

# Nuts & Bolts

AMSA MEMBER BULLETIN

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### Momentum, Growth and the Future of Men's Sheds

It is a genuine pleasure to provide this Chairman's Report at a time when AMSA has real momentum and a clear sense of direction. This report draws on the address I delivered at the 11th National Men's Shed Gathering in Brisbane in March, as well as the matters considered by the Board at its 25 March 2026 meeting.

#### Why Men's Sheds Matter

I want to begin with something important. Across Australia, too many men are struggling quietly and too often alone. We see it in the statistics, in our communities, and in the conversations happening every day in Sheds across the country.

Men are dying prematurely, often from preventable causes. Many experience poor health outcomes, high rates of suicide, substance dependence, homelessness, social isolation and disengagement from education and support systems. Men also continue to be overrepresented in workplace injuries and fatalities, particularly in physically demanding industries, with many carrying the long-term physical and psychological impacts of that work throughout their lives.

These challenges are complex. They are not the result of individual weakness, nor are they solved by telling men simply to "speak up". Too often, the systems designed to support people are not structured in ways that men naturally engage with. Many men will not walk into a room and openly announce they are lonely, anxious, grieving or struggling to cope.

But they will come to a Shed.

They will come to make something, repair something, share a cuppa, have a laugh, help someone out, or spend time alongside other people with a shared sense of purpose. And while that is happening, something important happens too. Connections are rebuilt. Confidence returns. People feel useful, valued and less alone.

That is the strength of the Shed model. It meets men where they are, in environments that feel practical, welcoming and familiar. It creates space for friendship, purpose, contribution and belonging without judgement or pressure. For many men, walking through the Shed door is the first step toward reconnecting with their community, their wellbeing and themselves.

That is why this movement matters so much, and why the work being done in Sheds across Australia continues to make such a meaningful difference.

### **AMSA's Growth and Progress**

When AMSA was established in 2007, there were around 50 Sheds across Australia. Today there are more than 1,300. That is extraordinary growth, and it did not happen by accident. It happened because this model works. In cities, suburbs, regional communities and small towns.

That growth is reflected in our membership figures. As at early March 2026, AMSA has 1,460 members, including 1,340 Men's Sheds, with 56 new Sheds joining between 1 June 2025 and 10 March 2026. That continued growth speaks to the strength and relevance of the movement.

Our communications response to the transition to SaCHS has also been encouraging. We recorded a 54 per cent read rate across our membership database for the key communications on this topic, with no substantive concerns raised. That is a strong signal that the movement understands and supports the direction we are taking. The organisation has also held its insurance package for a third consecutive year with no premium increase. This is a solid and pleasing operational outcome in the current environment.

### **A Significant Investment in Our Movement**

I am pleased to report a significant milestone for AMSA: the recent commitment of \$8.3 million in federal government funding over the next two years. This is a substantial investment in our movement and it recognises the real, measurable impact that Men's Sheds have on individuals, families and communities across Australia. It reflects the trust that has been built with government through AMSA's improved governance, accountability and operational capability. That support gives us the opportunity to do more, reach further, and build on the work already happening on the ground in Sheds every day.

### **Working Together: National, State and Local**

Growth only works if we organise ourselves properly. AMSA is at its best when we cooperate well, respect each other's roles and stay in our own swim lanes. AMSA is the national peak body. Our role is to focus nationally. To engage with the Federal Government, advocate for the movement at a national level, strengthen national programs, and improve and increase funding for men's health initiatives through that federal relationship. State bodies have a different but equally important role, focused primarily on securing support through their relationships with state governments and state stakeholders. Local Sheds, in turn, work closely with local councils, communities, volunteers, sponsors and services. That is the model: national where national matters, state where state matters, local where local matters. When each part of the movement does its job well and works respectfully with the others, the whole movement becomes stronger.

The 11th National Men's Shed Gathering in Brisbane was a good example of this in practice. AMSA and QMSA worked closely together to jointly coordinate the conference, and the result demonstrated what is possible when representative organisations cooperate properly and get on with the job. I want to thank Lawrie and the QMSA team for their partnership in making that happen.

### **Governance and the Transition to Sheds and Community Health Services (SaCHS)**

Governance is not the most exciting topic in any room. But it matters enormously to our ability to do what we exist to do. The move to SaCHS and our more skills-based board structure has made AMSA a stronger and more credible national organisation. It aligns with the way the Federal Government wants to see organisations like ours governed. with proper accountability, stronger capability, and the maturity required to manage public investment responsibly, while keeping our focus exactly where it belongs: on supporting Sheds and improving outcomes for men. This transition is not an abstract governance exercise. It is about building the kind of organisation that can be trusted with larger programs, that can work effectively with government, and that can represent the movement with authority and integrity.

## Board Renewal

I am pleased to welcome two new members to the AMSA Board: Michael Davies and Don Higgs. We are pleased to have both of you join us and I look forward to your contribution. Board renewal matters, and it is important that we continue to build a capable and constructive board team. At the same time, I want to sincerely thank the directors who have recently completed their terms: Stuart Eustice, Barry Laubsch and David Seen. Stuart's contribution in particular, across committee work and board matters, has been significant. AMSA is stronger for the service of all three.

## Expanding Our Role in Men's Health

AMSA is continuing to expand its role, carefully and thoughtfully, into a more prominent position in the men's health landscape. Programs like *Spanner in the Works?* are a great example of this evolution. They build on what Sheds already do so well, creating trusted, informal environments and add structured opportunities to engage men in conversations about their health and wellbeing. This is not about changing what Sheds are. It is about strengthening what they already offer. The Board at its March meeting also considered a proposal to support a mobile *Spanner in the Works?* program and office fleet through a vehicle lease arrangement. This is a practical example of resourcing our programs to deliver better outcomes on the ground.

## Organisational Housekeeping

At our March Board meeting we undertook a review of AMSA's subcommittee structure to ensure each subcommittee has a clear purpose, remains relevant, has suitable terms of reference and has the right membership going forward. We resolved to terminate the Constitution Review Subcommittee, which completed its task when the Board voted on its recommendations in October 2025. We also confirmed the continuation of the Sponsorship, Branding and Fundraising Subcommittee, subject to refreshed membership following recent Board changes. The Board also approved the establishment of a new Governance and Compliance Review Subcommittee, tasked with reviewing AMSA's governing policies for compliance with the Constitution, relevant regulation and best practice, with completion targeted before our August 2026 meeting. This is the kind of discipline that underpins long-term organisational health.

## A Word of Thanks

I want to express my sincere thanks to David Helmers, CEO of AMSA, and to Emma and the broader AMSA team for everything they do. Not just at events like the National Conference, but throughout the year. Events and programs do not happen because board members turn up and speak. They happen because good people do a mountain of hard, often unseen work behind the scenes. A great deal of that work is unglamorous, but all of it matters. The progress AMSA has made is a direct reflection of that sustained effort.

## Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Our purpose is clear: support Sheds, support men, and improve men's health and wellbeing. The men we serve do not care about organisational politics. They do not care who gets the credit. They care whether the Shed opens, whether the support is there, whether somebody answers the phone, and whether they feel welcome when they arrive. Our responsibility as a Board, as a national body and as a movement, is to keep that front and centre. If an idea strengthens Sheds, supports men and improves real outcomes, we should back it. If it distracts from that mission, we should be careful. In a world where too many men are still struggling, too often quietly and too often alone, Men's Sheds are not a luxury. They are part of the answer.

Thank you to every Shedder, every volunteer, every staff member and every board member who contributes to this remarkable movement. AMSA has made meaningful progress, and with continued alignment, discipline and goodwill, we are well placed to build on it.

Luke Clifton  
Chairman

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## Sign up to hear from us...

**The Shedder e-News** – shed stories, shedder spotlight, and projects for all shedders.

**Grants & Funding Bulletin** – latest grants and funding news for Men's Sheds.

**The Shed Wireless** – a podcast for shedders hosted by John Paul Young, for the love of shedding.

**Wellbeing Watch *NEW!*** – stories, info and resources for Wellbeing Leaders at the shed.

**Visit our website to sign up or simply email us at [amsa@mensshed.net](mailto:amsa@mensshed.net) to let us know which newsletters you'd like to receive!**

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## New Wellbeing Watch for Wellbeing Leaders



Wellbeing Leaders play a vital role in Men's Sheds. Whether it's a formal position like a Wellbeing Officer, or simply one or more shedders stepping up to organise health talks, share information, or check in on others, their contribution helps keep sheds supportive and connected spaces.

To support this important work, we're excited to introduce our *Wellbeing Watch* e-newsletter created for Wellbeing Leaders in all their forms.

The newsletter will feature practical tips, informative articles, useful resources, and real-life case studies tailored to Men's Sheds. The first edition will launch soon, so make sure your shed is signed up to stay in the loop!

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## NSDP Round 31 Outcomes

Formal announcement of successful applicants and release of grant outcomes for Round 31 will be available on the AMSA website from 9 June 2026.

All applicants will be informed of the outcomes and successful applicants provided with Letter of Offer documentation.

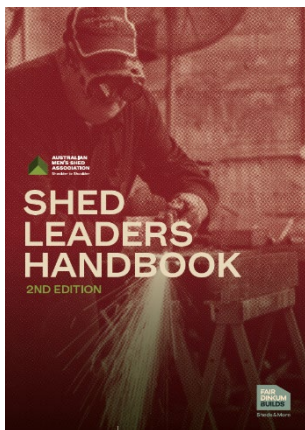
Information and supporting documents for the NSDP can be found at [www.mensshed.org/nsdp](http://www.mensshed.org/nsdp)

*The Australian Men's Shed Association administers the Australian Government National Shed Development Programme (NSDP) on behalf of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.*

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## New Resources for Men's Sheds

### Shed Leaders Handbook 2<sup>nd</sup> edition



**A new edition of our Shed Leaders Handbook is now available.**

The updated AMSA Shed Leaders Handbook is a valuable resource that recognises and supports the vital role shed leaders play in their communities. Shed leaders are the backbone of Men's Sheds, creating welcoming, inclusive spaces that foster connection, skill-sharing, and wellbeing.

This updated handbook provides practical guidance on selecting the right legal structure, good governance, managing meetings, succession planning and conflict and grievances plus tools to help navigate the evolving needs of members and communities.

Email us if you'd like to receive a hard copy of the handbook: [amsa@mensshed.net](mailto:amsa@mensshed.net)

### SMSA Factsheet: How to attract younger men into Men's Sheds



Our counterparts at the Scottish Men's Shed Association have been working with two researchers from the Glasgow Caledonian University to produce a factsheet for sheds interested in attracting younger members.

The factsheet presents valuable data and tips on getting younger men through the shed door.

To view the factsheet, visit

[www.scottishmsa.org.uk/factsheet-attractyoungermen](http://www.scottishmsa.org.uk/factsheet-attractyoungermen)

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## Become a Field Officer for the 2026 Census

Join the Census team and help collect the data that informs local services for your community. To apply and see all Census job opportunities, visit [census.abs.gov.au/jobs](https://census.abs.gov.au/jobs)



**Become a Field Officer**

Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Census

- ✓ Deliver Census letters and forms
- ✓ Earn extra money close to home
- ✓ No experience necessary

Apply now  
[census.abs.gov.au/jobs](https://census.abs.gov.au/jobs)

Field Officer jobs are now available in locations all over Australia, including our capital cities, regional towns and remote areas. The best part? No prior experience is required.

As a Field Officer, you'll be the local face of the Census. You'll deliver Census letters and forms, answer questions from the public and follow up households that haven't yet responded.

Field Officer jobs are temporary and suit a variety of schedules, from students to part-time workers and retirees. You can earn extra money and work flexibly across weekdays, weekends and evenings.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is looking for a broad range of people to apply to reflect the diversity of Australian communities.

**Get your application in by Monday 18 May 2026 to be considered in the first round of recruitment in your local area.**

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## Building Resilient Sheds Workshop

In collaboration with the Resilient Building Council, AMSA has recently run a series of pilot workshops designed to help sheds and their communities become more disaster-prepared.

The workshops focus on ways to better manage and protect buildings against natural disasters, including simple changes that will make a big impact. The workshop also provides information about protecting your own home against storm, fire and flood damage.

These workshops have received excellent feedback and we're now looking for Expressions of Interest from sheds who might be interested in hosting a workshop for their local shed community. This is open to all sheds across Australia.

To find out more and register your interest, please email us at [events@mensshed.net](mailto:events@mensshed.net)

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## Shed Diary

Visit [mensshed.org/events](https://mensshed.org/events) for AMSA's full calendar of events and workshops.

8 May	<b>Shed M8s Day</b> Celebrating Mateship, shoulder to shoulder for shedder wellbeing Find out more about Shed Mates at <a href="https://mensshed.org/mens-health">mensshed.org/mens-health</a>
19 May	<b>Building Resilient Sheds across the Gympie Region</b> Hosted by Glenwood Men's Shed Find out more at <a href="https://mensshed.org/events">mensshed.org/events</a>
18 – 24 May	<b>National Volunteer Week</b>
15 – 21 June	<b>Men's Health Week</b>
7 – 13 September	<b>Men's Shed Week</b>
10 October	<b>World Mental Health Day</b>
19 November	<b>International Men's Day</b>

## WRAP UP

# 11<sup>th</sup> AMSA National Men's Shed Gathering

The 11th National Men's Shed Gathering brought together more than 250 delegates representing 158 sheds and organisations from across Australia for three memorable days in Brisbane from 24–26 March 2026. Hosted at Royal on the Park, the Gathering celebrated the strength of the Men's Shed movement through connection, learning, mateship and community spirit.

The program featured shed tours, workshops, keynote presentations and practical sessions covering leadership, wellbeing, digital safety, inclusion and building stronger communities. Delegates also enjoyed networking opportunities through the Welcome Reception, Shedder's Big Breakfast and National Shed Awards Dinner.

Feedback from attendees highlighted the value of connecting with other shedders, sharing ideas and learning practical approaches that can be taken back to local sheds. Delegates rated the opportunity to connect with other shedders at 4.8 out of 5, with many describing the Gathering as "well organised", "practical" and "a wonderful opportunity to see other sheds and learn from each other".

The feedback also reinforced the importance of gatherings like this in supporting healthy, sustainable sheds and strong local leadership. The value for money in attending was rated 4.6 out of 5, and we encourage sheds to consider building attendance at future Gatherings into their budgets as an investment in networking, learning and development opportunities for members and committees.

A highlight of the event was hearing directly from sheds around the country about successful local initiatives, reinforcing the important role sheds continue to play in supporting the health and wellbeing of men and strengthening communities.

### Heading to the Hunter Valley in 2028

The Gathering also concluded with the exciting announcement that the 12th National Men's Shed Gathering will be held in the Hunter Valley in 2028. Following the success of the Brisbane event, the Hunter Valley Gathering is expected to continue building on the strong sense of connection, shared learning and mateship that has become a hallmark of the national event.

A big thank you to everyone who attended, presented, volunteered and supported the Gathering, including our Co-Host, the Queensland Men's Shed Association, and event sponsors Fair Dinkum Builds, Everest Risk Group, Black Dog Ride, Trilogy Care, Carbatec and Bastion Group.

We hope to see an even greater number of sheds represented in 2028.

