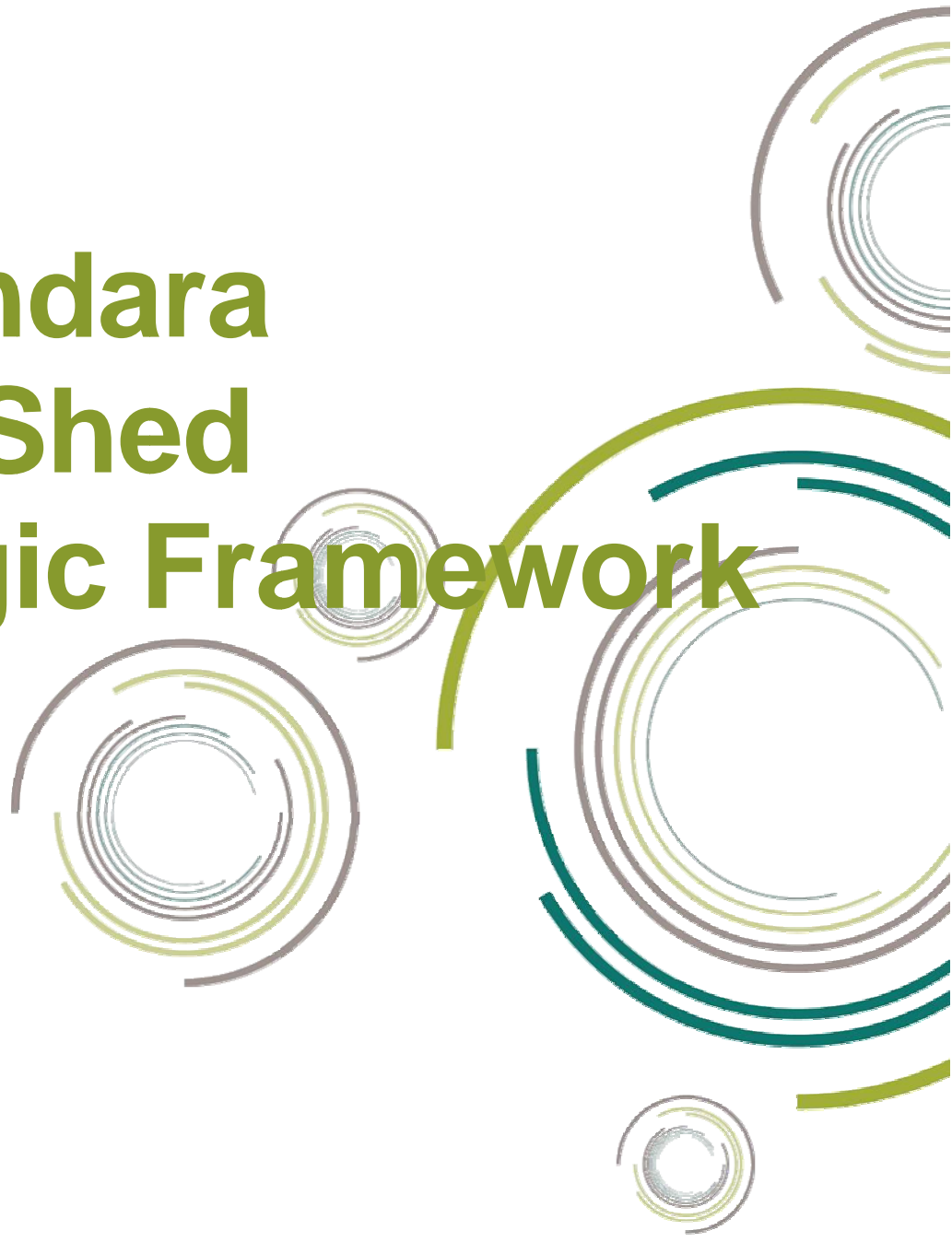


Boroondara Men's Shed Strategic Framework



March 2013

Responsible Directorate: Community Development
Authorised By: Council
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Boroondara Men's Shed Strategic Framework

1. Background

Men's sheds emerged in Australia in the mid-1990s in response to concerns about men's health and wellbeing. It was recognised that men had fewer opportunities to socialise in environments that encouraged them to express their feelings. Drawing on the 'shed in the backyard' concept where men

Traditionally attend to activities such as making and repairing furniture and equipment, men's sheds have emerged to offer a safe, friendly and healing environment where men can work on meaningful projects at their own pace in their own time and in the company of other men (Australian Men's Shed Association website).

From their inception, men's sheds have grown rapidly across Australia. As their name implies, men's sheds operate in shed or workshop-type spaces in community settings and provide opportunities for regular hands-on activity by groups mainly comprising men (Golding et al 2007, p. 13). Men's sheds range from informal casually evolved garages and small workshops to large-scale community or industry-sponsored semi-commercial operations. They provide new opportunities for men of all ages to pool their skills and experiences for mutual and community benefit (Golding et al 2007, p. 9).


Importantly, they 'create an area for socialisation in a men's workshop rather than a house or learning centre designed primarily for and by women' (Golding B et al 2007, p 9). However, some men's sheds, while a separate space, may run parallel to, and even be auspiced by, a community centre or neighbourhood house-type organisation. Similar to the development of neighbourhood houses, their formation follows a grassroots evolution, rather than a top down professionally driven service development. Sheds appear to work for men due to the type of social interactions and the informal possibilities the spaces create for men rather than because of what 'programs' men can access there (Golding et al 2007, p. 23).

As at November 2012, there are 873 men's sheds throughout Australia. Victoria has 231 registered men's sheds, which is the highest number of all the states.

2. Activities

Men's sheds typically have a woodworking space, tools and equipment and a social area, such as a garden. They may conduct metal working, craft and hobby activities, repair old machinery, or refurbish old computers. Many offer other activities such as cooking and sharing of meals, computer classes, and some are engaged in mentoring, generally with school students and often youth referred from the Justice system. They may also provide support for men with mental health or physical and intellectual disabilities and the unemployed (Misan 2009, p. 4).

Activities in men's shed tend to reflect the skills, experience and capabilities of members, the needs and opportunities in the local community, and the physical, financial and other resources at member's disposal. When located with another community facility such as a



neighbourhood house, a men's shed can also offer other activities including gardening, cooking and computer classes. In Boroondara, men's sheds primarily offer woodworking and some also have access to kitchen facilities to run cooking classes. The range of activities offered should suit the diverse needs of the community, hence do not need to be limited to traditional men's shed activities. For example, artistic activities may suit some community members.

3. Governance

Men's sheds are highly reliant on committed volunteers and a small number of funding sources. Funding options are limited and cover just a proportion of the costs.

The Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) is funded by the Australian Government as the peak men's shed organisation representing men's sheds. There is also a Victorian Men's Shed Association (VMSA). Its purpose is to promote and publicise men's sheds throughout Victoria, link sheds to each other, lobby government and businesses on behalf of men's sheds, and assist with start-up information and training and advice on funding applications.

AMSA administers the Australian Government Shed Development Program on behalf of the Australian Government. All men's sheds in Australia can apply for a total of \$10,000 from the AMSA's Shed Development Program. There are three categories of funding support:


- Category One: Tools and Equipment to a maximum of \$4,000
- Category Two: Building Maintenance and Development to a maximum of \$6,000
- Category Three: Shed Activities and Programs to a maximum of \$5,000

The priority categories for the last round of funding in 2012 were as follows:

- Men in rural and remote areas
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men
- Men with a disability and/or mental illness
- Migrant men
- Men who are socially disadvantaged and/or isolated
- Groups from areas where there is a high percentage of men out of work.

Preference was given to organisations seeking to establish or improve an existing men's shed for the priority groups outlined above, sheds that could demonstrate a high level of unmet need and sheds that could demonstrate partnerships with groups such as local councils, community health centres, welfare organisations, men's health services and other community service groups.

Grant funds do not cover purchasing land, building a men's shed or the cost of a coordinator. The cost of paying a coordinator is dependent on the employing body. For example, those employed by a neighbourhood house are paid under the Neighbourhood House Collective Agreement, which is between \$32 and \$35 per hour.



There is not a one-size-fits-all model for a men's shed. As might be expected given their grassroots origin, men's sheds come in all shapes and sizes, with different governance, management, operational and finance structures, and with different aims and objectives and numbers of participants. Sheds have been established under the auspices of aged care organisations, neighbourhood houses, health centres, hospitals, non-government organisations, Vietnam Veterans organisations, welfare agencies, church groups and local government. Sheds may be run by volunteers or facilitated by others, for example supervisors/coordinators, health promotion officers or men's health workers.

Men's sheds have evolved over the last 15 years with very little support or policy direction. Research indicates that the most successful men's sheds are built on a foundation of partnership, planning and community support with strategic intent and good leadership. Research confirms the critical importance to the effective operation of men's sheds of having a shed coordinator who is responsible at all times for the shed's operation and safety (Golding et al 2007, p. 40).

The key criteria for success of men's sheds include:

- Ensuring local support
- A reliable and ongoing funding source
- Having multiple partners and supporters
- Links with/support from a larger organisation, for example local government, a neighbourhood house, community health centre, which can provide support for programs and access to facilities
- A suitable location
- A skilled manager and management group
- A good business plan together with a sound marketing, recruitment, and communication strategy
- A wide range of activities for men to take part in
- Accessible opening hours.

Ensuring documentation and evaluation of outcomes is also helpful to demonstrate benefit and increasing the likelihood of attracting future funding. There are opportunities to expand men's shed operations if there is access to funding for supervision and coordination.

4. Existing men's sheds

There are four men's sheds in the City of Boroondara – Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Alamein Neighbourhood and Learning Centre, Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre in Kew, and Uniting Aged Care in Elgin Street, Hawthorn. In addition, Samarinda Lodge, Ashburton, has a men's shed program catering for men attending its centre-based day respite program. The activities take place in a program room. Boroondara has more men's sheds than the surrounding LGAs. A map showing where existing men's sheds are located in the municipality is attached (**Appendix 1**), while details on existing men's sheds in Boroondara are given below.



4.1. Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre (KNLC)

KNLC established a men's shed in 1994 as part of its Oasis program for older men with mental health issues, who were clients of the Home and Community Care Program (HACC). In 2009-10, KNLC applied to Council for a grant under the Community Grants Program to revitalise the men's shed. A grant of \$8,400 was approved with the aim of increasing the number of participants attending, increasing resources and hours of operation and re-designing the internal structure of the shed. The grant covered the employment of a project worker to oversee the men's shed, and KNLC provided a further \$2,000 towards resources. Evaluation of this grant indicated that there was an ongoing need for a paid coordinator to oversee the activities of the men's shed.

Between 8 and 14 men participate in the KNLC's men's shed program held on Monday afternoon and Thursday. Not all men can be accommodated in the shed and some spill out to the outdoor area to work on projects. Funding for supervision of the shed is provided under the HACC program and totals 7 hours per week. A further 7 hours is now provided voluntarily by the current shed supervisor. Additional funds are raised through BBQs at Bunning's Hawthorn held 3 to 4 times per year, each raising approximately \$1,500.

KNLC is keen to expand the program beyond the current client group. It would like to 'mainstream' the program and attract local men who may have retired and are looking for the company of other men. An application for \$30,000 to expand the men's shed is pending with the Department of Human Services (DHS). Kew East and Kew Bendigo Bank will provide approximately \$9,000 to KNLC for a shed expansion, pending a proposed redevelopment of the KNLC by Council.

Expansion of KNLC's program beyond its current hours will require sourcing additional funds for supervision. As there is no Victorian or Australian Government funding for supervision, alternative sources are being sought from within the business community.

4.2. Elgin Street Uniting Aged Care

A small men's shed operates from Elgin Street Uniting Aged Care. It currently has capacity for five men and operates on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Volunteers staff the men's shed, Bunning's donates wood and seedlings for the garden and families associated with the centre have donated equipment.

The program is run in partnership with the Boroondara Stroke Support Group, which provides referrals. Elgin Street would like to expand the program to include men from other programs, such as dementia clients who have expressed an interest in doing something with their hands. The men's shed program is seen as part of the therapy program offered by Elgin Street. Increasing staffing to supervise an expanded program would be a challenge.

In 2012, Glenferrie Rotary approached Elgin Street about the capacity of the men's shed to include its members. Approximately 35 men indicated their interest in a men's shed through a Rotary Club survey. An agreement has been reached with Elgin Street Aged Care to expand another shed on site, currently used for storage. A planning application for the expanded shed is being drawn up.



4.3. Alamein Men's Shed

Under the auspice of Alamein Neighbourhood and Learning Centre (ANLC), a men's shed was established in a garage adjacent to the Craig Family Centre. The men's shed has recently relocated to a refurbished building at the Alamein Railway Station following receipt of a \$50,000 grant from the Victorian Department of Community Planning and Development (DPCD) in 2010. The program currently has 16 men attending on Thursday - 8 in the morning and 8 in the afternoon. Those attending in the morning require assistance and have a carer, while those attending in the afternoon are independent. ANLC introduced a 3-hour session on Tuesdays, which is attended by people with mental health needs. There is capacity to expand the program beyond the current day and a half, subject to funding. ANLC reports a high level of interest from men in the community to use the facility, but the lack of funding for supervision has precluded further expansion of the program.

Like KNLC, supervision has been partly funded from the HACC program, as clients in the men's shed are also clients of the centre's HACC programs. Supervision of the mainstream shed program on Thursday afternoon has been funded by the ANLC, partially offset by a small \$2 voluntary donation by attendees. The shed supervisor is also supported by at least one volunteer at each session.

4.4. Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre


Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre is part of Austin Health. A woodworking project is operated by Royal Talbot as part of its rehabilitation program. The facility can accommodate up to 10 participants plus 5 volunteers, depending on the needs of the participants.

Royal Talbot applied for a Community Grant from Council in 2010-11 to assist develop a social enterprise project, as well as expand the program to attract men prone to social isolation. It was successful in receiving \$6,000, and contributed a further \$39,000 in-kind support (tools, space, on costs).

The woodworking project consists of three components:

- inpatients/outpatients of Royal Talbot, including ex-patients who are unable to access a local men's shed
- 'Community Shed' run by Eastern Access Community Health (EACH) for those with acquired brain injury on a hire basis each Tuesday, and can accommodate 10 people depending on individual needs plus volunteers
- River Enterprises, a social enterprise of Royal Talbot for those with disabilities who, with the assistance of volunteers, produce disability aids and custom-made items and administer the enterprise (eg taking and packing orders). The enterprise aims to be self-sufficient through the sale of aids and an increase in volunteer assistance.

While a facilitator is employed, volunteers are heavily relied upon, with some members requiring 1:1 assistance due to their level of disability.



Royal Talbot is willing to share its space with others provided that it has access to the facility for existing groups. Previously it has had discussions with Kew East Bendigo Bank and advised KNLC on the establishment of its men's shed.

4.5. Samarinda Day Respite Program

Due to the number of men attending Samarinda's centre-based day respite program, Samarinda commenced a men's shed program. There are six men participating who attend fortnightly and are assisted by volunteers. A nurse is on-site to administer medication and attend to the men's personal care requirements. As with other day respite program participants, Samarinda provides transport to collect and return the men to their homes. Volunteers have been sourced through Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC). The men make chopping boards, boxes and trays, while women attending the day respite program paint and decorate the items.

5. Need for a Boroondara Men's Shed Strategic Framework


5.1. Ageing demographics

With the progressive ageing of the population and the extension of lives post-work, activities similar to that provided by men's sheds and U3As will become more important. Because of their increased longevity, men and women will be in retirement and semi-retirement longer, strengthening the need for opportunities for lifelong learning for social and personal purposes that help to maintain independence and a sense of meaningful activity. As noted above, men's sheds can produce important non-vocational benefits through informal, collective, community involvement.

Forecast demographics indicate a 10.38% increase in the number of people over the age of 55 years living in Boroondara over the next five years (forecast.id). Currently, just over one-quarter of the population in Boroondara is aged 55 plus. The suburbs with greatest numbers of residents aged over 55 who are not in the workforce are Balwyn North and Kew followed by Camberwell, Glen Iris and Balwyn. Viewed on a precinct basis, the precinct with the highest numbers of residents not in the workforce is the North East (Balwyn North, Balwyn and Deepdene) followed by Central (Camberwell, Canterbury and Surrey Hills). If men aged 55 plus who work part-time or are unemployed are factored in, the profile remains the same. Interestingly, the North East Precinct is also the most diverse having more residents from China, Greece, Italy and Malaysia aged over 55 not in the workforce, working part-time or unemployed. A map showing the population concentration for residents aged over 55 not in the labour force, is attached (**Appendix 2**).

5.2. Demand for men's sheds

Since 2010, Council has received three requests from service clubs and a local branch of the Bendigo Bank for a Council building or land that could accommodate a men's shed. All have expressed a need for a shed, citing support from their membership. One has conducted a survey to establish demand and interest from its members. All three have been encouraged to speak to existing community organisations that either already have an interest in men's sheds and/or may have the capacity to accommodate a men's shed on their site or within the umbrella of their organisation. Two of these service clubs have



since located potential sites and are negotiating with the owners to accommodate a men's shed.

It is clear from the requests that Council is receiving and conversations with the organisations concerned, that there is a need for Council to have a strategic position or framework on men's sheds. The framework would assist Council to identify and respond to community need. The framework should be flexible and be able to respond to different requirements and circumstances.

6. Objectives of the Men's Shed Strategic Framework

The objectives of a Men's Shed Strategic Framework are to:

- Recognise the importance of men's sheds to health and wellbeing
- Establish Council's role in supporting and facilitating men's sheds
- Identify potential sites/opportunities for men's sheds
- Outline models of delivery including auspicing, partnerships
- Identify funding opportunities.


6.1. Health and wellbeing

Council is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all its residents through the *Boroondara Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* and to ageing positively in place through *Creating an Age Friendly Boroondara*.

The importance of men's sheds to the health and wellbeing of men has been established by recent research (Misan 2010, pp. 4-7) and in Australian and Victorian Government health policy. The Australian Men's Health Policy Strategy has identified men's sheds as an important community health innovation, while [*Victoria's Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2010-2014*](#) makes mention of men's sheds.

The key benefit of men's sheds is in decreasing social isolation, creating friendships, and enhancing self-esteem. Men's sheds provide mateship and a sense of belonging through positive and therapeutic informal activities and experiences with other men. Men's shed programs can lead to positive health, happiness and wellbeing outcomes for men who participate, and their partners, families and communities.

Research has also found that men's sheds have the ability to reach older and isolated men and be a vehicle for health promotion and illness prevention programs. However, in the absence of social and emotional health, men are less likely to act on health promotion messages, as men's key concerns relate to social and emotional issues such as loneliness, boredom, social isolation, loss of self-esteem, purpose and identity since retirement, rather than physical problems such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer (Misan 2010, p 6). In responding to the social and emotional needs of men, men's sheds may improve the likelihood that men will respond to health promotion messages and participate in illness prevention programs.



Men's sheds are therefore seen as a key part of health infrastructure, delivering programs that both directly and indirectly support men's health and wellbeing. As well as maintaining the health and wellbeing of men, key objectives of the men's shed movement are to provide a link between men and the primary health care network, identify health issues for men and help to resolve them and importantly, provide support to men in need of help arising from mental illness or other debilitating illnesses.

6.2. Council's role in establishing men's sheds in the City of Boroondara

One of the key directions in the Council Plan June 2012 is Strengthening Communities: 'identifying and responding to community needs and providing opportunities to enable people in our community to be supported and involved'. Articulating Council's role in the establishment and support of men's sheds is consistent with the Council Plan.

Men's sheds are a form of community infrastructure, offering programs that respond to the needs of a particular group in the community. They sit alongside neighbourhood houses, fulfilling similar objectives around social inclusion and lifelong learning. U3A shares many similarities with men's sheds: a grassroots community-driven movement responding to the needs of predominantly older people, who are seeking programs not currently offered by existing community organisations. Council is drafting a U3A Development Plan to address the long-term accommodation and other needs of U3A in Boroondara.


Local government's role in the development and support of men's sheds varies. Most commonly Councils have assisted in locating potential sites, sometimes Council-owned, contributed to the cost of building or acquiring a men's shed, provided a community grant to assist with the establishment of a men's shed and/or management/supervision of the shed, and provided information and support to the organising committees. Less commonly, Councils have built and run men's sheds.

In Boroondara, Rotary Clubs and the Bendigo Bank are well placed to gather support for men's sheds. They have the organisational and financial capacity to support the development of men's sheds and have approached Council for assistance with locating a site and/or appropriate buildings. They are also seeking assistance with the supervision/coordination of a men's shed program.

In the first instance, it is recommended that groups interested in establishing a men's shed make contact with AMSA, as it represents, supports and promotes the men's shed movement and acts as a central hub for information exchange providing initial and ongoing practical support for the development of all men's sheds. A manual on how to start a men's shed is available at its website.

As the North West and South East of the City have well established men's sheds, all of which have capacity to expand their programs, Council will give priority to establishing a men's shed in the North East, as this is the area of highest unmet need. Consideration will be given to establishing men's sheds in other areas of the city subject to demonstration of demand and existing men's sheds in those areas operating at capacity.

Council will implement a two-stage process to facilitate the development of men's sheds. The first stage involves Council providing an overview of the priority areas and needs, and



advice on how organisations can progress their plans for a men's shed through partnerships with existing men's sheds and/or auspicing organisations.

Stage 1


Council officers will:

1. convene a meeting with interested organisations to discuss their men's shed proposal including the target group and the type of activities the proposed men's shed program would offer
2. provide advice on the area of highest need and Council's preference for the establishment of a men's shed in the North East.
3. provide referrals to those organisations that currently run men's sheds to discuss opportunities to add new members, and/or to organisations that may be interested in entering a partnership to establish a men's shed eg churches
4. encourage the formation of partnerships and identification of potential auspicing organisations
5. assist groups to identify potential sources of financial support, including providing them with information about the Community Grants Program
6. assist with the provision of appropriate volunteers through the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre

Stage 2

For organisations seeking access to Council land or buildings, the following additional steps will apply:

7. organisations will need to demonstrate
 - i. a willingness to locate a men's shed in the area of highest need as identified by Council, namely the North East, and to consider locations identified by Council as appropriate for a men's shed
 - ii. support from members for a men's shed
 - iii. plans to include men with disabilities, isolated men, unemployed men, men from culturally diverse backgrounds and other target groups identified by Council, in the men's shed
 - iv. a minimum of one partner and/or an auspice for a men's shed to ensure the sustainability of the men's shed
 - v. the capacity to secure funding from at least one or more of the following: DHS, AMSA, corporate sponsorship/philanthropic trusts, auspicing bodies and partner organisations
 - vi. ability to secure insurance through AMSA to indemnify Council against any risk related to men's shed activities
8. organisations submit a business case/proposal for a men's shed, which details their contribution to the project. Council may need to play a facilitation and support role for this step.



Council officers will then prepare a report for the Building and Property Working Group to discuss the proposal, and depending on the outcome, a report for Council.

Council may consider a financial contribution to a building for a men's shed on preferred Council-owned sites subject to a satisfactory feasibility study, the project meeting identified Council priorities/strategic objectives and the availability of Council community grants. Council will not fund coordination/supervision of the men's shed.

6.3. Potential sites

A scan of the municipality for potential sites for a men's shed will be guided by Council's Sustainable Buildings Policy 2010, which states that:

Council will encourage appropriate shared use of its facilities, and will actively promote optimum use of its buildings. Council recognises the importance of managing a well-utilised and efficient property portfolio, and supports planning and designing for shared use'.

Also of relevance is the key strategic direction in the Council Plan 2012 to 'proactively manage the ongoing maintenance and development of Council's assets and facilities to meet our community's current and future needs'.

It is recognised that groups often seek specific purpose buildings to meet their requirements. The need for a workshop space for men's sheds may require a dedicated space that cannot be used by other groups for occupational health and safety reasons. Locating a men's shed in Council-owned buildings will have minimal risk implications for Council. Groups will be required to indemnify Council and accept liability for risk associated with men's shed activities by taking out appropriate insurance through AMSA.


As mentioned earlier, there is no men's shed in the North East. This is the area of highest need followed by Central. A shed in Balwyn could service the North East and also the Camberwell/Canterbury and Surrey Hills' area, the next most populous area with men aged over 55 not in the workforce.

6.3.1. Balwyn Community Centre (BCC)

The Balwyn Structure Plan recognises the potential for additional compatible uses on the BCC site. Tennis courts front the site at 412 Whitehorse Road, behind which sits a house (community centre), an occasional childcare centre, the 'barn' for upholstery, French polishing and painting, as well as a dedicated pottery studio, a function centre, a community garden and car park in a parkland type setting. Initial discussions have been held with the BCC in relation to developing a men's shed on site, and it has also been approached unofficially by a local Service Club.

The advantages of a men's shed at BCC are:

- the location is on a transport route close to the Balwyn Shopping Centre and the Balwyn Library

- 
- potential space to accommodate a men's shed which may require a master plan for the site
 - opportunities to partner with the management of BCC in the establishment of a men's shed program
 - linkages to other BCC programs eg men's cooking classes and the community garden, that are compatible with men's shed programs
 - potential to develop further programs related to men's health and wellbeing.

6.4. Models of delivery

Like any new business or community operation, men's sheds are most vulnerable during their start-up phase. Enthusiasm is high but experience is minimal, processes are lacking and capital is scarce; this is when planning and support count most. Being reliant on volunteers, fledgling men's shed groups can struggle with the regulations and complexities associated with the establishment of men's sheds. Partnerships with other community organisations can be critical to providing the support, access to resources and expertise that men's shed organisations need.


Council recognises the strength that partnerships can offer community projects, improving their viability and reach in the community. Council will consider proposals for assistance with men's shed projects from organisations that partner with others, or are auspiced by neighbourhood houses or similarly constituted community organisations.

6.5. Funding

Establishment of any new men's sheds in Boroondara will require funding in addition to that available through DHS. As well as securing a suitable building, community groups face the challenge of procuring funding to assist with coordination and supervision of participants. As researchers have noted, men's sheds have grown in number despite the limitations in funding. They caution, however, that the impact on future growth and sustainability is uncertain (Golding et al 2007, p 6). Partnerships are therefore recommended, and could include a service organisation such as Rotary in conjunction with the Bendigo Bank. Kew East Bendigo Bank has indicated its interest in providing assistance for both capital and recurrent costs such as supervision of the shed and administration.

Supervision may also be partially funded by a contribution from participants, generally between \$2 and \$5 per session. However, for a shed to offer a suite of programs over a five-day week, additional sources of funding for supervision will be required. One option may be to charge an annual membership fee, in addition to a fee per session, similar to the model used by neighbourhood houses. Consideration would need to be given to a sliding scale for those on low-incomes. For men's sheds to be sustainable and operate at capacity, access to a funding stream to provide supervision/coordination of the shed is critical.

It is Council's position that men's shed applicants source supervision funding from partners and/or philanthropic/service organisations. Council will not fund



coordination/supervision of men's sheds. Council may consider assisting with building the shed or retrofitting an existing building if this is a council facility. Men's shed organisations are eligible to apply through Council's community grant's programs for a grant to assist with men's shed activities, for example to purchase materials or fund a special activity or program. Ongoing support from a service club such as Rotary would be seen as ideal and consistent with their charter to raise funds for community projects, which could include men's sheds.

Actions

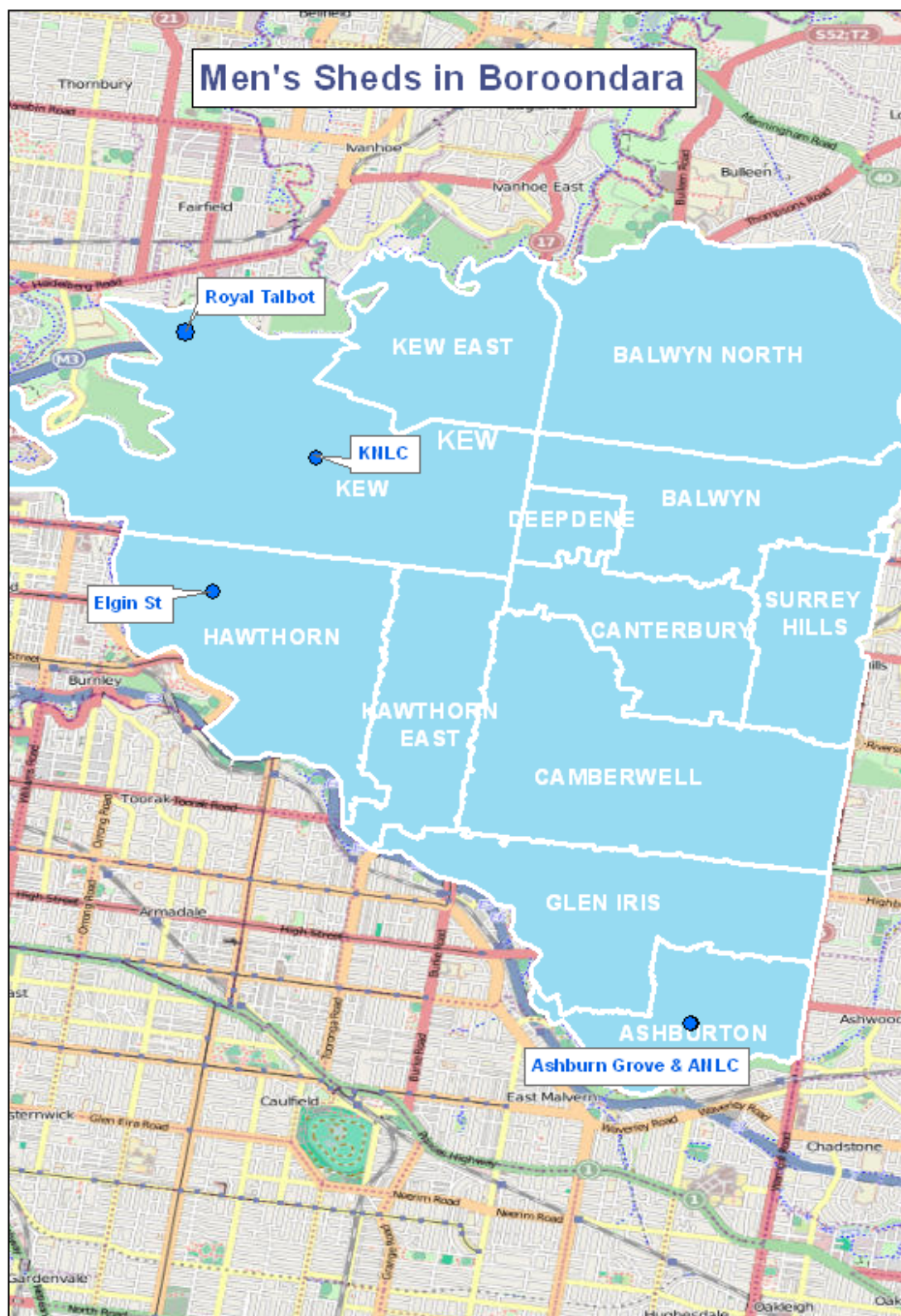
To support the establishment of men's sheds in Boroondara, Council will:

- prepare an article for the Boroondara Bulletin and a small survey to assess the level of community interest in men's sheds
- hold a men's shed workshop to discuss the establishment of men's sheds in Boroondara including potential partners and funding opportunities
- research additional sources of funding including philanthropic trusts
- advocate to DHS for funding to contribute to the costs of supervision of men's shed programs.
- implement the men's shed framework as detailed above and in **Appendix 3**.

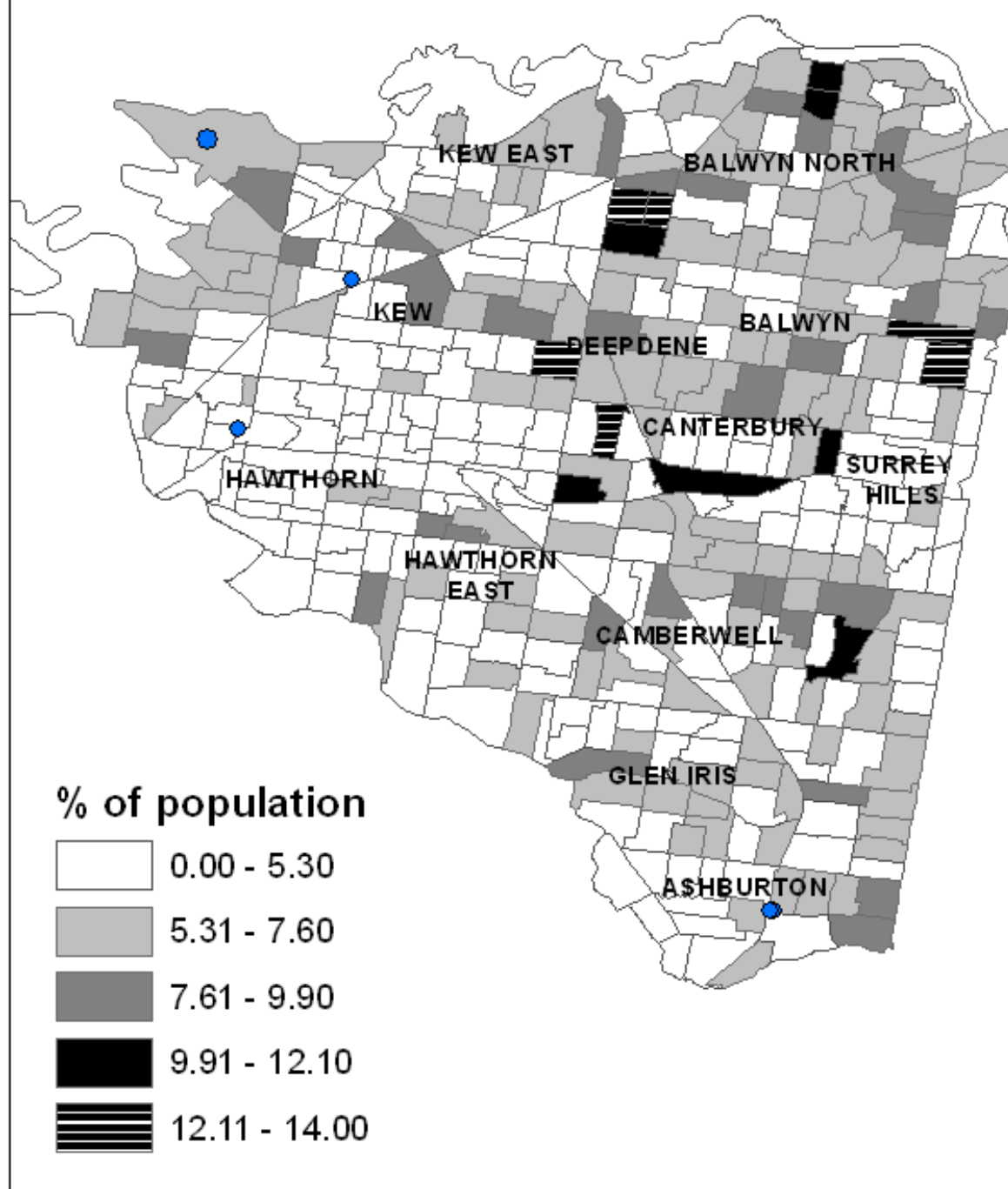
7. Sources

The following sources are acknowledged in the preparation of this report:

- Golding B et al, *Men's sheds in Australia- Learning through Community contexts*, NCVET, 2007.
- Misan G and Sergeant P, *Men's sheds—a strategy to improve men's health*, paper delivered at the 10th National Rural health Conference, 2010.
- Australian Men's Shed Association website <http://mensshed.org/home/.aspx>
- Victorian Men's Shed Association website <http://www.vicmensshed.org/page12002/Home.aspx>



**% of population comprised of
men aged 55 and over who
are not in the labour force (retired) -
2011 Census**



Men's Shed Strategic Framework

The objectives of a Men's Shed Strategic Framework are to:

- Recognise the importance of men's shed to health and wellbeing
- Establish Council's role in supporting and facilitating men's sheds
- Identify potential sites/opportunities for men's sheds
- Outline models of delivery including auspicing, partnerships
- Identify funding opportunities.

Health and wellbeing

Council is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all its residents through the Boroondara *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* and to ageing positively in place through *Creating an Age Friendly Boroondara*. The key benefit of men's sheds is in decreasing social isolation, creating friendships, and enhancing self-esteem. Men's sheds are a key part of health infrastructure, delivering programs that both directly and indirectly support men's health and wellbeing.

Council's role

Men's sheds are a form of community infrastructure, offering programs that respond to the needs of a particular group in the community. They sit alongside neighbourhood houses, fulfilling similar objectives around social inclusion and lifelong learning. Council will support the development of men's sheds in Boroondara by providing information, advice, referrals, brokering partnerships and information on the Community Grants Program for activities. The Community Planning and Development department will be the point of contact for groups requesting assistance.

Potential sites

Council support in the form of access to land and/or buildings will be provided to those organisations establishing sheds in areas of highest need. The area of highest need identified by Council is the North East, namely Balwyn, Balwyn North and Deepdene.

Models of delivery

Council recognises the strength that partnerships can offer community projects, improving their viability and reach in the community. Partnerships with other community organisations can be critical to providing the support, access to resources and expertise that men's shed organisations need for long-term sustainability.

Funding

Funding for the establishment or refurbishment of men's sheds is available through the Department of Human Services (DHS). The Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) also administers an Australian Government grants program for men's sheds, as well as providing important information to assist groups to establish and run men's shed programs. It is Council's position that men's shed applicants source supervision funding from partners and/or philanthropic/service organisations. Council will not fund coordination/supervision of men's sheds. Men's shed organisations are eligible to apply through Council's community grant's programs for a grant to assist with men's shed activities, for example, to purchase materials or fund a special activity or program.

Council may consider assisting with building the shed or retrofitting an existing shed if this is a Council owned facility.

To support the development of men's sheds in Boroondara, Council will implement a strategic framework, consisting of a two-stage process. The first stage involves Council providing an overview of the priority areas and needs, and advice on how organisations can progress their plans for a men's shed through partnerships with existing men's sheds and/or auspicing organisations.

Stage 1

Council officers will:

1. convene a meeting with interested organisations to discuss their men's shed proposal including the target group and the type of activities the proposed men's shed program would offer
2. provide advice on the area of highest need and Council's preference for the establishment of a men's shed in the North East
3. provide referrals to those organisations that currently run men's sheds to discuss opportunities to add new members, and/or to organisations that may be interested in entering a partnership to establish a men's shed
4. encourage the formation of partnerships and identification of potential auspicing organisations
5. assist groups to identify potential sources of financial support, including providing them with information about the Community Grants Program
6. assist with the provision of appropriate volunteers through the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre
7. include men's shed programs in the Community Grants Program eligibility criteria.

Stage 2

For organisations seeking access to Council land or buildings, the following additional steps will apply:

8. organisations will need to demonstrate
 - i. a willingness to locate a men's shed in the area of highest need as identified by Council, namely the North East, and to consider locations identified by Council as appropriate for a men's shed
 - ii. support from members for a men's shed
 - iii. plans to include men with disabilities, isolated men, unemployed men, men from culturally diverse backgrounds and other target groups identified by Council, in the men's shed
 - iv. a minimum of one partner and/or an auspice for a men's shed to ensure the sustainability of the men's shed
 - v. the capacity to secure funding from at least one or more of the following: DHS, AMSA, corporate sponsorship/philanthropic trusts, auspicing bodies and partner organisations
9. organisations must submit a business case/proposal for a men's shed, which details their contribution to the project. Council may need to play a facilitation and support role for this step.