



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** **Annual General Meeting 14-08-2014**

The first year of Pottsville and District Men's Shed has been both very busy and very productive.

This whole project began with the conviction that Pottsville should have a men's shed to support the retired men of Pottsville and their families. The project was researched and discussed at length by the men of Beachside Church who agreed to support the idea both physically and financially.

Planning began in October 2013 with the production of posters which were placed in shops and at the Pottsville Neighbourhood Centre. The local newspaper also ran a story on the establishment of a shed in Pottsville. Support was sought from the local Federal and State representatives and the Tweed Shire Mayor, all of whom pledged their support for the project. We now believed that we had the backing that we needed to launch this project.

In November 2013 at a stall at the Pottsville markets, fliers were handed out announcing that a meeting would be held at the Pottsville Sports Club to discuss the establishment of a men's shed. I was pleasantly surprised to see thirty five men turn up to watch a presentation about the scope and benefits a men's shed. All who attended were asked to provide their names and contact details, indicating that they would be interested in becoming a member of the shed or would be willing to serve on a committee to establish one. Twenty one men indicated their willingness to be part of the steering committee. This was a result beyond my expectations.

I had no idea of the backgrounds of all of the volunteers so it was decided to establish seven subcommittees to take on different roles and report their findings back to the initial management committee. Each subcommittee was given an operating brief to guide the activities of the members. This management committee would be made up of the seven spokesmen of the subcommittees.

All new committee members attended a meeting in December and were asked to indicate which committee they believed that they could best contribute to with the skills they had. I was amazed at the enormous range of talent which that first meeting attracted and the willingness of all of the men to contribute. The initial subcommittees are: buildings and grounds, shed programs, shed venue, finance, promotion and membership, tools/equipment/materials and policy and procedures.

The policy and procedures, venue and tools/equipment/materials committees began work immediately.

Ron Haggart, Secretary and Policy and Procedures Committee spokesman began researching how to put into place all of the compliance requirements for the shed to be registered. This has been an ongoing process and with the assistance of the Australian Men's Shed Association, Pottsville and District Men's Shed (P&DMS) is now registered as a charity, has insurance in place, has a constitution, policies and procedures, etc. Ron has put in an enormous amount of time and effort to get P&DMS to where it is at this time. His contribution has not only been to keep us on

# POTTSVILLE and DISTRICT MEN'S SHED



track with compliance but has assisted with finding and researching possible shed sites, producing building plans, getting building quotes, keeping meeting minutes and generally keeping us all on track with the process of commencing the establishment of P&DMS. Thank you Ron.

Michael Ryan, Vice-President and Venue Committee spokesperson, began searching for possible sites for the shed and organised a meeting with the Tweed Shire Council in January 2014 to discuss the possibility of securing council or crown land. Mr Barry Longland, the Tweed Shire Council Mayor, was very supportive of our project and pledged the support of Council to establish a men's shed in Pottsville.

This was followed by a meeting with the State Representative, Mr Geoff Provest, who was also very supportive and offered assistance and advice on the securing of crown land for the shed. The Federal representative for Richmond, the Honourable Justine Elliott MP, is another of our parliamentary representative who has indicated her support for this project.

All of the effort that has been put into finding sites, drawing building plans and meeting with the community representatives, has narrowed the number of available sites down to a few, on which we can now focus all of our attention. We are hoping that in the next few months Michael and his team will have some good news from the positive leads that they have received. Thank you Michael for all of your efforts, which we all know will bring some good results.

Noel Mather, Tools/Equipment/Materials Committee spokesman is an ex-Industrial Arts Head of Department from St Laurence's College in Brisbane. The College is in the process of refitting their industrial arts workshops and Noel was able to secure tools, equipment and machinery from the wood and metal work rooms. The college students are also making some benches which they will be donating to the shed. We have also been given lathes, wood and metal, drop saws, a B-B-Q and the list goes on. Noel and some of the other men from the shed have been busy oiling and storing the tools in preparation to going into the shed.

When all the tools and equipment began to arrive, Shackell Transport allowed Noel to use one of their containers for storage. They also provided assistance to load the container with help from some of their employees using Shackell's plant and equipment. When it came time to move all of our gear to our own container, Shackells again assisted with transport and manpower. We greatly appreciate all of their assistance and look forward to working with them in the future. Thank you to Noel and the committee for all that has been achieved and what's planned for the future.

Tim Whitfield, Treasurer and Finance Committee spokesman, has been in control of the shed's finances from day one. A P&DMS account was opened and contained \$100 donations from members of the management committee to pay for some of the start-up costs and this was soon joined by membership fees from 24 new members. A greatly appreciated donation of \$500 dollars was provided by Beachside church which helped P&DMS pay the fees to allow us to become compliant with Government requirements. We remain with a positive bank balance and expect that to improve with future fundraising programs. All thanks to Tim for keeping our accounts in order.

The other committee member have all pitched in to help where required as it has been a team effort to get us this far.

We presently have twenty seven paid up members and a total of eighty people interested in joining this project.

## **Supporting the Community**

Over the past seven months, shed members have held meetings with a number of community organisations to both receive and offer our support and assistance.

The Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre has been very supportive with the process of distributing information about the shed to the community. The centre provided a site on a market day to hand out fliers advertising the shed, they have put shed information on their website, kept and distributed shed newsletters and done all that they could to assist with the establishment of P&DMS. Thank you to Angela and her team for helping us get this far.

The Pottsville Beach Sports Club and TriCare Hastings Point Retirement Community have both allowed us use their facilities on a number of occasions to conduct meetings without charge. Conducting our business without the support of these greatly appreciated organisations would have been very difficult and we look forward to their continued support, thank you.

Beachside church operates a community pantry every Wednesday morning at the Neighbourhood Centre with the assistance of Leighton Meredith, Peter Dowsett and other shed members. Our members are involved in collecting food supplies from local supermarkets and taking it to the pantry for distribution to those with pension and benefit cards. Without this support the community pantry was struggling to collect these provisions but now there is an adequate supply. Our members are using their time and resources to make these trips each Wednesday and their assistance is sincerely appreciated. Beachside Church has also supported the establishment of P&DMS with not only the donation mentioned but also by coordinating the donation of our first container which was provided by Hutchinson Builders. The Tweed Shire Council has generously allowed us to place this container at the back of the North Pottsville Holiday Park so that we can begin and store the generous amount of tools that we are presently collecting.

Hutchinson Builders not only donated the container but also transported it to our site and once there, cleaned and painted it for us. Containers similar to this cost about \$2500 so this was a substantial donation to get us started. This type of community support has helped us get to where we are. Thank you to Hutchinson Builders and Pastor Alan Pillay for all of their assistance.

Our members have had discussions with the Pottsville Preschool and Primary School and both have welcomed our offers of support to help repair, maintain and build resources which will benefit the children under their care. As we grow and establish our own facility we hope to take on projects of this type to support these and other community organisations such as the SES and Rural Fire brigade. All of these groups have been supportive and would like to see us establish our shed in

the proximity of their facilities.

## Future Planning

We have come a long way in a short time but still have a fair way to go.

At our initial meeting it was suggested and adopted that the men's shed must not be seen as a short term project but needs to have a vision for this and future generations of Pottsville and District men. To accomplish this we need sufficient land on which to establish and grow so that men's shed activities will not be restricted to just the physical activities of working with wood and metal. To this end, we believe that a minimum of a hectare is required for the shed's growth.

There is such a diverse range of skills within our present group of men that the shed/sheds need to be able to accommodate activities that will allow these skills to be passed on to upskill others. Art and craft activities, mechanics, home repairs and maintenance, computers, photography, fishing rod building and repairs, to name a few, are all possible with the right facilities. Our vision is only restricted by our own imagination and our determination to grow.

Over the next twelve months I hope that we will have many opportunities to enjoy a variety of social activities and get to know each other better. Our first social activity, a meal together at the Cabarita Sports Club was a great success and this will soon be followed up by a barefoot bowls event at the Pottsville Sports Club. I hope many of our members can make it as my bowls skills are terrible and I need someone to give me some pointers. If we can find a social convener we may see ourselves doing a range of things like going on organised trips both in and out of Australia, taking caravan excursions, beach fishing trips, etc. Again our ideas are only limited by our imagination.

Raising funds for buildings, resources and other activities is also part of our future planning. Michael and Ron are working on a grant application for the first stage of the project but, as substantial as this grant might be, more funds will be needed to complete stage one of the shed. A fund raising coordinator is desperately needed to help us source government, corporate and community support. We have plenty of ideas and willing helpers, we just need someone to make the ideas become reality.

It has been said that **'Life begins, when we reach the end of our comfort zone'**.

When we become too comfortable with our life, we may never reach the real potential of this or any other project. When I get to the end of this fantastic journey, I would like to look back at things achieved and those who I shared that journey with. I would like to think that there were many 'what if' moments and not too many 'if only' moments. The planning and development of our men's shed is definitely a 'what if' experience and I hope that we will all gain much from being an active participator in what we are doing.

2014/2015 should see the first stage of this project completed to the satisfaction of all who have been and will be involved. I look forward to seeing you at the opening.

**Allan May - President**

PO Box 161 Pottsville NSW 2489 [secretary@padms.org](mailto:secretary@padms.org) 0448 545 503