



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Australian Men's Shed Association New South Wales

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Budget Consultation Submission

I represent all the Men's Sheds, Women's Sheds and Community Sheds in the A.C.T. that are members of the Australian Men's Shed Association. A.C.T. sheds fall under the NSW State association framework for geographical convenience, hence the title, which may be misleading.

Earlier this year the ACT sheds benefited from a grant of \$10,000 to be shared amongst the sheds with a maximum of \$2,000 per shed. This was to undertake shed improvement projects that were "shovel ready" In addition there was a grant to run a gathering of all the sheds to raise awareness of mental health, as part of Mental Health Month. We were graced by the Governor General, who opened the event. It is strongly recommended that this type of support for infrastructure development and education continues.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the existence of sheds and their contribution to society has a significant impact on the health of the aging population, which reduces the workload on general health services.

In June 2014 Purdon Planning submitted a report into the feasibility of Men's Sheds within the ACT.

I would like to suggest that the budget make an allocation for an update on this report considering how much change has occurred in the meantime and how much is expected through the new planning policy and district strategies.

One of the conclusions was that the demographics at the time could support 49 shed. At this stage we only have 17. Therefore, I would propose a budget allocation to establish property to accommodate at least one new shed per year for the next 10 years.

I have identified 2 locations that could be considered.

1. Tuggeranong Homestead
2. Lanyon Homestead

While both of these sites are heritage listed, they need considerable support in maintenance and upkeep. Having a shed on site would provide access to a group of volunteers with skills to help. There would also be synergy between community wellbeing and heritage support.

The Australian Men's Shed Association is supported by the Federal Department of Health, because it has been seen to produce health benefits. More sheds in A.C.T. are needed to increase these benefits. Within the government, the movement is supported by all parties through a body called "Friends of Sheds". Within the ACT Government, the movement is also supported, but not with a similar collective group.

I thank the government, on behalf of the ACT sheds, for their past support and look forward to a good ongoing consideration in the budget.

Regards,

Jim Thornton