



Australian Men's Shed Association

New South Wales

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

ZONE 8 - NEWSLETTER - February 2017

Hello Shedders

Welcome to the first Zone Newsletter for 2017.

After a much needed break from Men's Sheds administrative matters over January I think I'm ready for the year ahead, well I hope I am because there are a number of dark clouds swirling around that will mean some anxious moments until issues are resolved.

The matters I refer to relate to a couple of other states, Western Australia especially, who want to be the main provider to all things sheds in their state and to have AMSA as a back up in providing support when requested. They have even written a new set of By-Laws in part of which they state -

"State Association Member is the sole official representative of, and controlling authority for, Men's Sheds in a State"

and

"State Associations and AMSA will act in good faith to coordinate all government grants, sponsorship and partnership arrangements and other funding agreements in a manner that will enhance the quality and reputation for the collective and mutual benefit of the Members and the Australia Men's Shed movement".

These 2 statements taken from the current AMSA Membership By-Laws which were approved by the Board in the second half of 2016, indicate that if supported would see each state 'fighting' each other for government funds and would move AMSA to the side as a bit player in the Men's Shed Movement.

In 2007 when AMSA was in its infancy it participated in the development of the National Male Health Policy and from this program the Federal Government provided funding based on a recommendation from the [Senate Committee on Male Health \(2009\)](#) for the Governments consideration in relation to Mens Sheds.

The AMSA original submission which preceded this grant was based on a Centralised or Unified approach to service delivery, this is also supported well

within the other documents, nowhere is there mention of a Federated body with States providing service delivery that is not supportive or independent of the AMSA, there are also many more similar documents that go back to early 2007 including early AMSA working committee meeting minutes at the Strategic planning day held in Canberra 2008, as well as Senate submissions and Hansards that all are based on a Unified AMSA providing a Centralised service as a cost effective model.

From my reading of the WA rewrite, of these By - Laws it seems they want to turn the current structure on its head by having the state associations as the lead organisations for sheds to lead and to have AMSA as the subservient body that props up the state associations.

We must strive for a national body as the lead organisation and the state associations to act as the “arms and legs” for AMSA in the local context who deliver the services sheds need on AMSA’s behalf. I can’t see that the “legs controlling the head” principle can work.

I understand that a number of sheds have received emails from the West Australian Men’s Shed Association promoting their case but these have been landing in individual shed inboxes in a haphazard order. It seems that if WA has found your shed email address then you have been targeted.

Having said all AMSA see the need to tighten its management structures and now that long term funding has been received they have the time and resources to revisit past practices that were left due to the massive development of sheds across Australia. Your elected NSW Committee fully support AMSA and the moves it makes to tighten up on its management structures and are happy to work with them during as new staff are employed to assist the overworked current team.

From my reading of the WAMSA version, it seems as if they want to turn the current structure on its head by having the state associations as the lead organisation for sheds to go to and AMSA is the subservient body that props up the state associations.

We must strive for a national body as the lead organisation and the state association to act as the “arms and legs” for AMSA in the local context who deliver the services sheds need on AMSA’s behalf. I can’t see that the “legs controlling the head” principle can work.

NSW Committee News

Now that the year is in full swing arrangements have been finalised for the first face-to-face meeting to take place in Newcastle at the end of the month.

The main item on the agenda is a presentation from the AMSA team that is being billed as an Accreditation Course for state committees. By presenting the committee with the information that AMSA wants conveyed to sheds they are hoping that when Zone reps talk to sheds and groups of shedders the information they convey is accurate. Now that the staff has grown the responsibilities that 1 or 2 have taken on is being moved to a more appropriate officer. While it may take some time for sheds to stop ringing Mel it is planned that in time a more appropriate person will be the initial contact.

However it's not only the phone contacts that need to be streamlined but information on the best person to question accessing the AMSA web, applying for grants, WH&S, and complaints/grievances to name a few will be more evenly distributed and sheds advised.

This year, being one ending with an even number, will mean those of us in even numbered Zones will need to reapply for our positions and perhaps face a challenge from a shedder seeking appointment to the committee.

By the March Newsletter I will be able to report on the outcomes of the meeting.

Fund Raising

I know for some sheds this is an activity that just seems to keep rolling along with new offers each month. While for others there never seems to be anything new to rekindle the member's enthusiasm or to keep the bank balance in a healthy state.

We all have our special projects that we hang on to like the old 'trade secret' but I'm sure there are many ideas that could be shared without cutting across a neighbouring sheds funding source.

If you have any ideas you would like to share send them to me and I'll make sure they get out in following Newsletters. They can be as general or specific as you want and the more that share the more we will feel part of a bigger organisation and that we care for each other.

Hunter New England Local Health Clinical Trial

The Clinical Trial Coordinator for the Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services Research Unit of Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) has written with regards to a clinical trial they are conducting which uses a cannabis based medication Sativex® to help to improve cannabis treatment outcomes in a cost effective way, and with an acceptable side effect profile, in the treatment of cannabis dependence in the community.

The attached advertisement (on the next page as I couldn't work out how to drag it up) has been approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee as well as the HNELHD management and communication teams.

While Hunter New England Health runs the trial it is open to anyone within the Zone who is prepared to travel to the Newcastle Clinic once a week. If you are interested I suggest you contact the Clinic and discuss matters with them.

As the Men's Shed Movement is the largest male health organisation in Australia it's appropriate that we are approached and asked to promote similar initiatives through information sessions or by inviting shedders and their friends to consider joining a suitable health activity such as this trial.



NEW MEDICATION TRIAL FOR CANNABIS RELAPSE

**Do you want help with your cannabis use?
Find it difficult to reduce or give up?
Is your sleep messed up without cannabis?
Get irritated easily when you try to give up?**

Join our confidential study into a world first clinical trial examining the role of a new medication (Sativex) for people trying to stop or reduce their cannabis use.

The study is an outpatient trial in the community, conducted at four clinical sites in NSW including the Newcastle Cannabis Clinic. Enrolling in the trial commits you to 24 weeks of study engagement, although the main medication test phase is during the first 13 weeks with a research follow-up interview 12 weeks later. You will be allocated to either an active treatment (Sativex) or control (placebo) but you will not know which you are allocated to. The study is entirely free.

- You need to be at least 18 years of age
- Be a regular cannabis user
- Have a desire to reduce or quit your cannabis use
- Have found it difficult to reduce your cannabis use or quit in the past because of the discomfort of withdrawal symptoms from stopping cannabis

We will provide information, support, and referrals to assist you with achieving abstinence.

If you would like to know more, please call the Drug and Alcohol Research Unit mobile phone 0408 161 016



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District

I'm on a Committee

Oh, give me pity; I'm on a committee. Which means that from, morning till night, we attend, and amend, and contend, and defend, without a conclusion in sight. We confer and concur; we defer, and demur and reiterate all our thoughts. We revise the agenda with frequent addenda and consider a load of reports. We compose and propose, we suppose and oppose and the points of procedure are fun! But though various notions are brought up as motions, there is terribly little gets done.

We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve since it's out of the question for us. What a shattering pity to end our committee, where else could we make such a fuss?

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you think I can be of any assistance.

Happy shedding

John Sharples

Secretary

Australian Men's Shed Association – NSW

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Aberdeen Men's Shed, Bateau Bay Men's Shed, Branxton-Greta Men's Shed, Cessnock Men's Shed & Community Garden, Cooranbong Men's Shed, Denman and District Men's Shed, Erina Community Men's Shed, Gosford City Model Railroad Club, Gosford Community Men's Shed, Kincumber Men's Shed, Kurri Kurri Community Centre, Manno Men's Shed, Murrurundi Community Men's Shed, Muswellbrook Men's Shed, Peninsular Community Men's Shed, San Remo Community Men's Shed, South Lake Macquarie Community Men's Shed, Singleton Men's Shed, Swansea & District Community Men's Shed, Terrigal Men's Shed, The Entrance Men's Shed, The Shed @ Lake Haven, Umina Beach Men's Shed, Upper Hunter Men's Shed, Wisemans Ferry Community Men's Shed, Wyong Men's Shed