



CLUB DRUMBEAT

Gidgegannup Men's Shed (WA)



Photo.1: The temporary home for the Gidgegannup Men's Shed at the Ian Stannard Pavilion, Gidgegannup Showgrounds



Photo.2: Learning how to use the Lucas Mill to saw Jarrah slabs (left to right): Greg Coffey, Charles Coppack, Andrew Brine, Clive Williams, Andrew Simpson, Alex Lauren and Jeff Bugg

The concept for the Gidgegannup Men's Shed (GMS) arose from a public meeting following the Wooroloo bush fire in February 2021. The goal was to provide an environment where men from Gidgegannup and surrounding areas could work and socialise together to assist with their health, wellbeing and quality of life.

The Wooroloo bushfire severely impacted a significant portion of the Gidgegannup and adjoining communities, with the loss of close to 90 homes and the destruction and interruption of local infrastructure and access to the affected areas.

Disasters such as this affect the community in many ways. Some infrastructure and utilities can be restored relatively quickly. Temporary accommodation has been arranged but the rebuilding of homes is still ongoing.



Photo.3: Jarrah table slab made for a new membership drive give-away. Handcrafted, it was a combined effort by the woodwork, metalwork and milling teams

There is a longer-lasting, sometimes not very visible legacy that affects the community for a much longer period. The longer-term effects are social disruption, losing one's home and in some cases, the home was also the business premises. This leads to psychological issues, a feeling of hopelessness and other social effects in the community.

Men's health, especially in rural areas, is a matter of concern nationally and this bushfire event accelerated a need to address men's health issues within the community. Not long after the fire, the City of Swan's Social Recovery Committee considered a range of activities that would assist the community to recover. One suggestion that gained traction was to establish a Men's Shed in Gidgegannup.

About 20 men attended the first public meeting and agreed that it was desirable to have a Men's Shed. A further meeting in early July resolved to establish and incorporate the GMS.

Much has been achieved to bring the organisation into reality. Shed and community activities have begun. A public



Photo.4: Charles Coppack demonstrating the Hardwood bandsaw timber mill at the Community Barbecue lunch



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Photo.5 & 6: Milled timber

identity has been established with social media presence, website and newspaper articles. Sponsorship drives are well underway with some funding already received. Planning for a purpose-built shed is progressing with negotiations between the Shed Development Team, the City of Swan Council and local stakeholders. The Ian Stannard Pavilion located in Giddegannup Showgrounds is the Shed's temporary home (Photo.1).

Activities

Community activities have been funded by WA Rotary Relief. Blaze Aid provides equipment and training for volunteer members to assist with replacement and repair to fencing damaged or lost in the Woorlooloo bushfire areas. A tool library located in a sea container at the Shed provides a resource of tools available to affected residents and the local

community. Tools are provided on loan, at no cost, for personal use on people's properties in the restoration process.

Another activity funded by WA Rotary Relief is milling timber to supply GMS with useable timber for community projects in an affordable and sustainable way. GMS is also recovering wood that lies dormant and decaying in paddocks and fashions it into timber that is both useful and beautiful.

Some of the first milling operations involved a Lucas Mill with a swing blade, owned by one of the Shed's members affected by the bushfire and operated by an enthusiastic milling team to produce outstanding Jarrah slabs (Photo.2). One of the slabs was expertly handcrafted into a magnificent table and given away as a prize as an incentive for a membership drive (Photo.3). The table was a combined effort of the milling, woodworking and metalwork teams.

In November 2022 GMS took delivery of the Hardwood Timber Mill which operates on a bandsaw principle (Photo.4). The milling team has quickly mastered the new type of mill and have been very impressed with the ease of use and quality of cut timber produced (Photos.5 & 6).

With the inclusion of women members, membership has grown to 72. The Shed is currently open every Wednesday and Saturday morning 8am–noon. The main activities are woodworking and metalwork producing workbenches, kitchen bench and cupboards for use at the Shed, and building a fencing trailer. The workbenches will facilitate greater participation in workshop activities by members.

Members are encouraged to bring their ideas and plans so that they can work on their own projects, guided by the Shed's experienced Team Leaders. Regular inductions on safe operating procedures for workshop equipment are conducted.

Men's Chat is open to men only on Tuesday evenings for socialising, playing darts, cards and chess. There is a barbecue every month.

The Community Guest Speaker Programme and Barbecue is open to all of the community. Past topics have included 3D printing, mental health, Jarrah dieback treatment and tree hollows and bird nesting boxes.

Containers for Change and Bunnings sausage sizzles are the main fundraising activities. Along with Men's Shed WA grants, WA Rotary Relief and donations from sponsors and other Men's Sheds, funds have enabled the Shed's premises to be outfitted with basic equipment and tools.

GMS has come a long way in the short time since it was established. In October 2022 it was honoured to receive the Community category award in the 2022 Resilient Australia Awards (Photo.7).

For further information on the Shed contact Bruce Williams, President, Email: president@giddegannupmensched.org.au, visit giddegannupmensched.org.au or follow on Facebook.



Photo.7: Resilience Award (left to right): Emergency Services Commissioner, Darren Klemm AFSM; Bob Bristow; Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Emergency Services; Hon Jessica Shaw MLC, Andrew Simpson; Bruce Williams, President GMS; Jorg Nottle; Clieve Williams; Kevin Bamkin, Vice President GMS