

Port Fairy Men's Shed Inc. NEWSLETTER

Issue 04-2009
September 2009



Secretary: Harry Bracegirdle, 19, Dyson St. Port Fairy 3284 (5568-2601)

Affiliated with the Australian Men's Shed Association

Shed construction to start!

After much planning, and some degree of angst, it is pleasing to report that construction on the Shed finally commenced on 21st September.

The challenge to get everything arranged has been a bit of a journey given the usual requirements to get both planning & building permits and also a permit for a septic tank. We also had to finalise a tender for the supply and construction of the Shed as well as a separate tender for the Shed fit-out. At the time of writing, all permits are expected to be issued and the shed provider selected. We are now finalising the selection of contractors for the fit-out stage.

Most of the work is being managed by the **Joint Shed Construction Project Team** involving members of the Men's Shed, the Lions Club and the Show Society.

The major problems encountered surrounded the preparation of the site. Being on filled land, the engineer who designed the slab and footings initially specified a retaining wall. This was then changed to the cheaper option of installing a pier & beam structure to support the slab.

The Council then advised that a building permit could not be issued unless the land was properly compacted requiring us to remove all fill and re-lay it in compacted layers at a quoted cost of \$48,000. This was way beyond budget so the addition of extra piers became the compromising option.

Issues surrounding a permit for the septic tank then became our next obstacle as we were advised that the land was in the town's sewerage region requiring us to connect to the sewerage system. Given that the distance to the nearest connection point was some hundreds of metres away, uphill and through rocky ground, the cost was prohibitive compared to a septic tank. Fortunately, Wannon Water advised that the Showgrounds were not in the sewerage region so after further consultation concerning the location of the septic and sillage lines, a permit was granted.

As the Show Society had responsibility for site preparation and installation of the septic tank the above compromises were welcome given their limited budget.

In summary, one column in a Newsletter does not give justice to the amount of effort and consultation that transpired to get to this point and both Peter Fawns (PFMS) and Pauline Shirrefs (Show Society) are to be commended for their efforts to follow up and finalise all matters.

Construction & fit-out of the Shed

Following a tendering process, the contract to supply and erect the Shed was awarded to **Western District Sheds** (WDS). The shed and slab cost was approx. \$62K which may vary due to the requirements for additional piers.

The Manager of WDS, Greg Barlow, will provide a \$3,000 discount if we provide a few helpers ("go-fors") to assist him with the shed construction by carrying beams and steel sheets on the site. An initial concern about insurance cover for volunteers was eased by declaring the project as a "Lions Project". Providing that all assistants sign the attendance book then they are covered by Lions Australia. Greg only requires two persons at a time for a few days so, if you are interested in helping, then please contact **Peter Fawns** on 5568-2728. As this will involve heavy lifting then a general level fitness is a pre-requisite.

A Request for Quotation was also issued for the fit-out of the Shed which covered the work in two parts:

Part 1 Provision of carpentry, joinery, plumbing work for the kitchen and toilet area, including parts.

Part 2: Supply and installation of lighting & electrical work for the whole Shed.

At the time of writing, the successful contractor has not been finalised as all bids came in over budget. We are now having discussions with contractors to identify opportunities for reducing costs and bringing the project back on to budget. If savings in the fit-out cannot be realised then we will have to implement other savings measures like delaying the fit-out of the workspace (benches, shelves, etc.), delay installation of water tanks or delay fitting of kitchen appliances.

The actual budget status should be clearer once the shed construction phase is completed.



The Shed site ready for construction



Banners for the Men's Shed

Ted Mellor from the **Port Fairy Kite Shop** has offered to donate two banners to the Men's Shed which we have gratefully accepted. Ted has also suggested that if a person is willing to work in his loft and assist in the making of the banners then this would be appreciated and would also be a means of passing on some valuable skills. We are therefore looking for someone to help Ted on the banners. It is expected that a few hours work will see the job done. If you can help, then please contact **Harry Bracegirdle** on 5568-2601.

Insurance matters

As the Shed construction becomes a reality, the need for insurance has now become a major focus for the Committee and the task of securing adequate insurance cover is proving to be challenge and akin to "herding cats"! This is because it is difficult to get potential insurers to provide comparative quotes.

Even more alarming is the cost. Realistically, we require public liability insurance linked to limited product liability cover that ranges from \$600 to \$1200 in annual premiums. We also need voluntary workers' insurance (personal accident) and this is of the order of \$400 to \$500 pa. We cannot ignore the need to protect the Committee which costs about \$400 pa. Finally, property insurance on the Shed and Contents is another \$650 to \$800 in premiums. All up, insurance could cost us between \$1,900 and \$2,800 per annum depending in the type and level of cover.

It is also disturbing that the premiums and cover quoted have various restrictive clauses. One insurer would only provide voluntary workers' cover for persons 17 to 65 years of age! As you will realise this is pretty useless for older "shedders". We have now found alternative cover for persons up to 80.

Another policy would not provide product liability cover for us making kid's toys. This may limit our desire to help out the Moyneyana Festival who want us to emulate what the Warrnambool Woodworkers do for the *Fun4Kids* festival.

AMSA Conference

With generous support provided by the Moyne Shire Council, **Don Stephens** and **Harry Bracegirdle** attended the Australian Men's Sheds Association (AMSA) Annual Conference in August at the Wrest Point Hotel in Hobart. This was attended by over 240 delegates drawn from sheds all around Australia.

Don and Harry were keen to learn from all aspects of the conference; the 3rd one held by AMSA, as we move into the building phase for our Shed and will soon need to set up the operational aspects of the Port Fairy Men's Shed. In this regard, there was much to learn by drawing on the experiences of more established sheds.

Being central to the objectives of most Men's Sheds, men's health was a focus of the conference, especially from the keynote speakers, but it is fair to say we were hoping to hear about more case studies from the grass roots "Shedders" themselves.

However, as with most conferences, the opportunity to meet so many other like-minded people was a real benefit and we have now gained many important contacts in regard to shed issues, men's health, insurance, shed projects etc.

Assistance to emerging sheds

Whereas Harry & Don sought to learn from more established sheds whilst in Hobart, we are nevertheless being praised in shed circles for our efforts in getting the Port Fairy Men's Shed from inception to the point where we will soon commence construction. Particularly, we have received much positive feedback on our grant application to the Government and our ability to raise the funds.

In recognition of our success, Harry Bracegirdle was invited to speak at a recent gathering of potential shedders in Mount Gambier. The City of Mount Gambier's health support unit is keen to establish a Men's Shed in their town and are therefore about 15 months behind Port Fairy in their planning. They held two public meetings on 10th September to gauge public interest where Harry was able to pass on tips about setting up a committee, raising funds, gaining community support and other useful hints. Every Men's Shed is unique and compared to Port Fairy, Mt. Gambier has a different set of criteria and priorities to address but the public support they received on the day will ensure their project will progress. A similar request has now been received to provide similar support to Portland, Heywood and Casterton.

Annual General Meeting

Our 1st AGM was a successful evening given the attendance of over 40 members and supporters for the BBQ, meeting and presentation by the Warrnambool Triton Woodworkers. Following an election of office bearers, Peter Fawns replaced Peter Ridout on the Committee. Our thanks to Peter Ridout for his input and support in 2008/09.

Barwon-SW Men's Shed Cluster Mtg.

Port Fairy hosted the August meeting of the Barwon South-West Men's Shed Cluster Group. This was attended by some 22 enthusiastic delegates from 8 sheds in the region and involved presentations by the Warrnambool Woodworking Group and local DVA Community Support Officer, Keith McKenzie. We were grateful for the support from Mayor Ken Gale who subsidised the lunch and the hire of the RSL Hall.

The next meeting, scheduled for November, will be hosted by the Hamilton Men's Shed and hopefully representatives of the PFMS will be able to attend.

