

# Western Australian Men's Shed Association A View to the Future

The Western Australian Men's Shed Association (WAMSA) has identified significant opportunities for it to contribute to the health and well being of men and their communities, so providing a long term social and financial benefit to the state.

To implement this plan and deliver these benefits WAMSA is seeking a three year partnership with the state government.

## Men's Sheds in Western Australia

The first Western Australian Men's Sheds were developed some 10-15 years ago in several South West towns. The first metropolitan shed was established at Fremantle in 2004/2005. Since then there has been a rapid increase in the number of sheds in both metropolitan and country areas.

## Western Australian Men's Shed Association (WAMSA)

The Western Australian Men's Shed Association (WAMSA) was formed in 2010 to provide support

and information for existing sheds and those groups wishing to establish a shed as well as to represent the shed movement within the wider community of Western Australia. In mid 2014 there were 155 sheds established or in the planning phase and 83 sheds were financial members of WAMSA.

WAMSA is an active member of the national body, the Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA)

## Men's Sheds in the Community

Men's sheds are valuable contributors to their communities by providing a unique environment for the learning, communication and sense of belonging for men, leading to positive effects on their own health and well-being, as well as positive effects on their partners, families and communities.

## Fremantle Men's Shed

CASE STUDY 1

The Fremantle shed was formed in 2004/05, the first Western Australian metropolitan shed. A committee was formed and when the shed began everything was second hand. A building became available from the local Pigeon Racing Club, and initially it was shared between the two clubs. The shed is on Education Department land and the building belongs to the City of Fremantle. They plan to move to a new site at the Hilton Park Bowling Club and will need a \$500,000 grant to establish the new location. They have 120 members and a good committee of mainly retired men.

The shed receives a grant of \$50,000 each year to pay the shed boss and for various other costs, with about \$15,000 spent on administration. Their shed boss is particularly valuable as a result of his past training as a TAFE lecturer. Funds for power, water and glue come from a grant. They charge \$80/year membership and have a free film evening once a month.

They have encouraged young people to join the shed and as a result some backpackers have taken the opportunity to fit out their van.

The Fremantle shed actively raises its own funds, partly through projects such as the manufacture of 900 crosses for Remembrance Day, renovating a railway carriage, or providing a parking lot for bicycles



in the city by modifying an old container. They have adopted a self-funding model and pursue opportunities for income, such as teams of three men who help to keep the city clean. Such projects will generate some profit to help with the move to new premises. They have helped numerous other sheds through their own establishment.

The shed opens on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. It also opens on Tuesday evenings for men who, through work commitments can't access the Shed during the day. On Thursday afternoon they host "Kids at Risk" and they also invite disabled men and their carers to the shed, this proving to be a very successful program. In another initiative, a Women's Woodworking Group has successfully been introduced on Thursday nights. Shed members volunteer to mentor the women, who for a small fee have access to the Shed.

Currently one member is pushing a cart around Australia – raising money for Arthritis Research & Fremantle Shed's Well-being Mental Illness' Recovery Program, and linking with sheds as he goes.

## Broome Men's Shed



The Broome Men's Shed was formed in 2011, a result of interest in re-establishing the tramway between Town Beach and Chinatown. Space was hard to find at that time but one member ran the Bran Nue Day Centre and found space "out the back". Woodside Petroleum was active in the town at the time and provided early support, but now they have downsized in Broome.

This is a very hands-on Shed with gardens, woodwork, and metalwork. They are also teaching skills to Aboriginal men. They have about 30 members and open each week on Tuesday and Thursday from 1pm to 6pm and 8am to 1pm on Saturday.

A new interim location on crown land has been selected for the shed. The Shire controls the new location where there is some competition for space. However, the Men's Shed has a strong case for that location where they envisage there will be three working bays for metalwork and rebuilding of the Tram rolling stock. Inside the main room woodwork carving and engraving of pearl shells will be carried out. There is also to be room for a computer room and gymnasium.

In the beginning the Men's Shed approached Lottery West, the Dept of Veteran Affairs and Royalties for Regions for funding appreciating that the Broome Shire has limited funds.

### Analysis

The strategic analysis found that Men's Sheds have a positive image in the community and the movement is growing quickly. WAMSA provides important services to the sheds and community, but it is severely under resourced, and it must grow quickly to meet the demands of Men's Sheds in WA.

WAMSA is the primary organisation supporting Men's Sheds in WA. Men's Sheds interact with many under-represented groups of men and this role is expanding. WAMSA is dependent on its limited, largely State government, funding, so it must consolidate that and attract other sources of funds.

To succeed WAMSA must graduate beyond voluntary management, special skills must be attracted to its Board, and appropriate professional staff recruited.

Men's Sheds offer a range of voluntary services in many of their communities.

The preventative health benefits of Men's Sheds are better recognised as more research on this subject is completed.

### The WAMSA Plan

WAMSA has developed its comprehensive business plan using the enterprise review process, with the key elements being:

#### Values

- A sustainable membership organisation;
- Satisfied Members and stakeholders;
- Effective two way communication;
- Representation, including men from all walks of life;
- Involvement with and benefit to the community;
- Social inclusion and friendliness;
- Recognition by the whole community;

#### Vision

- Men's Sheds that are accessible to, and contribute to the health, happiness and well-being of all men in WA, so benefitting the whole Western Australian community.

#### Mission

- WAMSA is the representative organisation that assists the establishment, development and operation of Men's Sheds in Western Australia, and promotes the benefits of Men's Sheds to the wider community and stakeholders.

#### Five Year Strategy

- WAMSA will build on special project funding to consolidate its network, improve its member and stakeholder services and confirm its sustainable position as the representative body for all Men's Sheds in Western Australia.

#### Basis for Growth

- WAMSA will grow on the back of a continued increase of the number and activity of Men's Sheds in WA.

#### Sustainable Competitive Advantage

- WAMSA will succeed by providing excellent service that benefits all of Western Australia's Men's Sheds and maintaining strong relationships with all of its stakeholders.

## Critical Success Factors

🏠 The critical success factors in priority order are:

1. Effective support services to members (sheds).
2. Communication and promotion of WAMSA.
3. Sustainable and professional governance and operations for WAMSA.
4. Ongoing funding for WAMSA.
5. Men's sheds contributing to men's health and well-being.
6. A positive relationship with Local Government to support sheds.
7. Positive relationships with State and Federal governments to support WAMSA.
8. Working with the community and special groups.
9. An effective relationship with AMSA.

Objectives and action plans have been developed for each of these and each action plan details strategy, contributing actions, performance indicators/outputs, timeframe and responsibilities.

## Financial resources of WAMSA

WAMSA's current resources are insufficient to meet its present and future needs. WAMSA has two key opportunities to make a significant contribution to the community of Western Australia, so providing a social and financial return for the State government.

By continuing to provide support and services for the establishment and ongoing function of Men's Sheds in both metropolitan and country WA the health and well-being of many men is improved.

Men's Sheds have also proved they can support the development of special needs groups within the community; such as returning veterans, aboriginal men, men with mental health issues, disadvantaged youth and many others.

WAMSA is the only Western Australian organisation positioned to lead and facilitate this diverse community service.

## Wangara Wheelchairs for Kids Men's Shed

CASE STUDY 3



The Wangara Men's Shed has 155 members, with about 20 on a waiting list. Ages vary from 50 to over 80. This shed operates four days each week with about forty members there each day. Their manufacture of wheelchairs for disabled overseas children is tooled very accurately, with aluminium parts made in WA as are the covers for cushions. They source cushions, polycarbonate backs, steel chassis and bearing and wheels from China. The chairs are shipped through aid agencies, with about 300 made each month, or 3500 each year. Ladies participate in various ways in the shed, and others outside the shed help etc. by the crafting blankets, the covers for cushions and tool kits and soft toys in retirement villages.

Their Patron is Burns Specialist, Professor Dr Fiona Wood.

Each chair is sent with a rug or two, a soft toy and a tool kit. The shed's web site quotes:

"With the younger recipients of our wheelchairs, the toy is always greeted with wide eyes and a broad smile.

Clutching on tightly, they instantly become inseparable friends."

Chairs are shipped to 70 countries, mainly in Africa, India, Papua New Guinea, South Pacific Islands and Asia. Each wheelchair costs about \$150 to make and they have already made about 28,500. The chairs have been made by the group since 1998, before Men's Sheds and WAMSA existed.

The present facility at Wangara constrains the shed's activities, so a new location (for a Men's Shed plus Community Centre) with about 1500m<sup>2</sup> is being sought for the working shed, a kitchen and a meeting room.

Funding has become particularly challenging and they joined the Men's Shed Association to help improve that situation. Their major sponsor is Movies by Burswood as they are one of their chosen registered children's charities. They receive enormous support from Rotary Clubs and schools all around Australia. They have previously received funds from the McCusker Foundation and they also receive some private and corporate sponsorship.

## Stirling Men's Shed

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The Stirling Men's Shed is a newly-built facility that cost the city \$900,000 to build, supported by grants from Lotterywest, Home and Community Care (HACC) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). The shed was established as a membership association in August 2011 and membership has been capped at 140, with a wait list of about 130 and at least 85 members attending regularly. It has a focus on woodwork and a metalwork shed is planned. Service clubs such as Rotary have provided valuable support.

Members range in age from about 50 to the mid-80s, with the target of 55 and above.

Members pay \$45/year and an additional \$2 each visit for tea and coffee. The shed is open six days a week, and in a new initiative it is open to women every second Saturday – the Women Working with Wood group (W4).



Members at Stirling "own" the machines, so they are well maintained. There is very strong compliance with safe work processes.

The shed's main priority is the "community of the members". No obligation is imposed on or felt by any member, but they have a reference group that provides feedback to the coordinator, a City of Stirling employee who has overall responsibility and an open door philosophy. The Stirling Men's Shed provides "a safe workplace", not a place of work.

It is proposed that the State government enter into a three year partnership with WAMSA to provide the financial resources for an initial three year period to implement all elements of this strategic business plan, and develop a sustainable business model that:

- Provides and coordinates essential services to all Western Australian Men's Sheds;
- Clearly identifies and quantifies the benefit of Men's Sheds to the community;
- Develops a range of specialised services for the different special needs groups within society; and
- Identifies alternative sources of ongoing funding so as to diversify the funding base of WAMSA.

The initial three year funding requirement would be provided through a partnership with the state government that would include contributions from;

- Department of Health, including the Office of Aboriginal Health;
- Department of Local Government and Communities;
- Department of Corrective Services;
- Mental Health Commission;
- Disability Services Commission;
- The Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Lotterywest and Department of Veterans Affairs have indicated a willingness to contribute to a project for the development of WAMSA.

The funds will be used to implement the nine strategic priorities as follows;

Strategic Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1 WAMSA will provide a wide range of support services and standard packages to all sheds in Western Australia	195,000	198,000	204,000
2 WAMSA will be effectively promoted and will foster excellent two way communications with its stakeholders	61,800	62,200	65,442
3 Sustainable and professional governance and operations for WAMSA	20,000	20,000	20,500
4 Ongoing Funding for WAMSA's Core Activities	45,000	45,000	45,000
5 Demonstrate the contributions of Men's Sheds to men's health and well-being	60,000	61,000	63,000
6 Establish and maintain excellent relationships with Local Government	15,000	15,000	15,000
7 Establish and maintain excellent relationships with State and Federal Government	15,000	15,000	15,000
8 Investigate and develop relationships between Men's Sheds and community and special groups	70,000	70,000	70,000
9 Ensure WAMSA is complementary to AMSA	15,000	15,000	15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>496,800</b>	<b>501,200</b>	<b>512,942</b>