

# Port Fairy Men's Shed NEWSLETTER

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Secretary: Harry Bracegirdle, 19, Dyson St. Port Fairy 3284

Affiliated with the Australian Men's Shed Association

Welcome to the first edition of the **Port Fairy Men's Shed** (PFMS) Newsletter.

The Newsletter has been launched to keep all interested persons and the local community informed about progress on the PFMS.

Many of you would have seen articles about the PFMS in the Moyne Gazette that covered the preliminary, public meetings held to gauge local interest. As a consequence of those meetings, convened by the Port Fairy-Belfast Lions Club, a Steering Committee was established that has now held a number of meetings and gained some momentum as we endeavour to formally establish the Port Fairy Men's Shed.

## Members of the Steering Committee are –

- Don Stephens (Chairperson) .....5568-2153
- John Ellard (Deputy Chair – Fundraising).....5568-3317
- Keith Bunge (Workspace Co-ordination) .....5568-2524
- Harry Bracegirdle (Secretary / Treasurer).....5568-2601
- Mick Wentworth .....5568-2396
- Peter Ridout.....5568-1873

The Steering Committee has also been ably assisted by Steve Dawkins & Sharon Wilson from the Moyne Shire, Pauline McGee from Moyne Health as well as sub-committee members, Gary Hommelhoff and Ted Alsop, who are assisting Keith Bunge in the all important task of securing a Shed location.

## Activities to date

There is much to do to set-up an administrative structure for the Shed but even more to establish a physical shed at a suitable location. To date, much of the work has been centred on setting up the administration. We can happily report that progress to date has resulted in –

- A bank account has been set-up at the local NAB Branch
- The PFMS has been registered with the Australian Men's Sheds Association
- An application being sent to Consumer Affairs Victoria to apply for Incorporation of the PFMS
- The PFMS gaining an ABN and a TFN.
- Securing the Port Fairy – Belfast Lions Club as the Auspicing body for the PFMS
- Seed funding secured from the Rotary and the Lions Clubs
- Grant applications being prepared to source funding

## Objectives in setting up a Men's Shed

The establishment of a Men's Shed in Port Fairy is being pursued to address health related issues associated with men who are approaching or in retirement. In this regard, the objectives of the PFMS are embodied in the **Statement of Purposes** submitted with the application for Incorporation.

## Statement of Purposes

1. To provide a forum and physical location where members (primarily men) can regularly assemble to share skills, make friends and network with other members with the primary purpose of supporting and enhancing their personal well-being and health.
2. To provide a venue for members to regularly meet in a relaxed, happy and creative space and in an environment whereby members can feel useful and contribute to their community.
3. To draw on the collective knowledge and skills of the membership in order to support community-based projects.

## Local Support

It is pleasing to report that the establishment of the PFMS has been getting good support from the local community, in particular, the service clubs.



Of particular importance is the backing from the **Port Fairy – Belfast Lions Club** which has agreed to act as the Auspicing body for the Port Fairy Men's Shed. In addition, the Lions Club has generously donated \$2,500 to assist in meeting administrative costs and to act as seed funding in attracting Government and other grants. This platform of support will greatly assist in our endeavours to establish the Shed.



The **Rotary Club of Port Fairy** has also thrown its support behind the PFMS and provided seed funding to the tune of \$250 to help in meeting establishment costs.

The **Moyne Shire** is also providing support from its Community Support staff. **Steve Dawkins**, the Shire's new Community & Corporate Support Director as well as **Sharon Wilson**, Community Support Officer, have both been actively involved in meetings held to-date and are providing good advice.



## Australian Men's Sheds Association

As reported earlier, the Port Fairy Men's Shed is now registered with **Australian Men's Sheds Association**. You may be surprised to learn that there are over 200 Men's Sheds operating in Australia which have formed into cluster and state groups. *(We visited some of these Sheds – see later report)*

AMSA put out periodic newsletters, have an active website and even have an annual conference! The PFMS is currently using an AMSA publication as a guide to setting up a Men's Shed.

Details on AMSA are at <http://www.mensshed.org/>



## Shed location

To date, the setting up of an administrative structure is the easy part. The real challenge ahead is to raise the funds and establish a real live working shed!

**Keith Bunge** and his Workspace sub-committee have been investigating a number of options. All options are under consideration and it is fair to say that all come with some limitations and a need to compromise. The Steering Committee recognises that the Shed location is critical to the success of the project and has not yet decided on the best option.

However, it is encouraging to report on a firm invitation to use the **Showgrounds** and consequently a budget has been prepared that is based on this option (*see below*).

The Steering Committee also visited the **Railway Shed** on Railway Green. It is anticipated that the Shire will soon call for expressions of interest on the use of the Railway Sheds and we are considering making a submission.

It is also encouraging to report that a number of smaller "**private sheds**" have also been offered and it may well be that we will have to use one of these in the interim until sufficient funding can be raised to erect an independent facility.

*As the search for a shed / location continues the Steering Committee would be keen to hear from any other person or body that may have something to offer. If you have something to help us then please contact Keith Bunge on 5568-2524 or Don Stephens on 5568-2153.*

## Fundraising

The Steering Committee is actively seeking the funding required to establish the Shed.

A budget has been prepared which conservatively estimates that at least \$60,000 is required. This covers the cost of erecting a new shed (20m x 8m), providing toilets and kitchen services as well equipping it with basic power and hand tools.

Grant applications are being prepared for both the **Pacific Hydro Sustainable Communities Fund** and the **Moyne Shire Community Assistance Fund**.

Although these grants do not provide funding that can cover the whole \$60K required, they can provide a means to getting the project underway and support towards equipping the Shed with tools. More importantly, however, is that some Government grants are issued on a shared basis and by securing some base funding this can be multiplied at government level.

**John Ellard** is leading the fundraising effort and is also actively looking at other philanthropic trusts as a means of raising funds.

Given the benefits that a Men's Shed can bring to the community it is hoped that support and funding will flow in. At this stage, we have decided not to seek local

business support until a physical shed has been established. However, any donations from any source will be warmly welcomed.

## Visits to neighbouring Men's Sheds

As a follow up to site visits held last year, two trips were recently conducted to re-visit the Men's Shed operating at Hamilton, Harrow and Balmoral. (*A report on the Harrow and Balmoral Shed will be in the next issue.*)

Six people visited the **Hamilton Shed** which is about 12 months ahead of the Port Fairy project and is now a well equipped, vibrant shed that was a pleasure to witness. We managed to arrive at "morning tea" and were warmly welcomed by the Hamilton team who seemed to be having a great time on their many projects.

It is amazing how far they have come in such a short time having opened the Shed in January 2008. Fortunately, for Hamilton, the site they use (an old factory) has been offered for use at a "*peppercorn*" rental rate and is covered by a 5-year lease. Even more importantly, all of the equipment - most of it new - has either been donated by local businesses, supported by cash donations or supported by in-kind contributions from local tradespersons. They are very lucky and we were a bit envious of their success to date. This success was, in part, due to them conducting a special, early morning breakfast, catered by the Lions Club, to which they invited local businesses. We plan to emulate this activity as we strive to set up our own Shed.

### Other highlights of the Hamilton Shed were –

- It is auspiced by Uniting Care
- It has about 15 active members and operates once per week (soon to be 2 days/wk).
- They nominate a "Daily Supervisor" who wears a special, coloured vest
- They are an eclectic mix of retired farmers, tradesmen, businessmen and people with some disability. The social aspects of the shed are very important.
- Safety is a high priority – they also sign an In/Out register
- A work jobs roster is displayed as well as Shed Rules
- Timber etc. is all donated or scavenged
- They do community projects but also have a standing job to re-fit pallets for Iluka that has greatly helped their bank balance grow



*A view of the Hamilton Men's Shed*

