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'Don't fix what ain't broke': evaluating the effectiveness of a Men's Shed in inner-regional Australia

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Publication Details

A. Waling & D. L. Fildes, "'Don't fix what ain't broke': evaluating the effectiveness of a Men's Shed in inner-regional Australia", *Health and Social Care in the Community* 25 2 (2017) 758-768.

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Abstract

Men's Sheds and similar community programmes are known to encourage help-seeking behaviour and thus improve the health and well-being outcomes for the men who attend. This paper investigates this issue through a community needs assessment of a Men's Shed programme in inner-regional Australia. The immediate purpose of this research was to help direct future funding initiatives, and provide recommendations for potential changes and improvements to the programme. A community-level needs assessment is a systematic process used to determine and address gaps or needs between current and desired conditions within a particular community. We sought to explore how particular formats and structures of Men's Sheds programmes contribute to improve social and medical well-being, and whether there are key programme characteristics that could be emulated. In total, 22 surveys and 20 interviews were conducted with the men who participated in the programme. The report finds 95% of men are satisfied with the current running of the programme. While there were areas that have been identified for improvement, most men reported that they are content with the current format and would not like to see major changes to its implementation. The results of this research confirm the known benefits of these types of programmes. This paper provides other community programmes with some insight into the key success factors for running a Men's Shed.

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ABSTRACT: Men's sheds and similar community programmes are known to encourage help-seeking behaviour and thus improve the health and well-being outcomes for the men who attend. This paper investigates this issue through a community needs assessment of a men's shed programme in Inner-Regional Australia. The immediate purpose of this research was to help direct future funding initiatives, and provide recommendations for potential changes and improvements to the programme. A community level needs assessment (CLNA) is a systematic process used to determine and address gaps or needs between current and desired conditions within a particular community. We sought to explore how particular formats and structures of men's sheds programmes contribute to improve social and medical well-being, and whether there are key programme characteristics that could be emulated. In total, 22 surveys and 20 interviews were conducted with the men that participated in the programme. The report finds 95% of men are satisfied with the current running of the programme. While there were areas that have been identified for improvement, most men reported that they are content with the current format and would not like to see major changes to its implementation. The results of this research confirm the known benefits of these types of programmes. This paper provides other community programmes with some insight into the key success factors for running a men's shed.

What We Know

- Men's sheds have been found to support improved outcomes in the health and well-being of older men.
- Men's sheds facilitate the development of skills and social networks.
- Men's sheds provide safe places where men can come together and build solidarity.

What This Paper Adds

- An exploration of the unique structure and informal qualities of a men's shed that can be emulated for future programmes.
- The organic development of such programmes can engage with identified traits of successful shed typologies but do not need to be formally guided by them.
- Evaluations of such programmes should endeavour to include the men in the process to gain a better insight into what is working for them, and why.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers have found that men are less likely to seek help for physical and mental ailments than women (Banks 2001; Adis & Malhalik 2003; Malhalik *et al.* 2007; O'Brien *et al.* 2005). Pressured into subscribing to what Evans *et al.* (2011) and O'Brien *et al.* (2007) argue is a limited and constraining role of masculinity, men may be reluctant to seek help and support in fear of ridicule and scrutiny about their masculine identity. Evans *et al.* (2011) note that men in the later years of their life face additional complexities regarding this fear, where the circumstances of ageing such as increased likelihood to experience illness and deterioration challenges conventional notions of masculine able-bodiedness, stoicism, and strength. This makes it difficult to find practical ways to engage men in help-seeking behaviour, many of whom may already be in a vulnerable position.

However, men's sheds and similar programmes both in Australia and internationally, have been able to, in part, find ways to overcome these challenges. Kierans *et al.* (2007) highlight that the informal nature of men's community health programmes have been beneficial in addressing men's medical needs without contradicting their experience of masculinity. Furthermore, men's sheds and similar community programmes have been found to help men located in disadvantaged regions through reducing their potential to commit violence against their partners by allowing them a safe space to address their concerns, fears, and aggressive behaviours in productive ways (Laming 2000).

The research described in this paper concerns a Men's Shed programme in Inner-Regional Australia, which is an initiative to provide retired and/or unemployed men with the opportunity to develop skills, reduce social isolation and increase their self-esteem. Inner-Regional is defined as "those areas where geographic distance imposes some restriction

upon accessibility to the widest range of goods, services and opportunities for social interaction” (ABS, 2004). First established in 2005, the programme was constructed around a social inclusion and community engagement model (Fildes *et al.* 2010). The Shed has undergone a previous evaluation that highlighted overall improvements to the men’s well-being, increased levels of self-esteem, a reduction in suicidal tendencies and reduced feelings of loneliness and depression (Fildes *et al.* 2010). Rather than replicate the research methodology of the previous evaluation, this study adopts a community level needs assessment in order to address current deficits in the shed and establish how the shed could be improved operationally. Most men who attend this shed are retired, retrenched, unemployed or on a disability pension, with ages ranging from 40 to 75. Many come from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse CALD Backgrounds (CALD) including Chilean, Turkish and Portuguese: some speak English as a second language, while others have little or no fluency in English. Most men have trade and labour experience, though some have also worked in government positions. Some have been diagnosed with mental health disabilities, others have a history of physical ailments such as prostate cancer, and some have both. All of them reside in low SES suburbs in inner-regional Australia and anywhere from 4 to 10 men attend the shed each day.

This paper discusses the results from the needs assessment. While much has been written concerning men’s sheds more broadly in their ability to tackle isolation, suicide prevention, disease prevention, and depression among older men who are no longer employed in the workforce (Cordier & Wilson 2013, 2014; Cordier *et al.* 2015), little has been said apart from Wilson *et al.*, (2015), and Hays and Williamson (2007), as to how particular formats and

structures of men's sheds programmes contribute to improve social and medical well-being, and whether there are key programme characteristics that could be emulated.

Literature Review

Originating in Australia in the mid-1990s, men's sheds have provided a communal space for older men to meet, socialise, learn new skills, and take part in practical activities with other men (Golding 2015). They have also engaged men in informal adult learning activities, provided health-related information and referred men onto relevant services to promote their health and well-being (Milligan *et al.* 2015). Men's sheds offer a non-threatening space for men to engage with other men (Milligan *et al.* 2015). In Australia, there are approximately 1,000 men's sheds with over 50,000 men attending on a regular basis (Hansji *et al.* 2015). The movement is also spreading in the UK, New Zealand, and Ireland (Carragher 2013; Carragher & Golding 2015). The growth in the men's shed movement has seen an increase in the published research espousing the positive effects of men's sheds on health and well-being (see Wilson & Cordier, 2013).

Themes that have resulted from such research include decreases in social isolation (Fildes *et al.* 2010); increased community connection (Ballinger *et al.* 2009; Hansji 2015; Ormsby *et al.* 2010); increase in positive mental and physical health (Golding *et al.* 2007; Golding 2015; Morgan *et al.* 2007; Wilson *et al.* 2013; Culph *et al.* 2015); respite from family responsibilities (Moylan *et al.* 2015); increased peer-bonding (Carragher 2013; Carragher & Golding 2015); and increased quality of life (QoL) (Ford *et al.* 2015). Recent literature has

also found that men who attend sheds are able to better manage difficult life transitions (Carragher 2013; Carragher & Golding, 2015).

In 2007, Hayes and Williamson proposed a typology of five shed types according to their effectiveness in supporting men. **[Insert Table 1]** More recently, Wilson *et al.* (2015) further developed this typology based on primary function and shed philosophy following detailed analysis of the International Men's Shed Survey, (See **Table 1**). The authors demonstrate that such classifications can provide "a way of better classifying Men's Sheds so as to more effectively frame and deliver health messages to the different groups of men who frequent different types of sheds" (Wilson *et al.*, 2015, p.140).

In thinking about programme effectiveness regarding this inner-regional men's shed in improving men's health and social well-being, we ask, what is its structure and how is it managed? In addressing this question we cast light on how a men's shed fits within the revised shed typology as developed by Wilson *et al.*, (2015).

Methods

This needs assessment received no funding and was conducted pro-bono by two researchers. It was designed to answer the following questions: 1), what do the men who attend the shed want from the project, 2), to identify the effectiveness of the programme in relation to the men's health and social well-being, and 3), what can be done to keep the programme running effectively? To answer these questions, this research employed a *community level needs assessment* (CLNA); a systematic process used to determine and address gaps or needs between current and desired conditions within a particular

community (Soriano 2012; Stoecker 2005). This particular model utilised what Gupta *et al.* (2007) term a *community needs analysis*: the practice of identifying issues, material problems, and advantages, where those qualities are taken into consideration when looking for possible solutions. This is achieved through a SWOT framework, the process of identifying strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) of, and potential threats (T) to, the programme (Phillips & Pittman, 2008). We asked:

- 1) What is currently working in the programme?
- 2) What needs attention?
- 3) What are some opportunities we have not yet thought of?
- 4) What are some pressing threats to the programme's current running?

A mixed methodology approach was used which included a small-scale survey and interviews/focus groups. Interviews and surveys were completed by men who had attended on the days of distribution and/or occurrence of interviews.

The NSW Health Human Research Ethics Committee (HHREC) guidelines stipulate that quality improvement exercises may be excluded from requiring a formal ethics review if they meet certain eligibility criteria (NSW HHREC 2013). This project was classified as a quality improvement exercise, as its primary focus was to improve the health and social services provided for older men who attend the Men's Shed. The research sought advice from the NSW HHREC to ensure ethics compliancy. In doing this, this project was assessed against an ethics checklist provided by the NSW HHREC, where "If the checklist identifies no 'ethical risks', and only intention to publish, then ethical review is not warranted" (NSW HHREC 2013: 7). This project only ticked one of the possible sixteen criteria for ethical risks (contact with participants), however, it was deemed low risk, and not required to undergo a

formal ethics review (see NSW HREC 2013, Appendix A & B for a review of the process). Participants were recruited voluntarily and provided both verbal and written consent. All identifying information has been de-identified, and all participants' names remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

The Social Survey

The survey's purpose was three-fold. First, to measure how the men feel about the programme in relation to their social and well-being outcomes to-date. Second, to identify possible improvement to the shed's management, and third, to rate the men's overall satisfaction with the programme. The survey was comprised of 22 questions, was completed by 22 men, and underwent substantial revisions to ensure English language comprehension and completion suitability. The survey was divided into three parts with Part A and C containing 5 point Likert-type scale questions (Clason & Dormody 1994) and Part B as text responses. Survey topics included satisfaction with overall facilities and programme operation, personal experience with the programme, mental health issues and happiness, and text responses to questions regarding potential changes and improvements to the shed's operation. Surveys were distributed in October, 2014. Hard copies were made available during the men's allocated programme day, with facilitators aiding in question translation for those lacking fluency with English (See Appendix A: Survey Tool). All men responded to the Likert-type scale questions in Part A and Part C, but not all of the men chose to answer the text response questions in Part B and Part C (See Appendix B: Annotated Questionnaire). Data from the surveys were analysed using community needs analysis (Gupta *et al.* 2007).

The Interviews and Focus Groups

Semi-structured voluntary interviews were conducted with 20 men to build on their responses from the surveys. Men who participated had attended the shed on the days the research team was available. As such, not all men who attend the shed participated in the interviews or surveys. **[Insert Table 2 Here]. Table 2** highlights the demographic characteristics of the men who participated. The semi-structured interview format allowed for organic conversation to develop (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Interviews were conducted both individually and in small group settings, and lasted approximately forty minutes to an hour each. Men who were proficient with their English language speaking were interviewed individually, while those who struggled or did not speak English were interviewed in small groups to allow some men to translate for others. In some cases the facilitator aided in the translation efforts. As interviewees were not comfortable with being audio recorded, the researchers employed a 'manual recording approach,' a process of recording interviews that utilised thorough note-taking as opposed to audio recording (Lee, 2004; Clifford & Gough, 2004). This note taking includes describing not only conversation, but the dynamics of the interview, questions asked of both the interviewer and the interviewee(s), and remarks of the interviewer (Lee, 2004). During this study, detailed notes were taken during and after the event of each interview, and transcribed the same day. Detailed summaries of responses were recorded from time to time throughout interviews, alongside direct quotations where appropriate (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011), a method often used in social evaluation research when participants decline requests to tape-record interviews (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011; e.g. Koh *et al.*, 2004). Most of the larger quotes presented in this report are

participants' paraphrased comments taken directly from the interview transcripts (and are not verbatim). While we recognise the limitations of such methods (see Clifford & Gough, 2004), we also recognise the importance of working within the comfort zone of our participants. As such, this method was deemed most appropriate. Once all write-ups were completed, the notes were examined to code and categorise recurring themes utilising Gupta *et al.* (2007)'s approach to community needs analysis. These themes were then compared to the survey data.

Results

Positive health and well-being outcomes continue to be shown by the men who participate in the shed programme. We have summarised these in three tables and will be referring to them throughout this paper **[Insert Table 3 Here]**. **Table 3** highlights the results from Part A of the survey which sought to measure outcomes regarding emotional health and well-being. **[Insert Table 4 here]**. **Table 4** illustrates select qualitative responses concerning improvements from Part B and Part C of the survey. **[Insert Table 5 here]**. **Table 5** represents results from Part C of the survey that examined overall satisfaction. The results of this study have been organised thematically, in which the data from both the survey and the interviews are intertwined throughout. Themes include overall satisfaction, health and recovery, socialisation and support, confidence, motivation, and achievement, and flexibility in accessing and using the space.

Overall Satisfaction

Overall, the men are satisfied with the programme, with 59% stating that programme delivery is above average and/or excellent (**Table 5, C1**). The current running of the programme received much support, with 73% satisfied with its format, while 91% are satisfied and/or strongly satisfied with the skills they have learned from the programme (**Table 5, C4, C5**). However, the ratings for current facilities were much lower, where only 37% stated that the facilities were above average (**Table 5, C2**).

Health and Recovery

Our results found that most of the men made a conscious effort to attend the shed despite the lack of attendance obligations. When the men were asked whether they felt happy and supported when they leave the shed, 64% agreed and 36% strongly agreed with this statement (**Table 3, A1**). Some men cited that when they left the shed, they had more energy to utilise at home. Many found the space energising as opposed to draining, where the level of energy they put into their work, they get in return (**Table 4, C7**).

Most men exclaimed feelings of happiness as a result of attending the shed and on the whole, felt a greater sense of well-being (**Table 4, C7**). Some narrated personal stories of recovery, such as Ryan, who felt the shed was a space where he could build strength and happiness after enduring treatment for prostate cancer. Feeling frustrated, depressed, and isolated with having to leave his job due to his illness, the Men's Shed offered him an imitation of the work he used to do. Others recounted similar stories regarding recovery, or have found that the Men's Shed provided a space where they can continue to exercise both physical and mental health in ways that were not demanding of them.

For some, the programme has improved relationships with loved ones at home. Some indicated that relationships with their family have improved since they began attending the shed. As one recalled, the arguments he had with his wife have decreased, and he has begun to develop a stronger relationship with his father:

Brian: I love my wife. We used to fight a lot, it wasn't nice. But now it's different. I'm happy to see her when I get home, and she's happy to see me. We still argue, but it's not the same. I feel better when I come here and it's helped at home.

Brian also cited decreases in feelings of aggression and violence and stated that he felt more balanced and in control of these emotions. For Brian, the Men's Shed has provided a positive and productive outlet in reducing aggressive emotions without him feeling that his masculine self is being compromised.

Socialisation and Support

Social interaction was a concurrent theme across all the men who attend the Men's Shed as a major reason for their engagement, including those who had access to similar equipment to complete projects at home. Most claimed that the Men's Shed is a space where they can help each other out and feel supported. Some cited that while there may be barriers in relation to culture and language, solidarity was important as the men had similar experiences, such as sick family members or their own illnesses, retrenchment and disability, and the everyday demands of their lives. When asked about their level of loneliness after attending a session, 50% agreed that they felt less lonely, and 50% strongly agreed with this statement (**Table 3, A4**). One of the major reasons the men attend the shed is to socialise with other men who have had similar experiences in relation to their work, family, and personal problems (**Table 4, C7**).

Many felt that the programme enabled them to make and maintain friendships, with 45% agreeing and 50% strongly agreeing with this statement (**Table 3, A8**). Some who struggle with socialising came to the shed to improve these skills, and have found that they are less inclined to feel anxious about engaging in social interaction. When asked about whether the Men's Shed is a space in which their voices and needs can be heard by their fellow peers, 64% agreed and 27% strongly agreed with this statement (**Table 3, A9**). The men recounted stories about personal trauma and how coming to the shed enabled them to connect with other men undergoing similar experiences. As one man recalled, his wife was in hospital in intensive care. Coming to the shed enabled him to find solidarity with other men who have had significant others that have either passed away or are unwell. Others felt the shed provided a supportive space for socialising (**Table 4, B5**):

Interviewer: Why do you like coming here?

George: It's a playgroup for old blokes. And that's why it works.

A few cited that mistakes on their wood-working projects and knowing that someone with more experience would be able to help them without criticism or judgment was also quite favourable:

Marcus: I like it here because if you make a mistake with your work, someone will help you fix it.

Interviewer: You don't feel like you will be judged or get into trouble?

Marcus: No, not at all

Interviewer: Do you ever feel worried about making a mistake?

Jeremy: No, no problems here...can just hide it in the scrap wood *laughs*

Marcus also cited difficulty in socialising with other men, due to a learning disability resulting from a head injury that has left him feeling anxious and self-conscious about his abilities. For him, the Men's Shed is a space where he can develop his wood-working skills and learn from the more experienced men who have worked in trades and manual labour at a pace that is manageable for him. Jeremy indicates an ease around the possibility of making mistakes through joking about placing discarded projects into the scrap wood pile. In both cases, Marcus and Jeremy highlight that errors aid in the learning process, and encouragement from their peers means that men who do make mistakes with their projects are not subjected to feelings of shame or guilt.

Confidence, Motivation and Achievement.

Most men indicated higher levels of confidence when attending the shed, many of whom exclaiming that there were dramatic improvements to their feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. When asked about whether their self-esteem has improved due to attending the Men's Shed, 45% agreed and 55% strongly agreed with this statement **(Table 3, A5)**. Furthermore, 73% agreed and 27% strongly agreed with the statement that the Men's Shed has helped them build confidence in their skills **(Table 3, A6)**. Many cited increased feelings of self-worth when attending the shed and that while they were retired, retrenched or on disability pensions, their lives still had purpose and meaning **(Table 3, C7)**:

Interviewer: Why do you like coming to the Men's Shed?

Brian: I feel important when I come here.

Brian highlights that for him, the Men's Shed is a space where he feels valued. It enables him to continue to build his self-esteem in productive and helpful ways. The programme also allows for those who might be feeling a sense of guilt throughout their retirement the ability to overcome this. Some of the participants felt guilty about no longer providing income for the household, the breadwinning now the responsibility of their wives:

James: Now that I'm not working, I feel guilty because my wife still works. Which is fine-I mean, I'm retired and have worked for 50 years, so I've done my dues. But I still feel guilty about not working. Coming here allows me to pretend that I'm working, and many of the projects I complete I can do for the house.

As James highlights, the shed has lessened his feelings of guilt and shame regarding his own reconciliation of masculinity and breadwinning. While many could no longer work, or were now retired, they felt uneasy about their lack of contribution to the household income. The shed then provides a space where they feel that they are working and contributing even though they do not earn a wage.

For many, motivation and achievement were high on their list of positive outcomes from attending the programme:

Interviewer: If you have wood-working equipment at home, why do you come to the shed?

Dylan: It keeps me motivated, I could never be self-employed but completing personal projects at the Shed means I get them done because I have facilitators that supervise me. They don't tell me what to do, but just having them there means I get my work done. It's a mental thing.

Dylan, a retired carpenter highlights that he has access to wood working equipment at home, but finds working at the shed preferable. Not only is it a space for him to socialise with other men, it is also a space where he feels that the facilitators take on a faux role of

work-place supervision, allowing him to complete projects under a guise of work. When asked if the Men's Shed has helped them find direction in life 73% agreed and 14% strongly agreed with this statement (**Table 3, A7**). Many also enjoy the material outcomes of their work:

Eric: I used to work in social services, and it was rewarding, but I was missing this sense of fulfilment. Doing projects here, I like to take a step back and say, 'I did that.' I can see the material outcome. You can't see that when you work with just people.

Eric notes that for him, he gains a sense of fulfilment when completing projects at the shed. For him, the ability to say "I did that" and appreciate the time and effort that goes into constructing projects has helped improve his self-esteem and confidence.

Flexibility in Accessing and Using the Space

Flexibility with attendance and programme structure was a key defining feature of this particular shed. The obligation to attend is absent, and the lack of expectation to put in a particular number of hours per day or week is appealing to these men (**Table 4, B5**). While men are placed in particular groups based on cultural heritage and language spoken, a few have transcended their placement to attend on more than one day per week. For those who do, they enjoy mixing with different cultural groups (**Table 4, B5**). For those who stick with their allocated day, they find comfort in working with men who speak the same language and have similar cultural backgrounds. The men felt that the shed in its current format supports their unique needs and limitations. As each man has a varying level of energy, ability and time, the limited structure allows for them to use the shed in a way that suits them best.

Flexibility was also maintained through the lack of focus on a social enterprise model, a monetary gain method that some not-for-profits utilise to help cover operational costs and maintain sustainable funding (Dart, 2004). However, some men highlighted that the revenue orientated mindset of some of the larger Men's Sheds was off-putting (**Table 4, B5**). They felt that these sheds were less relaxed in their environment with increased pressure to ensure spots are filled to make the most out of the programme financially.

Discussion

These results highlight three significant points concerning this particular shed and the men who attend. First, was the ability to maintain a high level of (masculine) independence as the disadvantages of ageing requires them to seek support in other areas of their lives. Smith *et al.* (2007) note in their study of older men in Adelaide ageing 'successfully' is marked by maintaining a level of independence. In the context of men, this can also become associated with maintaining a culturally acknowledgeable masculine identity (Smith *et al.* 2007; O'Brien *et al.* 2005). While Smith *et al.* (2007) demonstrate that this need to maintain a masculine independence can have harmful implications for men's help-seeking, they also highlight the significance that sustaining a level of independence has on how older men negotiate ageing while trying to adhere to traditional models of masculinity. This is achieved through the shed's ability to offer the men flexible choices in how they use the space while simultaneously encouraging them to both engage with traditional models of masculinity through their focus on craftsmanship, and in help-seeking with the shed's emphasis on improving health and well-being.

The second, was the support of men's help-seeking and engaging in emotional support. Studies into men's reluctance for help-seeking and emotional support (the result of feeling

the need to maintain a traditional stoic masculine identity) have found that men's groups facilitate the development of emotional bonds and platonic intimacy between men (Singleton 2003; Garfield 2010; Ribeiro *et al.* 2007). Men who engage with men's groups are able to develop close friendships with other men, and utilise those skills in maintaining intimate relationships with their partners and other family members (Singleton, 2003; Garfield 2010; Ribeiro *et al.* 2007). This is perhaps crucial to the success of this shed, as here, the men are not expected to engage with such social hierarchy frameworks, and instead work within a unified space of solidarity, regardless of experience or role (Milligan *et al.* 2015).

The third was the use of the shed as a community gathering space, complete with requests for longer operating hours that attributed to the participants' perceptions that more hours and access will have increased benefits for their overall well-being. Community spaces have been heralded as essential components in the improvement of the lives of the disadvantaged. Multiple studies focussing on various minority groups have found that the establishment of community initiatives have contributed to an increase in the well-being of the target population (Raphael *et al.* 2001; Warin *et al.* 2000). Recently, prominence has begun to be placed on examining the different pathways to accessing these resources and their impact on well-being (Cattell *et al.* 2008; Conradson 2003). For example, Conradson (2003) highlights the significance of establishing informal and safe community spaces (such as men's sheds). These spaces encourage everyday encounters between individuals that in turn can facilitate or promote health and well-being.

This framework of care is the basis for how this men's shed operates. Through establishing an informal, unstructured and safe space, the men who participate in the programme are

able to engage in this form of care that, as the results have indicated, have led to increases in their health and social well-being. It is not as surprising then, that most were adamant that increased operating hours were vital to the continued programme success. They have made the links between socialising with men in similar situations, and positive improvements in their well-being.

What our research also finds is that this particular shed is both utilitarian and social in its philosophy, it provides both a useful place for men to gather to participate in practical activities, and also provides a place for men to gather together and socialise. According to the revised typology provided by Wilson and Cordier (2015), our shed falls into the 'mixed' category of men's sheds representing a combination of providing practical educational opportunities to its participants as well as acting as a community resource. This has occurred in an organic way through direct involvement of the men, it has not been carefully planned by program managers.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation to this study concerns the interview data collection. There was a language barrier between the researcher and the participants. While this barrier was mediated through the use of the shed facilitators, they do not have any credentials and experience in translation. As such, we acknowledge that poorly translated concepts or phrases could have changed what themes emerged from the analysis of the data. The researchers also had to rely on manually recording the interviews rather than use audio-recording as the men felt uncomfortable with the latter method. Again, whilst we

acknowledge the limitations of this method, we also recognise the importance of working within the comfort zones of the participants. As this was a non-experimental study, future research might consider standardised measures of experiences like “loneliness”, such as the de Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburgh, 2006) and the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996).

Conclusion

Using a community needs analysis approach and conducting 22 surveys and 20 interviews with CALD men, this inner regional Australia Men’s Shed has been found to continue to deliver positive health and well-being outcomes for its participants. Instead of changing the programme format, the men would benefit from an expansion that includes increased operating hours, and better facilities. The research implications suggest that 1), informally structured programmes encourage men’s engagement with sheds, leading to continued positive outcomes; 2) the organic development of such programmes can engage with identified traits of successful shed typologies but do not need to be formally guided by them, and 3), that reviews and evaluations of such programmes should endeavour to include the men in the evaluation process to gain a better insight as to what is effectively working for them, and why.

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[PROGRAMME NAME] SURVEY

[ORGANISATION] would like to know what they can do to continue to provide services that meet your current needs, and what improvements can be made to the [PROGRAMME NAME]. In order to do this, we would like to ask you some questions about your experiences, and what you would like to see improved.

This survey is divided into three short sections:

- 1) Effectiveness of the Programme
- 2) Improvements and Changes to the Programme
- 3) Overall Rating and Satisfaction

This survey should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. There are 21 questions in total. Please try and answer each one. Directions are available in each section.

Your responses are voluntary and will remain confidential. All responses will be compiled together and analysed as a group. The results from this survey will be used to help develop focus group questions, and determine the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for development for the [PROGRAMME NAME].

This survey has approval from the [ORGANISATION NAME] committee.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [CONTACT PERSON] on the below contact details.

Thank you,

[CONTACT DETAILS]

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME

The following questions relate to your experiences of participating in the [Programme name]. We want to know whether how you feel as a person has changed as a result of your involvement in the shed. Please tell us whether you strongly disagree, disagree, are neutral, agree or strongly agree with the following statements:

There are no right or wrong answers. Please circle your choice.

1) After a session at the [shed] do you feel happy and supported?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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2) The [shed] encourages you to try new things.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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3) The [shed] encourages you to become more involved in community projects outside of the Men's Shed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
--------------------------	-----------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------

4) I feel less lonely after attending the [shed].

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
--------------------------	-----------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------

5) My self-esteem has improved as a result of participating in the [shed].

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
--------------------------	-----------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------

6) The [shed] has helped you build confidence in your abilities, and learn new and helpful skills.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
--------------------------	-----------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------

7) The [shed] has helped find direction in your life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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8) The [shed] has helped you develop and maintain friendships.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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9) The [shed] is a space where you can discuss your needs and have your voice heard amongst friends.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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10) The [shed] has helped you develop your problem solving, communication, leadership and teamwork skills.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
--------------------------	-----------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------

2. IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME

[Programme Name] would like to know what you enjoy about the Programme and what changes you think could be made.

Please fill in the blank for each question.

1) If you could improve on something in the [shed], what would it be?

2) If you could introduce something new to the [shed], what would it be?

3) If you could pick something that you would like to see more of in the [shed], what would it be?

4) If you could pick something that you would like to less of in the [shed], what would it be?

5) What is something you would like to stay the same in the [shed]?

3. OVERALL RATING AND SATISFACTION

The [Programme name] would like to know how you would rate your overall experience with their Programme and your level of satisfaction. Please answer the following questions using the scales provided.

1) How would you rate the [shed] in meeting your needs with its current range of Programmes and services?

Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
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2) How would you rate the current facilities?

Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
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3) Do you find the [shed] easy to get to?

Yes	No
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Comments:

4) How satisfied are you with the skills you have learned from the [shed]?

Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Strongly Dissatisfied
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5) How satisfied are you with how the [shed] is currently run?

Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Strongly Dissatisfied
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6) How satisfied are you with your overall experience in the [shed]?

Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Strongly Dissatisfied
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Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience regarding the [shed] ?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BOX

THANK YOU!

On behalf of the [ORGANISATION], we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in filling out this survey. If you are interested, focus groups will be running in the [MONTH, YEAR]. Please get involved if you can, we highly value your input!

Appendix A: Annotated Questionnaire

Part A: Effectiveness of the Programme

A1. After a session at the [shed] do you feel happy and supported?

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	0%	0
Agree	64%	14
Strongly agree	36%	8
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A2. The [shed] encourages you to try new things.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	5%	1
Agree	36%	8
Strongly agree	59%	13
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A3. The [shed] encourages you to become more involved in community projects outside of the Men's Shed.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	9%	2
Agree	68%	15
Strongly agree	23%	5
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A4. I feel less lonely after attending the [shed]

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	0%	0
Agree	50%	11
Strongly agree	50%	11
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A5. My self-esteem has improved as a result of participating in the [shed]

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	0%	0
Agree	45%	10
Strongly agree	55%	12
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A6. The [shed] has helped you build confidence in your abilities, and learn new and helpful skills.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	0%	0
Agree	73%	16
Strongly agree	27%	6
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A7. The [shed] has helped find direction in your life.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	14%	3
Agree	73%	16
Strongly agree	14%	3
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this option:</i>		0

A8. The [shed] has helped you develop and maintain friendships.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	5%	1
Agree	45%	10
Strongly agree	50%	11
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this option:</i>		0

A9. The [shed] is a space where you can discuss your needs and have your voice heard amongst friends.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	9%	2
Agree	64%	14
Strongly agree	27%	6
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

A10. The [shed] has helped you develop your problem solving, communication, leadership and teamwork skills.

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly disagree	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Neutral	14%	3
Agree	77%	17
Strongly agree	9%	2
<i>Number of respondents:</i>		22
<i>Number of respondents who skipped this question:</i>		0

Part B: Improvements to the Programme

B1. If you could improve on something in the [shed], what would it be?

Text answer

1. Water available in the lunch room
2. Opening during holidays. Longer opening times - 4 hours
3. Longer hours/hrs in the day for more weeks/year, especially over the christmas break when stress levels increase
4. New projects for the community
5. Men's health would improve she being operated more days/ increased hours
6. Longer days and more hours
7. Hours more meaningful for retired men who live alone and are in need of more interaction with other people
8. Open more days and longer hours
9. Water in the kitchen
10. Install dust suction equipment in the shed
11. Running water and electricity in the kitchen
12. More days open or more hours
13. Things to improve mental health
14. Kitchen needs lots of improvements (electrical)
15. Power points in the kitchen, urgently tap water needed

Number of respondents: 15

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 7

Text answer

1. English classes
2. Spray painting
3. Plant visits, leatherwork and upholstery
4. Maintenance for local school (furniture)
5. Saw dust extractors

6. Access to more materials and equipment from deceased estates and garage cleanups.
7. Gardening projects
8. New activities
9. School holiday time - Men's Shed to be open at least 60% of the time
10. Learning more about electricity
11. Hci staff to have meeting twice a year with all groups

Number of respondents: 11

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 11

B2. If you could introduce something new to the [shed], what would it be?

B3. If you could pick something that you would like to see more of in the [shed], what would it be?

Text answer

1. Specific projects
2. Timber milling. More hand tools, taps and dies, gouges, gauges
3. More donations of timber and hardware.
4. More open time at the shed
5. More mental health professional visits
6. Upholstery and leather work
7. More, newer equipment
8. Yes - less useless equipment
9. At least twice a year all different groups to get together with management
10. More equipment
11. More HCI support regarding bbq groups

Number of respondents: 11

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 11

B4. If you could pick something that you would like to less of in the [shed], what would it be?

Text answer

1. Less useless equipment in the shed
2. Budget constraints
3. Less of old machinery
4. Nothing
5. ?
6. Less useless equipment in the men's shed

Number of respondents: 6

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 16

B5. What is something you would like to stay the same in the [shed]?

Text answer

1. Shed open to all ages and remain open in the future
2. Mainly bbq's
3. No fees or costs
4. The way we work as a team.
5. The way it is run at the moment and not like other sheds - for profit.
6. No rigid hours or attendance rules
7. Set up where all work in harmony without any pressure to work to a deadline
8. To have the shed open for all ages.
9. Friendship and freedom of different little projects of each man
10. Keep working in the same format and have place open for more workers to enjoy the facilities at Men's Shed
11. Attending the shed with no costs per visit

Number of respondents: 11

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 11

Part C: Overall Rating of the Programme

C1. How would you rate the [shed] in meeting your needs with its current range of Programmes and services?

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Poor	0%	0
Below average	5%	1
Average	36%	8
Above average	36%	8
Excellent	23%	5

Number of respondents: 22

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 0

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Poor	14%	3
Below average	9%	2
Average	41%	9
Above average	32%	7
Excellent	5%	1

Number of respondents: 22

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 0

C2. How would you rate the current facilities?

C3. Do you find the [shed] easy to get to?

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Yes	73%	16
No	27%	6

Number of respondents: 22

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 0

Comments (optional)

1. Plenty of parking, close to bus and train stops.
2. And well managed
3. The shed itself -no, but the complex building - yes. Shed needs more signage.
4. Street direction signage

Number of respondents: 4

Number of respondents who skipped this option: 18

C4. How satisfied are you with the skills you have learned from the [shed]?

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly satisfied	23%	5
Satisfied	68%	15
Neutral	9%	2
Dissatisfied	0%	0
Strongly dissatisfied	0%	0

Number of respondents: 22

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 0

C5. How satisfied are you with how the [shed] is currently run?

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly satisfied	14%	3
Satisfied	59%	13
Neutral	14%	3
Dissatisfied	14%	3
Strongly dissatisfied	0%	0

Number of respondents: 22

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 0

C6. How satisfied are you with your overall experience in the [shed]?

Likert scale	% of respondents	# of respondents
Strongly satisfied	27%	6
Satisfied	68%	15
Neutral	4%	1
Dissatisfied	0%	0
Strongly dissatisfied	0%	0

Number of respondents: 22

Number of respondents who skipped this question: 0

C7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience regarding the [shed]?

Comments (optional)

1. Sharing skills, stories and knowledge
2. I am happy , and a better person
3. More operating days and more hours
4. Look forward to coming to Men's Shed. Gets me out of the house. Learn more skills
5. I like coming and meeting new friends and learning new skills
6. Stay the same as it always was. I like socialising as well as learning new things and use of different equipment
7. I would like to spend more time at the shed all year round
8. I am happy with the Men's Shed. I am keeping myself busy. I am learning lots of things.
9. Thank you healthy cities men project. As a community volunteer I was never enthusiastic about the Men's Shed. I came to lead some of my country people but, now I like it very much. It takes me out of my bubble, and energise me to battle with the voluntary work.
10. Sense of achievement at the end of days work & experiencing, and gaining extra energy levels both mentally and physically at work or at home.
11. More hours
12. Visits from hci management
13. The experience tells us that this shed is a place to be operating for many years to come.
14. Men's Shed do good for the men

Number of respondents: 14

Number of respondents who skipped this option: 8