



Australian Men's Shed Association

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER



Dear Shedders,

The last few months have been like no other as we have all had to deal with COVID-19.

As an organisation we have had to quickly move our operations online, which I'm sure you can acknowledge has been a challenge. Men's Sheds are very much an "in-person" activity, but this new way of delivering value has been thrust upon us, and we're doing our best to quickly adapt and find new ways to support the ongoing development of the Men's Shed movement.

As you may know, we've recently introduced "The Shed Online" as one part of our strategy to keep as many of you as connected as possible. **This week we launch another phase of this program: "The Shed Wireless"**.

The Shed Wireless is a weekly podcast, intended to be an informal exploration of all things Men's Sheds. For now, you can listen to episodes of The Shed Wireless at mensshed.org/theshedwireless. You'll be able to listen from "wherever you get your podcasts" very soon.

AMSA staff have also been conducting hundreds of "welfare calls" to member

Men's Sheds.

These calls aim to check in on how individual sheds, and their members, are coping with the situation. We are also encouraging Shed Committees to make similar calls to all of their members (which many are doing). This program has been hugely successful and I wish to acknowledge all of the good work being done by Men's Shed Committees in looking after the welfare of their members.

As we move through weeks of reasonably strict social isolation measures, some states have seen recent relaxation of social distancing. Subsequently, **we have received numerous enquiries asking (you can probably guess...) *when can we get back to the Shed?***

Unfortunately, we still don't have the answer. But, we continue to liaise with Federal and State Governments and monitor the situation. The relaxation of social distancing does not include the reopening of Men's Sheds at this stage.

We will continue to keep you updated with any information as it comes to us.

We are however, already looking forward to our "post COVID-19" world.

We've commenced work on a number of resources for Men's Sheds to use as guidelines when we are all allowed back in the Sheds. We expect there will be health advice and distancing measures applied to any gatherings of people for some time to come.

These resources will be available once Sheds have been permitted by authorities to reopen, and we have a clearer understanding of distancing restrictions will be advised. We're also working on a larger piece of work.

Following the turmoil of the past few months there is a much bigger question at hand... *what will Men's Sheds look like in a post COVID-19 world?*

This is a question I am personally putting to the entire Men's Shed community via The Shed Online for discussion and ideas. [Click here to visit The Shed Online and participate in the conversation.](#)

With anticipated higher unemployment I believe there will be increased demand for participation in Men's Sheds. And there will be a number of new opportunities for Sheds to increase membership and to attract younger men.

There will be a greater need for activities that will socially engage men, and possibilities for training and educational programs.

There will also be new opportunities for Sheds to strengthen their community links and partnerships with external organisations.

However, as with all opportunities, there also comes risks and threats but these can be overcome if we accept change and plan our way forward effectively.

We would like to hear your opinions and ideas on how Men's Sheds can overcome the obstacles and shine in adapting to a post COVID-19 environment. I encourage as many of you to participate in this constructive discussion over at The Shed

Online.

Talk to you soon.

David Helmers
Executive Officer

THE SHEDDER AUTUMN 2020 EDITION HIGHLIGHTS

The Shed Wireless

The Shed Wireless is a weekly podcast detailing and discovering all things Men's Sheds, and other interesting stuff.

The first five episodes will see host Aaron Kearney, and special guests, take us on a highlights reel of the journey of Men's Sheds from their very beginnings to today.

The first episode of The Shed Wireless is now available for your auditory pleasure at mensshed.org/theshedwireless.

Returning to the shed after COVID-19

Today's outlook

Although some State Governments have eased social gathering restrictions, this does not include Men's Sheds and other Community Centres.

It is our understanding, under the various management acts issued by states and territories, there has been no removal of the restriction to close Community & Recreation Centres. There is an exemption where these centres are being used for essential public services (according to the Office of the Prime Minister, this is defined as "hosting essential voluntary or public services, such as food banks or homeless services.")

In regards to Men's Sheds covered by the AMSA Shed Insurance Scheme: If members are acting legally, then (subject to the terms and conditions of each policy) they can expect coverage protection.

It is up to each Men's Shed Committee to determine if going to the shed to undertake

any activities at all will be a breach of law. You can contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 (open 24 hrs).

Spirit of mateship shines through bushfire relief efforts

While the current coronavirus pandemic justifiably captures the attention of the world, for those who were not directly impacted it would be easy to forget the bushfire crisis that gripped much of Australia over summer. But, we will not let our thanks go unsaid for the efforts of many Men's Sheds around the country.



The spirit of mateship that runs deep through the Men's Shed community is often highlighted during difficult times. And our community's response to the recent bushfires were no different.

Men's Sheds from all over the country contributed monetary donations and countless volunteer hours to provide an immediate response to help in the recovery – for community members as well as towards the regeneration of habitats for local fauna.

[Click here to read more stories from Men's Sheds supporting communities in need.](#)



How taking notice can help your physical and mental wellbeing

Time on your hands? Or not enough time? COVID-19 has forced many to slow down, to stop rushing from one place to another. For others, such as essential workers, it's

meant having to work harder and under more pressure than ever before.

Whichever camp you fall into, thinking about how you use the time you have is really important to both your physical and mental wellbeing.

A range of studies have shown that mindfulness can help reduce stress and anxiety, enhance relationships, increase focus and memory, boost immune systems and may also help reduce compassion fatigue and burnout in healthcare staff.

We don't think twice about the daily things we do for our personal physical hygiene, like brush our hair or take a shower, so why not do the same for our minds?

[Click here to read more about staying Mindful this May at The Shed Online.](#)

Visit malehealth.org.au and register for the newsletter to sign up for a weekly mindful tip delivered to your inbox throughout May.