



**Australian Men's Shed Association**  
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

## WHAT IS A MEN'S SHED

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The modern Men's Shed is an updated version of the shed in the backyard that has long been a part of Australian culture. Men's Sheds are springing up all around Australia and internationally.

Not all Men's Sheds are the same- if you looked inside you might see a number of men making furniture, perhaps restoring bicycles for a local school, making Mynah bird traps, fixing lawn mowers or making a cubby house for Camp Quality to raffle. You might also see a few young men working with the older men obtaining new skills and learning something about life from the men with whom they work. You might see local elders making traditional weapons or designing arts and crafts. You will see tea-bags, coffee cups and a comfortable area where men can sit and talk. You will probably also see an area where men can learn to cook for themselves or how to contact their families by computer.

## SO WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS NEW TYPE OF MEN'S SHED?

Most men have learned from our culture that they don't talk about feelings and emotions many do not take an interest in their own health and well-being. Unlike women, most men are reluctant to talk about their emotions and that means that they usually don't ask for help. Probably because of this, many men are less healthy than women, drink more, take more risks and suffer more from isolation, loneliness and depression. Relationship breakdown, retrenchment or early retirement from a job, loss of children following divorce, physical or mental illness are just some of the problems that men may find difficult to deal with on their own.

Good health is based on many factors including feeling good about yourself, being productive, contributing to your community, connecting with friends and maintaining an active body and mind. Becoming a member of a Men's Shed provides a safe and busy environment where men can find many of these things in an atmosphere of old-fashioned mateship. And, importantly, there is no pressure. Men can just come and have a yarn and a cuppa if that is all they're looking for.

Members of Men's Sheds come from all walks of life – the bond that unites them is that they are men with time on their hands and would like something meaningful to do with that time.

A good Men's Shed has a Management Committee that has developed a safe and happy environment where men are welcome to work on community projects, specific Men's Shed projects or a project of their choice in their own time and where the only 'must' is to observe safe working practices....all in a spirit of mateship.

The Men's Shed movement has now become one of the most powerful tools in addressing health and wellbeing and helping men to once again become valued and productive members of our community.

## DEFINITION OF A MEN'S SHED

### Preamble

AMSA has defined a Men's Shed for the purpose of deciding which organisations are eligible for membership.

### AMSA BY-LAWS – MEMBERSHIP VERSION NO 1

In arriving at this definition, AMSA recognises and values the diversity of reasons why men come together to share activities and common interests in the context of a Men's Shed.

AMSA believes that Men's Sheds should be open to all men but where its membership is restricted to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander members for cultural purposes or restricted to residents of private facilities such as Aged Care and Residential Care facilities, such shed will be admitted.

AMSA recognises that not all sheds are exclusively for men and that some sheds choose to call themselves 'Community Sheds' as they may be open to female members. The decision to have female members is entirely a local one. For the purposes of this document, the term 'Men's Shed' is used to cover all member Men's Sheds.

AMSA also recognises that there are valid reasons to exclude organisations that wish to benefit from the advantages of membership of AMSA but whose real purpose is not in alignment with the Vision and the Objects of the Association.

### Definition for the purpose of admission to AMSA membership

1. AMSA recognises as a Men's Shed any community-based, non-profit, non-commercial organization that is accessible to all men and whose primary activity is the provision of a safe and friendly environment where men are able to work on meaningful projects at their own pace in their own time in the company of other men. A major objective is to advance the well-being and health of their male members.
2. Upon application, AMSA may admit to membership a Shed which conforms to the above definition in all respects except that its membership is restricted to male Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander members for cultural purposes.

AMSA will not admit to membership any organisation that has illegal aims, objectives or practices, is disrespectful/ harmful to other people or sections of the community, is aimed primarily at promoting particular political or religious views or practices, discriminates against membership on the basis of race, creed, sexual preference or age, is similar in name to an existing registered shed, is a Men's Shed in name only and is not intent on becoming a Men's Shed as defined, or if its priority of operation as a Men's Shed is secondary to other purposes, is not committed to Men's Shed health & safety and duty of care of its members and public, does not have the required level of insurances, is not a legal entity (incorporated) or does not have a written agreement of partnership with the auspice or sponsor body.