

# What makes a successful Men's Shed?

Professor Kirsten Holmes | 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021



# Challenges for Men's Sheds

- Recruiting and keeping members
- Succession planning for key roles
- Resourcing activities
- Others?





# What factors might be important?

- Governance
- Location
- Networks
- Size of shed
- Types of members
- Shed activities
- Others?







# Literature review of research about men's sheds

- Aim: to identify and synthesise the structural factors and processes that lead to the success of a mutual aid community group;
- Process: Systematic search for articles about men's sheds, and health and wellbeing;
- Search reinforced uniqueness of Men's Sheds as mutual aid voluntary organisations.



# What do we know about the impact of men's sheds?

- Men's sheds do improve members' health and wellbeing, especially mental health
  - Decreased depression, increased confidence and self-esteem;
  - Increased sense of purpose in life, higher quality relationships, and higher levels of happiness;
  - Improved coordination and mobility.



# Funding

- Lack of funding
- Competition for resources among members
- Competition for resources among sheds
- Obligation for shed members to produce and sell items





# Governance and support

- Style and quality of leadership
- Ability of leader to facilitate relationships among members
- Lack of support for members from leadership
- Too many rules and hierarchical structure



# Physical structure

- A social area
- A common area for workshops
- Ease of access
- Location within the town
- Safety of shed building and location





# Shed's turning 10

MATTEO GAGLIARDI

MEMBERS of the Willo's Men's Shed are preparing to host the community organisation's 10th birthday celebrations at the end of the year.

The local men's shed – based at Little Paxton Street, Willaston – began on October 11, 2007, as a project between Gawler Health Service and Gawler Council.

Initially involving 10 people, the men's shed's aim was to promote the mental health of older men in the community and provide them with a setting to socialise and work on community projects.

It has since become incorporated as its own organisation and grown to include over 70 members, and will celebrate a decade in existence on its open day on December 3.

Willo's Men's Shed secretary Chris Rehn said members have already hit the ground running with preparations to host the celebratory event, more than six months out from the open day.

"We've got an established masterplan in flow chart form (detailing) what we want done by the end of each month," Mr Rehn said.

"We hope to have a rather large birthday cake to share around with everybody, and



Willo's Men's Shed members Andrew Scholz (left), Henry Loveridge and Laurens Howymayers working on one of the shed's current community projects, a money box for the Rotary Club. PHOTO: Alec Urquhart

there'll be displays of our products – we'll have some toys, a bit of furniture that the members have made (and) products for sale.

"There will also be a little bit about men's health."

Long-time member Allan Turvey, who joined the organisation shortly after it was founded, said the shed has offered assistance through its relaxed environment to a lot of men over the past decade,

including himself.

He said he's seen a lot of changes occur at the men's shed since it started.

"There's a lot of people that come and stay, and a few people have come and gone," Mr Turvey said.

"(We started with) a workshop, and the blokes' storage for stuff that you've built already, and then they built an office, and now they've got a mezzanine floor – that's all been done."

## What else might be relevant?

- Types of members
  - Previous occupation of members
  - Experience and skills of members
- Type of funding
- Availability of resources
- Age of shed
- Geographic location
- Economic base of local community
- Impact of shed's networks

# Future research

- Evaluate what factors are associated with higher levels of social and emotional wellbeing
  - Interviews with a key stakeholders from a sample of Men's Sheds
  - Online survey tracking over time the SEWB of Men's Sheds members
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