unique in not having, and not planning to have, a workshop. It is also unique in having special interest groups (SIGs) which are more or less autonomous in organising their own programmes.
- Some Sheds have existed for years under other names before hopping on the Shed wagon, namely the Railway Restoration Society and the Vietnam Veterans Association (600 members).

Some Conclusions Drawn from Discussions

- There is, within the ACT Men's Shed Movement, an enormous reservoir of professional and trade skills. These should be shared between Sheds. However, there is a limit to which these can be utilised because, on retirement, most Shed members surrendered their certifications and indemnity insurances. Is there a solution to this.
- Sheds should network and avoid unnecessary duplication of expensive, specialised assets and to have more interaction on programs and activities.
- It would be helpful if Sheds adopted a common data base system that enabled, for example, easy sharing of information on membership, regular activities, assets, skills, experiences, how bureaucratic hurdles were overcome, etc. etc.
- Sheds should use social and traditional media (e.g. The Chronicle) to help build a higher profile.

- Each Shed should groom a specialist grant writer. The more grants you apply for the better you get. Typically the strike rate is about one in five to ten. Consider also approaching some grant applications on a 50:50 basis – Shed meets half the cost.

Some Other Points to Consider

- All grant program information is available on website ourcommunity.com.au. For an annual fee of \$75.00, information on all future grants (from all sources) can be obtained.
- Women in Sheds?!*
- Looking to the future, the sponsored may become the sponsors. With many community service organisations finding it difficult to recruit members, Sheds may have to sponsor them into the fold. Imagine, Ginninderra Rotary Club becoming a Shed sponsored by the Melba Shed.
- There was a strong push for an ACT Government *one stop shop* for matters relating to Men's Sheds. There was much criticism of the slow, expensive and duplicated bureaucracy associated with obtaining permits, approvals, licences etc.

Other Voices Heard

- Kangara Waters shed invited Melba to make a reciprocal visit to their Shed.
- Hall Shed invited Melba to visit their Shed (Bob Richardson).
- Tuggeranong Shed invited Melba to *Spanner in the Works* seminar on men's health (June 10).
- Page Shed offered to share a copy of the Shed Charter if useful.

Raymond Nelson and Billy Williams

01/05/2014