



WORKING TOGETHER WITH TRUST AND RESPECT

# Community Health Matters

**BANYULE**  
Community Health



*Local men celebrate their success at gaining funding to establish a permanent Men's Shed in West Heidelberg*

## Celebrate! Let's Build the Men's Shed

The men of West Heidelberg were celebrating last week, when they found out that they had been awarded \$50,000 to build a permanent Men's Shed in West Heidelberg.

The West Heidelberg Men's Shed will be built on land provided by the West Heidelberg Uniting Church, and will be supported by Banyule Community Health, Banyule City Council, Berry Street, Children's Protection Society, Kildonan Uniting Care, NEAMI and Neighbourhood Renewal.

"The establishment of a permanent Men's Shed in West Heidelberg will deliver a unique way for men of all ages and backgrounds to connect, meet new friends and learn new skills," said Banyule Community Health Men's Health Worker Rob Patton.

Once built, the Men's Shed will include a large shed with a fully equipped workshops, computers with internet access, kitchen area, outdoor seating and BBQ area and a garden – much of which will be built or established by local men volunteering down at the Men's Shed, and learning new skills as they do it.

"For the past six months, we've been based in temporary accommodation provided by the church, which has been great," said Ron, one of the volunteers at the Men's Shed.

"But this funding will allow us to build a Men's Shed that has been designed from the ground up to meet our needs. We can't wait!" he said.

See the articles inside to find out more about the Men's Shed and the programs currently on offer.

Winter 2009

# Community Health Matters



CEO Jim Pasinis (left) with local resident "Foxy" at the Men's Lunch

## From the CEO

Welcome to our winter edition of Community Health Matters, focusing on Men's Health and what we are doing in this area.

The last few months have seen lots of activity at the Banyule Community Health, responding to the Swine Flu outbreak as well as supporting bushfire affected clients and communities.

In response to the Black Saturday bushfires, we have now employed five Case Managers to work with families who were affected by this disaster. This has been possible through State Government funding to support these families and communities to get back on their feet.

Banyule Community Health was one of three community clinics established to respond to the recent Swine Flu outbreak. Our Swine Flu clinic supported over eight hundred clients over a four week period when the hospital system was under the most stress. Our role supporting the state-wide response to Swine Flu has been applauded by Government, our partners and the community. I thank the community for their understanding during this time and the staff who were involved in our response.

On the topic of men, we are developing a better understanding of the importance of engaging men early and in innovative ways to best address their health. Our experiences are showing us that men present and connect differently to services than women. Two initiatives featured in the newsletter show the value of participation as a way of improving your health.

With an ageing community and an increase in the onset of chronic conditions, the health sector needs to better embrace the strengths and capacity of the community to drive their own health outcomes. The men I have observed involved in our exciting new Men's Shed and the Men's Lunch program are a shining example of men taking control of their health and supporting each other.

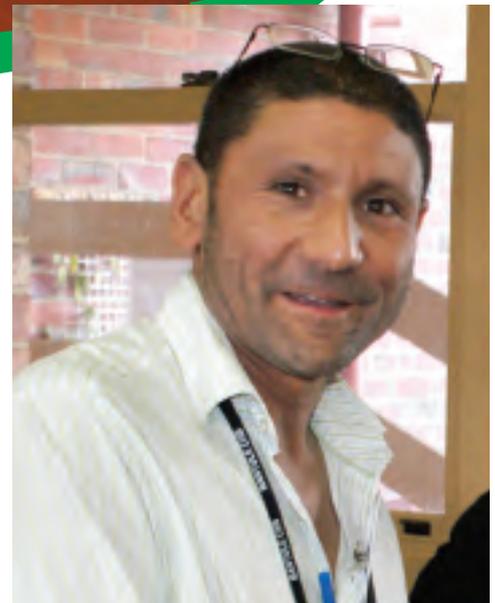
*Jim Pasinis*

Chief Executive Officer

## Introducing Rob Patton

Banyule Community Health has a long history of working with members of our community from all walks of life and we've seen some of these stories in past issues of Community Health Matters. For some years now we have been looking at ways to better connect with local men in the community, to provide services and supports to help them deal with their particular health needs.

Rob Patton joined the team at Banyule Community Health in mid 2008 as our Men's Health Worker, developing programs and supports that local men could engage with. And as you can see from the pages of this issue of Community Health Matters, he has had great success in connecting with local men.



If you'd like to get involved with any of our Men's Health Programs, contact Rob by calling 9450 2000 or email [banyule@bchs.org.au](mailto:banyule@bchs.org.au).



## What is Men's Health?



Many people say that simply being male is bad for your health!

Many men have common health risks that seriously affect the quality of their health and the longevity of their life. Men are more likely to participate in work

and hobbies that are risky and on top of this men are less likely to seek help for physical or psychological problems they are facing.

If they do see a professional, many men come away without having told the doctor their real concerns – especially if they are having problems they consider embarrassing or frightening... but the earlier a problem is picked up the easier it is to deal with.

So what should men do to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle?

### See Your Doctor

If you've got a health concern, seek professional advice. See your doctor or other medical profession and take a list of the things that are worrying you. Remember, doctors have seen and heard pretty much everything in their careers and will not judge you or be embarrassed. Your doctor can also organise regular screening checks for common health problems such as heart disease, cancer, and blood pressure issues.

### Make Connections

Social connections and friendships are an

important part of healthy living for everyone, including men. So say "g'day" to other men on a regular basis. Join in with social or sporting groups, or even just chat with a neighbour. This can help to pick up your spirits, reduce isolation and help you to think positively. It's not only good for you, but it will be good for them as well!

### Protect Yourself

If you are doing something a bit risky – take precautions. Don't be afraid to put on the ear-muffs when mowing the lawn or stick on a hat when you are out in the sun. Where the safety goggles if you are working in the shed. And don't be afraid to ask someone for help with a big job – there's no need to do it all yourself (or all at once).

### Healthy Behaviours – Exercise & Healthy Eating

Good health behaviours will help with the quality of your life – both your body and your mind! A little bit of exercise every day will help to improve your fitness – so why not take a short walk to the shops, rather than driving. Eat healthy whenever you can – have a piece of fruit when you feel like a snack, rather than a biscuit. And as always, reduce or stop smoking, limit your alcohol intake and try and drink more water.

### Shave Your Moustache to Sniff Less

This one really is only for men... if you find yourself prone to allergies and you have a moustache – wash it twice a day with liquid soap. This will help to keep it clean and will remove any dust or pollen that might have lodged in there!

# What is this thing called social inclusion? The Men's Lunch



Friday's at West Heidelberg have taken on a new dimension. From 10 o'clock onwards the men start streaming in to participate in the Men's Lunch. Supported by local volunteers, the men prepare the meal for a Men's Lunch. The room gradually fills with local men with varying backgrounds. Some set up the tables, while others cut up the salad in readiness for the men. Stories of the week are told, discussions about

footy, politics and current affairs takes place. One member brings in his poetry scribed in the past week. For these men the lunch is something to look forward to and connect with one another. Men's Health Worker Rob Patton, oversees the lunch, but doesn't need to get too involved. "The guys are so capable. They always pitch in to make the lunch happen." Anywhere between 20 and 30 men attend the lunch regularly. Some live alone, some in local

hostels or rooming houses and a few who are homeless. New friendships are formed and the men feel they belong to something positive, healthy and good fun. Men have participated in food handling training and others have established a bike repair group. Michael, a regular participant and helper enjoys the comradery. "It's great to have a laugh and feel needed. It's given me a new lease on life."

## Men's Shed hits the nail on the head for men's health!

It's a well known fact. A man without a shed is like a meat pie without tomato sauce!

But not all men have access to a shed or workshop in their backyard, the tools needed to

repair, create and invent things in their shed, or the friends to lend a hand with those big jobs. Until now.

Banyule Community Health is proud to be involved in the West Heidelberg Men's Shed – a place for blokes of all ages and backgrounds to come together, have a yarn over a cuppa, and to get their hands dirty "on the tools".

Supported by Men's Health Worker Rob Patton, a group of committed men came together toward the end of last year to talk about setting up a local Men's Shed. Why a Men's Shed? Men's Sheds are a proven way to engage men in positive activities where they can build friendships and support networks.

The men wanted to establish somewhere they could meet and build ideas and when the word started spreading around, other men started to appear out of the woodwork. Soon enough, they had the backing of a number of community

organisations – and they even had somewhere to build their shed (in the backyard of the Heidelberg Heights Uniting Church).

The men were quickly able to use some spare space in the church to establish a temporary Men's Shed, and the shed (along with the community partnership) was launched by Richard Wynne, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Aboriginal Affairs at a ceremony earlier this year – and the shed has gone from strength to strength since then.

When asked about why they came to the shed, all of the men talked about the benefits they've received from participating in the activities and through building new friendships.

"It's been great at my age to make some new friends," said Alan, one of the regulars. Another one of the men tells how "meeting these blokes has taught me new skills" and goes on to tell how he is more motivated to get up and do things.

"We've done some training together, and some building, which has been good," tells Michael, another regular. "But just having a laugh again has really helped me with my depression. I feel good again."



Local men hard at work in the temporary Men's Shed



The Men's Shed is a place for blokes of all ages and backgrounds to come together

# What's On @ The Shed

The West Heidelberg Men's Shed provides opportunities for local men from all ages and backgrounds to join in, make new friendships and learn new skills.

There are opportunities to join in, stop by for a cuppa, and meet up with the blokes on each day of the week. The specific programs currently on offer are outlined below – and these will expand once the permanent Men's Shed is established.

Men's Shed Volunteers are present for of the programs, which are overseen by Banyule Community Health and supported by local agencies.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Bike &amp; Mower Repairs</p> <p>Local men salvage bicycles and lawnmowers from the Council tip and restore them for use by community members. Come along and learn new skills.</p> <p><b>11:00am to 3:00pm</b></p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCHS</li> <li>• Berry Street</li> <li>• Men's Shed Volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>Gardening &amp; Landscaping</p> <p>Come along and join the men in building garden beds, growing vegetables and cleaning up the site ready for the permanent shed.</p> <p><b>11:00am to 2:00pm</b></p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEAMI</li> <li>• Men's Shed Volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>"Yarning Up"</p> <p>An opportunity for aboriginal men to connect with their heritage and with the present. Men learn how to create traditional objects, story telling and build their parenting skills.</p> <p><b>11:00am to 3:00pm</b></p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS</li> <li>• Men's Shed Volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>Woodwork &amp; Artistry</p> <p>Come along and try your hand "on the tools". Let our volunteers pass on their knowledge and help you to build your skills working with timber and tools.</p> <p><b>1:00pm to 4:00pm</b></p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCHS</li> <li>• Kildonan Uniting Care</li> <li>• Men's Shed Volunteers</li> </ul>



New men are always welcome and are encouraged to come down to the Men's Shed. For more information, contact Men's Health Worker Rob Patton on 03 9450 2000



**BANYULE**  
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