



# The not so Wrinkly Rag

The Shed is supported by the Shire of Mundaring, Lotterywest, Mundaring Community Financial Services (Bendigo Bank), Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, and the WA Department of Communities.

**Donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible – just ask the Treasurer for a receipt.**

## What's on in the Next Month or 2?

General Meeting	11am on 15 <sup>th</sup> of January 2026.
Wood carvers	7:00pm every Monday – contact Terry 9295-1393
Fundraising	Next raffle on 9 <sup>th</sup> of May at Woolies.
Shed Open <b>EVERY</b> Saturday	9am-noon - come down for a cuppa and a natter.
Public Open Saturday (last Saturday of the month)	31 <sup>st</sup> of January Open Morning 8:00am-noon. Bacon & egg toastie and drink for \$5 - 8:00am–10:00am. All welcome, even non-members.
Committee Meeting	11:00am on 12 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026.
Deadline for Wrinkly Rag copy	5:00pm on 13 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026.
Wrinkly Rag publish	5:00pm on 15 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026.
Speakers' Circle	10:30am on 13 <sup>th</sup> of January – Darling Range Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade: "Behind the Lines"  10:30am on 10 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026 – Roxanne Ozanne from CommBank: "Staying Safe Online".

## Editorial – Ross Boughton

Wrinkly Rags are published by the Monday before the monthly general meeting based on information provided up to the previous Friday, being the day after the monthly committee meeting.

Please send articles of general interest (up to 2 A4 pages), photos, funnies, leads to [president@mundaringshed.org.au](mailto:president@mundaringshed.org.au) for inclusion in the Wrinkly Rag. Only **minimal** edits will be applied – **spelling and grammar errors** may slip through. 😊

Normal publishing rules apply – if you “borrow” material, please attribute it to the owner.

### Disclaimer

The information in this publication is of a general nature. The articles contained herein are not intended to provide a complete discussion on each subject and/or issues canvassed. Mundaring Community Men's Shed Inc does not accept any liability for any statements or any opinion, or for any errors or omissions contained.

## President's Patter – Ross Boughton



As a result of the May 2025 election, we received a grant from the WA Government Department of Communities to cover the walkway between buildings 4 (ablutions) and 5 (woodwork / modelbuilding/ plastics).

This cover will be opened at 10:am on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January by the Honourable Klasey Hirst MLC, who will be providing morning tea. Please attend if you can.

Another successful grant application was to AMSA as part of the National Shed Development Program (NDSP) Round 30. The money will provide for a Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and the training of 2 non-sparkies to use it to enlarge the pool of people who can test extension cords and machinery that plugs into power points. Well done to Secretary Ian Allison and Treasurer Russell Porter for submitting the grant and to John Winsor for getting the quotes for the PAT.



On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2026 we'll be having the first of our regular "last Saturday of the Month" open mornings with a \$5 bacon and egg toastie and tea, coffee or juice from 8-10am. This will be open to everybody, not just shedders, allowing us to show (and sell) what we make and let people know the full gamut of Shed activities. Please come along and support the Shed if you can; if you can help with catering all the better.

If you are experiencing health issues or just need somebody to chat with, remember there's always somebody at the Shed willing to lend an ear.



## New Members

New members in the last month: Please welcome John Collier (returned) and Hans Harland-Hue

## Around the Shed

After a break of 2 weeks activity is starting to pick-up in the workshops.

In building 6 (metalwork etc.) Peter M and Peter T are getting closer to building the new shed trailer. Ken Palmer is back on mechanicals & small engines and David Walker on bike repairs.

Last month the Motorcycle Men's Shed collected toys from around the state to deliver to charities for their Christmas Appeals. James Arthur made some lovely pull-along toys for the drive.

The "bin store and washdown area" is now complete, and already half of it has been "repurposed" as a wood store!

In building 5 (woodwork) there has been a lot of activity as evidenced by sawdust. I'll try to get some photos of projects for next month,

In the model-building room Trevor Holmwood has started on the lengthy task of reconnecting the wires that needed to be cut when the model railway was moved.



## Wrinkly Smiles – Max Hore



I think my wife has started to show the first signs of dementia... She said she can't remember what she ever saw in me!



## Trains and Grains – Craig Ward

Since the farmers in WA first grew crops they required the transport of their golden grain to the hungry townies. Horse drawn wagons were their only options until the Fremantle – Perth – Guildford railways opened. This allowed the cockies to easily bring their crops from York, Quairading, Toodyay and surrounding areas to the city. Once the government line was extended to Beverley, and side lines to Northam and Toodyay the movement of grain improved. Wheat was the main crop to supply the population with their daily bread, but barley was also required for their liquid tipple, while oats fed man's offside- their horses.

Until the 1940's all grain was bagged. This system had been in operation for thousands of years but was labour intensive. It therefore was not suitable for the modern eras of high volume of growth and customers. The farmers were struggling- barely making a living with the cost of labour and bags. Bulk handling had been tried overseas with poor results, but the Cooperative Bulk Handling (CBH) succeeded. They were so good that grain merchants from the USA, Canada and UK came to eyeball this system. (Three cheers for WA)!

From the beginning, rail was an important partner for the movement of all grain to the ports for export. When the WAGR was established in 1890 it enabled settlement along their lines. By the 1930's the wheat crops were mainly within 48 Km of the rails. But by the 1950's many lines were closed because of government rationalisation and road transport. However, lines were kept operating in the wheat belt, although only seasonally. There were many small sidings, sometimes only a bin, or in small settlements. These the CBH closed in the 1960's but enlarged other receiver sites.

So, what is this CBH thing? We see the logo on the trains here, at Northam, and elsewhere. It is a cooperative formed on the 5 April 1933, originally by wheat farmers who were not getting a fair deal from private grain merchants. During the depression period of the 1930's, when the wheat price was very low - almost zero, there many who thought that bulk handling was a waste of time and money. However, John Thomson, the General Manager of Wesfarmers, was a strong and vocal supporter. His determination was successful, and we now have bulk handling (another three cheers for a sandgroper)!

The Wheat Board of WA and Wesfarmers began the company with 100,000 shares at £1 each for the farmers to purchase. The farmers had equal voting rights, regardless of their production, and this modernised the handling of the wheat. Bulk transport had been tried here and overseas but with little success due to lack of suitable transport. For example, the grain ships of the day did not have suitable holds for loading or offloading loose cargo. Some farmers at first were also reluctant about bulk deliveries, not having suitable equipment, but once again a Northam lad, J. McManus, led the way with a delivery of 11,000 bushels to the local mill.

Also, there were no buildings for land storage. Later, through trial and error, CBH designed and constructed two effective styles of grain bins. The vertical and horizontal types with which we are familiar. Another major problem was insect infestation. But again, CBH employees developed a fumigation method using Malathion gas in sealed silos.

Next hurdle! How to get this stuff to the ports to send to the hungry citizens overseas. Up until 2010, the WAGR did all of the transport from the many sidings. With the CBH having the expertise of controlling the flow of grain it initiated a new business section. The equipment required was purchased by them but operated by a separate contractor. The plan was to increase rail transport from 50% to 70%. This would decrease haulage costs and increase delivery reliably.

In 2010 CBH purchased for \$175 million, 22 CBH class locomotives from the USA and 574 grain wagons

from China. The first operations contractor was WATCO AUSTRALIA who provided the total logistics to run and maintain the system, while CBH owned all the equipment. AURIZON, in 2022 carried on with a new contract. Since then, 500 extra wagons and locos have been purchased. The rail network, used by CBH, is sub leased from ARC INFRASTRUCTURE, which in turn leases 5,500 kilometres from this state. It is responsible for the maintenance of the line and the access to other users. Currently there is a feasibility study to return the rail lines to public ownership.

Western Australia exports around 90 per cent of its grain crop through bulk export to more than 30 countries across the world. Each year records were set with the grain received. In the 2025-year period 20.4 million tonnes (the third-largest crop on record) filled the bins, with 19.8 million tonnes most going overseas, all transported by locomotives. This created a surplus of \$208.3 million, driven by a large harvest and robust operational performance across the supply chain. On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the largest receiver of grain of 632,000 tonnes was delivered across the state network.

With as many as 197 grain collection points in the wheat belt, the company has four port facilities. These are in [Albany](#), [Geraldton](#), [Esperance](#) and [Kwinana](#), with all of the eleven different grains being transported by rail. All the ship loading equipment has been designed by CBH engineers.

CBH has a long history of designing, and in some cases constructing, their own requirements. Because of the rapid development of bulk handling, there were no other options anywhere in the world.



Grain Ship Loading at Kwinana.

Western Australia is a major exporter of grain through the world, mainly to SE Asia, Europe and the USA. Because of the disruption in the Ukraine, Australia supplies many of the European countries. CBH also is involved in aftermarket flour production with INTERFLOUR, a miller in Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Turkey. This has proved very successful and is one of their many future investments.

There are six grain types delivered by train to the four ports. Wheat is the largest tonnage, followed by barley, canola, oats, lupins and pulses. The main handling port is Kwinana, with Albany, Esperance and Geraldton. Albany and Esperance have a greater variety of the cooler region crops of pulses and canola, while Geraldton delivers mainly wheat and lupins.

**2024 Season GIWA February 2025 Western Australia Crop Production Estimates (tonnes)**

Port Zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Pulses	State Total
Kwinana	5,630,000	2,540,000	1,100,000	370,000	185,000	12,000	<b>9,837,000</b>
Albany	1,790,000	2,250,000	860,000	270,000	90,000	15,000	<b>5,275,000</b>
Esperance	1,830,000	980,000	640,000	20,000	40,000	40,000	<b>3,550,000</b>
Geraldton	3,200,000	120,000	270,000	5,000	165,000	1,000	<b>3,761,000</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,450,000</b>	<b>5,890,000</b>	<b>2,870,000</b>	<b>665,000</b>	<b>480,000</b>	<b>68,000</b>	<b>22,423,000</b>

*Note: the grain totals reported are for whole farm production. This includes on-farm seed and feed requirements as well as trade outside of the CBH network.*

The unique financial arrangements of CBH are unlike other organisations, because it is a co-operative owned and managed by the shareholder/farmers. The growers receive payments based on the estimated overseas price. A percentage of the farmer’s initial payments are deducted to cover handling and shipping. Once the grain is sold, the extra income is then paid to the grower or held as a credit by CBH (a debenture). From this profit, CBH invests in overseas and local/community organisations. For example, the CBH Grass Root Community Grants program supports community lead projects in grain-growing regions of WA, offering funding for events and infrastructure projects. Investments for the future are also important, such as rail facilities at Broomehill, Moora and Cranbrook, as well as major site expansions completed at Newdegate and Corrigin. CBH also have interests in overseas banks, hire purchase for farm machinery, property insurance etc.

One of our “shedders” is descended from an early settler in the wheat belt region: Jonah Parker, who, together with an engineer T.C. Hodgson, instigated a water supply at Toapin Rock in 1912. As well as supplying the local area, the water was used by the Commissioner of Railways for the rail service.

Together, the trains and grains have a strong future within this GREAT state!

Acknowledgements:

- “A Heritage Ingrained” by Cyril Ayris.
- “Life of the Land” Essence
- “The Golden Grain and the Silver Fleece” by Frances Eaton
- The CBH Web Page



Loading at Ravensthorpe.

