



Bench Press

Shed West Community Men's Shed Inc. for Pullenvale Ward
Number 16 September 2011

Welcome to this special edition of *Bench Press* devoted entirely to a glimpse of the Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) National Conference. This was hosted by the Queensland Men's Shed Association on behalf of the national body.

The conference from 21 to 23 August was entitled, *Men in Sheds: Building Communities*. This was an excellent opportunity for members to meet other shed members from across Australia and to hear about what others and the movement are doing — nationally and internationally.

Shed West had the largest delegation attending, with fifteen members out of the 258 registered. They were: Don Atkinson, Graham Barnard, Lloyd Brown, Don Bryant, Graeme Curnow, Alan Ernst, Roger Harding, Malcolm Johnson, Ray Johnson, Max Lockwood, Ken Martin, Doug Nissen, Tom Usher, Howard White and Peter Young.

conference welcoming delegates and introducing the visitors to Brisbane and confirming the Brisbane City Council's commitment to men's sheds.



Opening night, with from left, David Helmers, Executive Officer Australian Men's Shed Association with our own Graeme Curnow, Chairman of the organising committee, with The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Graham Quirk.



Some of the Shed West contingent with our New Zealand colleague Neil Bruce.

Opening Session

Sunday evening saw many delegates arrive and register for the opening session where Brisbane's Lord Mayor officially opened the



Delegates were treated to a welcome presentation by an indigenous group involving members of the Stradbroke Island Men's Shed.

Following the official welcome and refreshments delegates were invited to see the movie, *Mad Bastards*, about an aboriginal man sick of scraping out an existence in the city,

who travels to the tiny frontier town of Five Rivers to find his son. Here he is confronted by a tough local cop and so begins a story about hard men battling to do the right thing by their family.

Conference

The program featured plenary sessions, three concurrent streams, a technology workshop, poster displays and an industry exhibition. Sessions were presented on a wide range of topics and from a diverse background of speakers. Speakers came from Australia and overseas and included: members of parliament, academics, community workers, government, private industry and shed members. They presented a range of information from research results to local experiences and policies. There was something for everyone.

Take Home Messages

All sheds are different Mixing with other shedders and listening to presentations confirmed that no two sheds are exactly the same. Some have large workshops as well as other facilities. Some operate from under houses or are groups who meet socially without a workshop. Then there is the Shed Online.

The movement is growing The Shed movement is growing quickly. There are over 600 sheds registered with AMSA. In Queensland there are 60 sheds whereas, twelve months ago there were fifteen sheds. Nationally, there are over 50,000 members.



The Shed West display.



Shed West member Peter Young demonstrating woodworking techniques. These displays took place during the breaks in the formal sessions.

Australia then the world While the movement started in Australia there are now almost forty Sheds in New Zealand, thirty-two in Ireland, nine in England and two in Canada, with inquires about sheds from many other countries.

Men's health is a major issue Suicide, diseases and social isolation are major issues. Five men a day in Australia commit suicide compared with one female. Social interaction is a major determinate of health together with healthy mind and healthy body.

Health= body + mind + social

A number of presenters also had support materials such as books and DVDs.

Biddulph Steve (2010) *The New Manhood*

Steve was a plenary speaker who inspired many in the three sessions he ran and has a worldwide reputation with his books in four million homes in 31 languages.

Kreig Julian (2011) *We are all in it, it's only the depth that varies.* Julian spends his days, as executive officer of Wheatbelt Men's Health in Western Australia, pioneering programs to address the issues facing rural Australia. Here the difference between being OK or depressed could be as little as a shower of rain at the right time.

Shed convenors Some sheds at least have paid convenors. These are often funded by

other organisations and some convenors are community health workers.

Sheds building communities Several speakers talked about how Sheds were contributing to building and developing communities. Some sheds work on community projects while others are working with youth and schools. To experience one of these try searching You Tube for the *Men's Integeneration Project Video*.

New friends We all made new friends and benefited from our discussions. Some through the billets they accommodated and others with other shedders. Shed West has established contacts with the Lightning Ridge Shed, where we have been able to provide some timber, and with Badu Island where Pastor John Newie is trying to establish a Shed. Some of our surplus tools will be going to Badu Men's Shed.



How to make a didgeridoo.

Services from the Department of Veterans' Affairs are at 133 254 or www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm

DIY Health Toolbox an initiative under the National Male Health Policy at www.health.gov.au/malehealth

If you have a hearing problem stay in touch with the assistance of National Relay Service at www.relayservice.com.au or consult Hearing Australia on 131 797 or www.hearing.com.au

Spiritus an Anglican Church group who provide caring services and also require volunteers are at 07 3421 2800 or www.spiritus.org.au

Find out how to be medicine wise at www.nps.org.au



Enjoying the conference dinner at the Greek Club.

Men's Health

There were many presentations and displays on men's health issues. Some websites are:

Cancer Council www.cancer.org.au
Cancer Council Help Line call 13 11 20 or www.cancerqld.org.au

More on Bowel Cancer and the National Bowel Cancer Screening program in Queensland www.health.qld.gov.au/bowelcancer or 1300 766 927 and for the national program try www.cancerscreening.gov.au or 1800 118 868

Feeling lonely, think you are alone try Men's Line 1300 78 99 78 or www.mensline.org.au



Shed West member Don Atkinson demonstrated jewellery making techniques during the breaks in the formal sessions. Don's work was done with basic hand tools and the Archimedes drill seen above.

Web Wanderings

A selection of websites from the many displays at the conference.

The shed power club is offering deals on Einhell power tools to sheds see www.einhell.com.au

The ever popular Timber and Working with Wood Show dates for 2012 are available; Brisbane 8-20 May see www.eee.net.au

Wood Craft Supplies
www.woodcraftsupplies.com.au

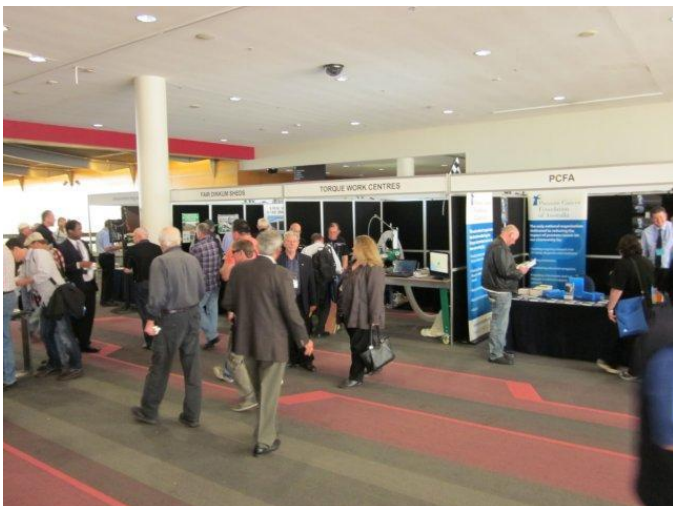
Hare and Forbes
www.machineryhouse.com.au

Learn bookbinding at the next course on 19-20 November with Queensland Bookbinders' Guild
www.qbg.org.au

No time to go to shed or have difficulty getting there try the Shed Online at
www.theshedonline.org.au

Technical Aid to the Disabled Qld are looking for volunteers, particularly, engineers, fitters & turners, industrial designers, technicians, upholsters, trades people and handy persons. See www.tadq.org.au or 1300 663 243.

Looking for fellowship or new interests and much more try Probus at: 1800 630 488 or www.probusouthpacific.org



Part of the display area where twenty exhibitors had booths ranging from tools, craft supplies and safety equipment to health information.



The 350 delegates at the conference. (Photo by Rene Marcel).

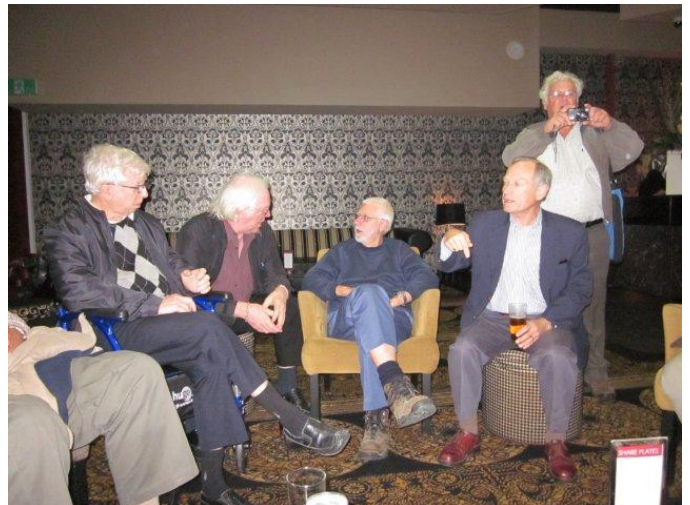
Next Conference

The next conference is planned for Melbourne in 2013. Keep an eye out for details on the AMSA website at www.mensshed.org

Previous conferences were in Lakes Entrance in 2005, Sydney in 2007 and Hobart in 2009.

Interested

Visit the Shed at 98 Brookfield Road Kenmore Hills any morning Monday to Friday or enquire about the Tuesday afternoon meetings.



Shed West members enjoy a break at the Melbourne Hotel before the conference dinner at the Greek Club.

More Information

www.shedwest.com.au
Graeme Curnow 3720 9789 or gjmcurnow@bigpond.com
Alan Ernst 0408 769 576 or ernsts@bigpond.net.au

© Shed West (2011). Contact: Shed West, Community Men's Shed Inc PO Box 391 Kenmore Q 4069, or the editor on 0408 769 576.