

THE SHEDDER

Shoulder to shoulder for every man, and his Men's Shed.

The Christmas Spirit alive in Men's Sheds

HEALTH CHECKS MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Costa gets a health check

Supporting Men and Boys
INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

National Gathering and Shed Awards



**AUSTRALIAN
MEN'S SHED
ASSOCIATION**

Shoulder to Shoulder

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From the EO's Desk



As 2025 draws to a close (and what a great year it has been), it's an opportune time to reflect on a momentous year for the Men's Shed movement and the men's health sector.

This year has been the most significant year since the launch of the National Male Health Policy 15 years ago, with the Government now fulfilling their pre-election commitment of \$32m over four years to support men's health initiatives, including \$8.3m to Men's Sheds. This achievement was only made possible through your support, and our partner organisations Movember and Healthy Male, in carrying your voices to influence this Government commitment.

We also welcomed the appointment of the Hon. Dan Repacholi MP as Special Envoy for Men's Health - an appointment that truly signifies and reinforces the Government's commitment to real change for men's health and wellbeing. Dan has already been extremely active in the Men's Shed community and I would even go as far as saying that he has already visited more Men's Sheds than any other politician - giving him a valuable insight into the importance of Men's Sheds and a strong voice for all of us in Canberra.

Out on the ground, there were a great number of opportunities for connection, conversation and celebration.

In February, with the Bipartisan Friendship Group of Men's Sheds, we hosted a summer BBQ in the Reps Courtyard of Parliament House. With a standout cook-up from the Tuggeranong Men's Shed, MPs, Senators and their staff enjoyed our thanks to them for their support of local Men's Sheds.

We held events around the country during National Volunteer Week - celebrating the heart and soul of Men's Sheds: you. In sheds around the country committee members are the unsung heroes working behind the scenes - wrangling paperwork, wrestling

with council requirements, balancing the books, and making sure the shed can open its doors week after week. Out on the floor, Shedders are making everything from bird boxes and planter stands to toys and rustic benches - all sold to support the shed or donated to local charities and community groups.

In June we marked international Men's Health Week with the theme *See Your GP* - a good reminder for us all to keep up the DIY maintenance and regular servicing on our most important asset.

In September we celebrated Men's Shed Week with the theme "Building Healthy Communities" - something that Men's Sheds do every day. We were thrilled to host Dan and local member Sharon Claydon MP for a BBQ lunch at Elermore Vale Men's Shed, where Newcastle Men's Shed performed their song "At the Men's Shed" (which you can check out on our YouTube channel).

I was pleased to be part of our first ever gathering of Men's Sheds in the Northern Territory at ShedFEST NT, in Darwin in October. We were joined by Dan and his team, as well as local MP Luke Gosling and, most importantly, a great representation of sheds from as far as Alice Springs. As we roll out our new "ShedFEST" event format, it is being reviewed and refined to become a great social and developmental get together for shedders around the country.

Last month, we acknowledged International Men's Day on 19 November,

with its theme "Supporting Men and Boys". It's a theme that resonates deeply with our mission at AMSA, and one that many Sheds are already putting into practice every day.

Across the country, sheds have continued to demonstrate the power of community, connection and purpose - the very qualities that make our network so strong.

The Australian Men's Shed Association acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

Looking ahead to 2026, there will be further expansion of the services provided by AMSA that align to our new funding with a focus on our men's health initiatives, in particular *Spanner in the Works?*. Last year we did over 2,000 *Spanner in the Works?* health checks across Australia – and we look forward to expanding our work in this space over the coming years.

The highlight for early next year will be our 11th AMSA National Men's Shed Gathering. With the Queensland Men's Shed Association as our Co-Host and our long-term major partner Fair Dinkum Builds as our platinum sponsor, we will be based at Royal on the Park Hotel & Suites in the Brisbane CBD from Tuesday 24 March to Thursday 26 March. I hope many of you will be able to attend – we'd love to see as many sheds from every state and territory attend as possible. You can find out more on our website at www.mensshed.org/menssheds2026

I also encourage all shedders to nominate a shed as part of our 2026 National Shed Awards. I know you're a humble lot, but it's a great chance for us to showcase the great work you do every day. Nominations close soon – please don't be put off by filling in a form, it's the quality of the activity we're focused on.

To wrap up what always becomes a lengthy end-of-year letter -

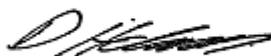
Thank you to every shed and every shed member for your contributions throughout the year. Your efforts continue to strengthen not only your local communities, but the national Men's Shed movement as a whole.

Now it is time for us all to dust off the machinery and close the shed for the Christmas break, time to

spend with friends and family, but also acknowledging that for some it may not be such a happy time, in true Men's Shed comradery I encourage you all to look after our mates.

On behalf of the AMSA team, I wish you all a safe, restful and enjoyable Christmas season – and a positive start to the year ahead. The AMSA Office will be closed from Monday 22 December and we will return ready to support you for another great year on Monday 12 January.

Merry Men's Shed Christmas,



David Helmers
Executive Officer

Tim Kroehn, AMSA Shed Support SA/NT and the South Australian shedders recognised during National volunteer Week 2025



Men's Sheds sharing the Christmas spirit

Men's Sheds everywhere are officially in *elf mode*, with workshops buzzing as shedders craft Christmas magic for their communities. At the **Burleigh Community Men's Shed**, members have built a beautifully crafted Santa throne ready for festive photo ops, while the team at **Sunnybank Men's Shed** have produced a full sleigh for Santa's visit to Bunnings Acacia Ridge, while the **Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest Men's Shed** have also turned out an impressive sleigh of their own.

In Dareton, shedders have been hard at work creating a Santa chair for a local school, as well as Christmas trees and kangaroo cut-outs for students to decorate for the shire's Christmas show. Meanwhile, the **Naracoorte Men's Shed** can barely keep up with demand for their wooden Christmas trees, complete with cut-outs for hanging baubles. The **Daylesford Men's Shed** is adding the final touches of lacquer to a collection of wooden wombats, lovingly decorated by local students. These will soon be mounted onto the shed's signature Christmas trees and displayed along Vincent and Howe Streets in early December.

And spreading the festive spirit even further abroad, the **Market Drayton Men's Shed in the UK** has crafted a giant Christmas pudding—complete with a plunger that the mayor will use to switch on the town's Christmas lights



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Shed Project on Track at Muckleford Station

Whether it's with your partner or a health professional, it can be tough to speak up about health concerns. Passengers stepping off the steam train at Muckleford Railway Station in Central Victoria now have a more comfortable place to pause and soak up the historic atmosphere – thanks to a thoughtful community project by the Maldon Men's Shed.

Muckleford is a quiet, unattended station on the Victorian Goldfields Heritage Railway line, nestled between Castlemaine and Maldon. While the steam train makes regular stops there, it was noted that there was nowhere for passengers to sit and take in the surroundings.

That's where the Maldon Men's Shed stepped in.

With access to long river red gum poles, Shed members got to work designing and crafting a pair of sturdy bench seats for the station. Over several weeks, around seven members collaborated on the project, tackling everything from cutting and planking to assembling and painting.

Once completed, the benches were transported to Muckleford via rail from the Maldon railhead. Volunteers from the railway then installed them with care – digging holes, levelling each bench precisely, concreting them in place, and treating them to resist termites.

It was a true community effort with a rewarding result: passengers now have a place to rest, and the station has a new touch of character.

As a gesture of appreciation, the Victorian Goldfields Heritage Railway donated a supply of reclaimed red gum sleepers – left over from recent rail upgrades – to the Maldon Men's Shed. These sleepers have since been put to good use framing garden beds at the Shed.

A job well done – and a great example of local collaboration, with lasting benefits for all involved.



AMSA's 2026 Shed Awards

AMSA's National Men's Shed Awards give the Men's Shed community an opportunity to recognise the outstanding work of Men's Sheds around Australia. Supported by AMSA's major partner Fair Dinkum Builds, the Awards look for Sheds and efforts of all sizes to celebrate the simple greatness of Men's Sheds from all over the country.

Nominations for the 2026 Shed Awards are now open, and close on Thursday 18 December 2025.

The nomination form including the judging criteria can be found on the AMSA website at: mensshed.org/shed-community/shed-awards/

We're looking for great and interesting projects – we aren't judging the quality of the application or your writing skills so get your nomination in soon!

Discounted price for the National Men's Shed Gathering

Each shed nominated will receive a 10% discount on the cost of registration for the [11th AMSA National Men's Shed Gathering](#) to be held in Brisbane in March 2026.

The 2024 award winners

SHED OF THE YEAR: The Macclesfield Men's Shed, South Australia

Macclesfield Men's Shed (MMS) was proudly named Shed of the Year in 2024, a recognition of the remarkable impact its members have had on their community.

As a modest shed with around 20 dedicated members, the shed has an impressive list of projects and achievements in the community from creating park furniture, to mentoring young fellas, and even catering for local events!



INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY: Jurien Bay Men's Shed, West Australia for their innovative Rest in Reef project

The **Jurien Bay Community Men's Shed** developed the innovative *Rest in Reef* project, creating an enduring memorial that also supports the marine environment. Up to 100 specially designed mini reef balls are made with a blend of concrete incorporating a deceased person's ashes. These reef balls are carefully placed off Jurien Bay, becoming part of the local artificial reef and encouraging marine life to thrive almost immediately.

This project uniquely combines remembrance, community involvement, fundraising and environmental sustainability – providing a lasting tribute that also enriches the ocean ecosystem.

MEN'S HEALTH: Coolum Men's Shed QLD & Eden Men's Shed, NSW



Eden Men's Shed, NSW

The Eden Men's Shed has developed a strong partnership with the Southern NSW Local Health District, focusing on the health and wellbeing of its members. The Shed regularly

invites guest speakers from the NSW Government's Southern NSW Local Health District and other organisations to address important health topics. These range from prostate cancer and dementia to first aid and proper use of their on-site defibrillator. In addition, with support from an NSDP grant, Eden Men's Shed organised the inaugural Far South Coast Men's Health Muster in March 2023. The event brought together 55 members from 10 different Sheds, including participants from Narooma and Cooma in New South Wales, Bemm River in Victoria, and members of the local community. Nine health and community organizations set up stalls to provide valuable advice and information during breaks.



Through a combination of recycling, repurposing, fundraising, and compassion, the shed has not only built a strong internal culture but also made a significant impact on the wider Wagga Wagga community.



Under the guidance of secretary David Croft, who has held the role since 2014, the shed has developed innovative systems to turn what others see as rubbish into revenue, tools, furniture, and even works of art.

“Our shed's philosophy is, if something has got a second life, we'll find it!”

You can watch the video on the AMSA Online blog about the Wagga Shed's sustainability.

Coolum Mens' Shed

Coolum Men's Shed Inc hosted the highly successful “ShedMusic Festival,” a one-day community music event designed to highlight the physical and mental health benefits of making music. The festival also provided a platform for Men's Shed members from across the Sunshine Coast and South Brisbane to showcase their musical talents and connect with like-minded mates.

SUSTAINABILITY: Men's Shed Wagga Wagga NSW

Since its establishment in 2008, Wagga Wagga Men's Shed (NSW) has evolved into a model of sustainability and community service, earning them the AMSA National Men's Shed Award for Sustainability.

TED DONNELLY AWARD – OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE MEN'S SHED MOVEMENT: Paul Sladdin

The “Ted Donnelly Award” recognising outstanding and lifelong contributions to the Men's Shed movement was awarded to Paul Sladdin. Paul's service to the Australian Men's Shed Association has been exceptional, being a founding member of the Mansfield Men's Shed (VIC), President of the Victorian Men's Shed Association (VMSA) 2010 – 2014, an Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) board member 2010 – 2017 and AMSA Chairman 2018 – 2024.

In 2026, the Awards fall in the following four categories:

The Bright Spark Award (Innovation)

– a unique or unusual approach to a problem or project

The Green Shed Award (Sustainability)

– a project or activity that puts the environment or recycling at its heart

Healthy Shed, Healthy Blokes Award (Men's health)

– promoting men's mental and physical health and wellbeing

Community Impact Award (replacing Shed of the Year)

– a Shed doing great things for their community

Award winners are announced alongside the recipient of the Ted Donnelly Lifetime Contribution Award at the AMSA National Gathering in Brisbane in March 2026.



Building
HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES

11TH AMSA NATIONAL MEN'S SHED GATHERING



[MENSSHED.ORG/MENSSHEDS2026](https://mensshed.org/menssheds2026)

24 - 26 MARCH 2026

ROYAL ON THE PARK - BRISBANE, QLD



SHED DEVELOPMENT



SHED MATES



SHED TOURS

MEET YOUR SHED MATES IN SUNNY BRISBANE

The Australian Men's Shed Association and Queensland Men's Shed Association invite you to join us for the 11th AMSA National Men's Shed Gathering. Experience inspiring talks, shed tours, and share new ideas to grow and develop your community.

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Health Checks making a difference

This year, AMSA's health check program reached more men – and more communities – than ever before. Across six events across the country, we teamed up with our university and health partners to complete more than 2,000 health checks.

From the Royal Bathurst Show to the Henty Field Days, and even a music festival on the Sunshine Coast, we met men (and plenty of families) in all sorts of settings – talking health, connection, and community.

Each event offered something unique, but the message stayed the same: taking a few minutes for a simple check can make a real difference. We have started to see and hear from past health check participants that have shared how their visit to our site caused them to investigate further health issues that had been brought to their attention. We heard of stents being put in, prostate issues addressed as well as weight reduction and healthier lifestyles being shared.

Our partners – including the University of Western Sydney, Charles Sturt University,

Sunshine Coast Area Health, and the University of South Australia – were key to making it all happen. Their energy, professionalism, and student involvement keep these health checks running smoothly.

A highlight from the Australian National Field Days: Costa Georgiadis stepped in as judge of the scarecrow competition, where the Borenore Primary School kids showcased their Halloween creations. True to form, Costa charmed everyone he met – and even agreed to get his health check done by a Charles Sturt University (CSU) paramedicine student!

This was CSU's first year joining the Borenore Nashdale Men's Shed health check stand, with a little help from AMSA to pull everything together. Across the

three days, the team completed an incredible 204 health checks – and with only three first-year students on deck!

CSU has long been a mainstay at our Henty Field Days, so it didn't take much convincing to get them on board. They've already asked if the Shed blokes can build another health check station for the 2026 event, where they hope to encourage even more students to take part in this fantastic placement program - one that hones the most important skill in paramedicine: communication with the patient.

While we love the numbers – more than 2,000 checks in total – what really matters are the conversations started, the awareness raised, and the connections built.

Here's to more healthy chats, quick checks, and strong



Costa Georgiadis getting his health checked at the Australian National Field Days by a Charles Sturt University paramedicine student.

Spotlight on the Wagga Wagga Men's Shed:

The shed where Nothing Goes To Waste

Since its establishment in 2008, Wagga Wagga Men's Shed (NSW) has evolved into a model of sustainability and community service, earning them the AMSA National Men's Shed Award for Sustainability. Through a combination of recycling, repurposing, fundraising, and compassion, the shed has not only built a strong internal culture but also made a significant impact on the wider Wagga Wagga community.

Under the guidance of secretary David Croft, who has held the role since 2014, the shed has developed innovative systems to turn what others see as rubbish into revenue, tools, furniture, and even works of art.

A fully functioning recycling hub

Recycling is at the heart of the Wagga shed. Members collect old appliances – everything from washing machines and microwaves to electric motors – and pull them apart by hand. Copper wiring, worth up to \$10.60 per kilo when stripped, is carefully extracted. Aluminium and steel are sorted into bins, and even plastic tubs from old machines are resold as livestock feeders or fire bins.

This effort brings in approximately \$18,000 annually, with proceeds supporting the shed and being redistributed to community causes. Notable beneficiaries include the Wagga Care Van, Pro Patria rehabilitation centre, and Lilly Lodge cancer care centre.

Members find not only purpose but also companionship in this process. Teams of blokes, many well into their 80s and 90s, sit together and unwind motors or strip cables. It's a hands-on, social approach to environmental care.

Partnerships with Purpose

Wagga Men's Shed has a long-standing partnership with the local council to refurbish public bench seats. Members remove damaged timbers, replace rusty bolts, and repaint the frames – returning each bench to near-new condition. This project runs year-round, with the council swapping out damaged benches for repaired ones on a regular cycle.

“Our shed's philosophy is, if something has got a second life, we'll find it!”

The shed itself is a testament to creative reuse. The walls are made of insulated roller doors, old hospital beds have been converted into adjustable workbenches for shedders of different heights, and trucking company mudguards have been transformed into raised flower and vegetable beds.

From Grief to Generosity: The Deceased Estate Program

Perhaps the most moving initiative is the shed's deceased estate service. Families overwhelmed by the task of clearing a loved one's belongings often turn to the shed for help. Shed members respectfully clean out the spaces, sort items into recyclables, saleables, and waste, and bring what they can back to the shed for reuse or resale.

For many families, there's comfort in knowing that items belonging to their loved ones will help support charitable causes. For shed members, it's another way to stay active and offer a meaningful service.

Watch the video about Wagga's award winning approach to sustainability on the AMSA online blog page at:
mensshed.org/the-shed-online/the-shed-where-nothing-goes-to-waste/



The Garage Sale That Never Ends

A shed member with a knack for social media helped transform Wagga's humble garage sale into a thriving enterprise. Open five days a week, the garage sale now brings in about \$75,000 a year. Items are displayed, sold, or scrapped after 6–8 weeks to prevent overflow. Proceeds go to running the shed and funding local charities.

Creative Outlets and Surprising Ventures

In addition to recycling and refurbishing, the shed fosters creativity. One member started growing chrysanthemums after declaring he wasn't into vegetables – resulting in over two dozen floral arrangements sold for Mother's Day.

The shed also became home to a leadlight glass project after a retired tradesman's family donated his entire workshop. Members now sort coloured glass and create new leadlight pieces as a hobby and a tribute to traditional craftsmanship.

A Model for Other Sheds

With an average member age of 87, the Wagga Men's Shed proves age is no barrier to innovation. David encourages other sheds to explore similar projects – particularly deceased estate pickups and recycling systems.

“There's value in everything,” he says, “whether it's scrap metal or an old garden tool. And there's dignity in giving it a second life.”



NAILED IT WITH *Rip Woodchip*

This month on The Shed Wireless, a podcast for shedders, Rip's chiming in for Christmas! Listen to the full episode on The Shed Wireless podcast at www.mensshed.org/the-shed-wireless

*Ho-ho-ho, g'day shedders! Rip Woodchip here, sliding down the metaphorical chimney and straight into your earholes for the Christmas edition of *The Shed Wireless*. And let me tell you— nothing says Christmas like the smell of a hot northerly wind, sunscreen, prawns sizzling on the barbie, and a big bowl of cherries that cost more than your first car and the annual panic of trying to buy gifts for people who already have a shed full of perfectly good stuff. Ahh, festive spirit!*

Now, gift giving... it's a beautiful tradition. Unless you're like me, and every year you swear you're gonna be organised—yet on December 23rd you'll find me wandering Bunnings like a confused reindeer who took a wrong turn.

But here's the thing: us shedders? We've got a secret superpower. We can make things. With our hands. And occasionally with power tools that make the neighbours nervous. And here's a bonus: it's better for the planet! Instead of buying something from Amazon or Temu that's flown halfway around the world wrapped in enough plastic to choke a blue whale, you can make a gift right there in the shed. Local timber, recycled materials, stuff you rescued from the offcuts pile—Mother Nature's cheering you on!

So let me give you a few ideas from the Rip Woodchip School of Festive Craftsmanship:

- 1. The classic chopping board: Easy to make, good for the kitchen, the barbie, or whacking cane toads—versatile! And every time someone slices a tomato on it, they'll think of you. Hopefully fondly - and not because of the knife they are holding!*
- 2. A birdhouse: Nothing spreads Christmas cheer like giving local wildlife a place to squat. Plus, you get the joy of seeing native birds move in—just remember, if the ibis shows up, that's on you. Or maybe make it big enough for that cheeky possum that will try to move in anyway.*
- 3. Wooden bowls and platters, serving implements, bbq caddies - the list of possibilities is endless of possibilities! And so much nicer than plastic!*
- 4. A gift that keeps giving: Gift a packet of seeds with a pot and bag of soil - or pot up seedling already on it's way - you could choose flowers or a herb for the recipient to add to their cooking!*
- 5. Kids toys - wooden cars, spinning tops, puzzles or even a rocking horse!: Kids love them, and parents love them even more because they don't beep, flash, or need charging. And they last and can be passed on to the next little nipper.*

*But maybe the best gift you can give this year isn't something you glue, screw, or sand. Maybe it's your **time**. A visit, a phone call, a cuppa with someone who's doing it tough. Or a helping hand to a mate whose shed looks like it's been hit by a festive tornado. Connection—that's the real Christmas magic. And you mob at the sheds do that better than just about anyone. So this year, whether you're giving a lovingly handcrafted masterpiece...or a last-minute servo voucher wrapped in yesterday's newspaper...remember: it's the thought, and **the connection, that counts**.*

Alright, that's enough wisdom from me—my tinsel's caught in the lathe again. This is Rip Woodchip, wishing you a safe, joyful, low-waste, shed-filled Christmas.