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Working Well Together

The roles of rural Men's Sheds in the lives of their members and the life of their local communities

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Social Work

at

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa (Massey University, Manawatū), Aotearoa

(New Zealand).

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2019

ABSTRACT

There are international concerns about the state of men's health that are mirrored in an Aotearoa New Zealand context. Men in this country die at least four years earlier than their female counterparts largely from life-style related, non-communicable diseases that are potentially preventable through a proactive health promotion approach that promotes social connectedness. Given this, there is an imperative to understand the benefits of groups that promote and support men's health and wellbeing. Men's Sheds are one such group that have been operating internationally for thirty years and for twenty-five years in this country. Men's Sheds have a growing, evidence-informed, reputation for being hubs of male wellbeing. This research investigates the connection between the health and wellbeing of men involved in Men's Sheds in provincial Aotearoa New Zealand and that of their local rural communities. A generic qualitative approach to gathering and analysing data was chosen for this study. This approach utilized semi-structured key informant interviews and focus groups from two rural Men's Sheds located in the same region. Thematic analysis was used to locate, order, and offer explanation of themes from the data corpus.

The findings of this study endorse current literature regarding Men's Sheds strongly enhancing the social connectedness of men with commensurate and significant benefits to their mental health and potentially to their physical health. Men's Sheds are contexts for productive work that harnesses and develops, cognitive and physical skills and facilitates capacity building and collective wellbeing in their communities through constructions projects, events, and mentoring. As unique community organisations, Sheds face several challenges pertaining to material and social resources. Implications of this research include supporting the development of existing Sheds in the context of their communities and those communities considering developing their own Shed. Also implied is facilitation of reciprocal engagement with organizational stakeholders and supporting professionals invested in individual and community wellbeing. The physical and mental wellbeing, learning, mentoring and community development and capacity building outcomes of Sheds. Detailed recommendations regarding policy and practice based on these

implications at local and national levels are provided together with a specially developed, comprehensive tool for Shed review based on this research project.

It is hoped that these outputs contribute to Aotearoa Sheds and communities as they build on their history of working well together.

FIGURE 1: HISTORIC RURAL SHED



Source: Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fittingly, this research is constructed on a foundation fashioned out of meaningful and rich social connections. Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the men and women of the Linwood Men's Shed in Eastern Christchurch for their aroha and support as I started my journey with Sheds. Special thanks go to Mona Contractor, Mary McNaughton, Lou Cootes, Bill Lloyd, Mark, Todd, Martin Cox, and Ray Hall. Next, I am very grateful to the leadership and members of Trundell and Wexford Shed for their openness, generosity of spirit and inspiring Shed practice. Mention must also go to the researchers, local and international, who have gone before me and my patient and encouraging academic supervisors, Dr's Kieran O'Donoghue and Michael Dale at Massey University. Colleagues Donna Ellen and David Cairns from Pegasus Health have supported and encouraged me alongside my friends Sean, Mike, Sarah, Nikki, Gythlian and George. The bedrock of the foundation has been my incredibly patient wife Raewyn and adult children Joel and Kate who have endured my physical and mental absence and helped me retain perspective when the going got tough.

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1 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the thesis. The title, *Working Well Together*, is not only a useful signifier but is descriptive of the phenomenon under study. As the literature review will shortly describe, the health of men has been identified internationally and locally as a matter of public concern for some time. Men are dying younger from potentially preventable disease and injury and are generally more socially isolated than their female counterparts yet, are less likely to seek help for physical and mental health related issues. In relation to this concern Men's Sheds appear to be potent avenues for supporting the health and general wellbeing of men and maximizing their contribution to the communities in which they are located. The simple premise is that when men join together in voluntary workshop activity producing items and engaging in service opportunities, they enhance their own physical, mental, and social wellbeing and that of their communities. This thesis aims to provide detailed examination of this premise grounded in the experience of two rural Men's Sheds juxtaposed with supporting literature. The process of this examination has given context to production of some tools to aid development of Men's Sheds and communities they serve.

This chapter begins with an outline of the research aim, the motivation of the researcher and continues on to provide brief definitions of key terms encountered within the thesis. An overview of each chapter is then presented with the chapter concluding with a summary of the direction of the study leading into the literature review in Chapter Two.

1.2 RESEARCH AIM

The current national socio-political climate appears characterized by devolution of responsibility for health and welfare from central government back on to local communities. The least resourced communities, including those in rural areas, seem to be more impacted by this trend. Therefore, it seems timely to consider how communities, constituted of their network of

organisations, can work collaboratively to address these challenges. Existing international Men's Shed research has focused predominantly on the benefits for men of Men's Shed membership. A small body of scholarship has given attention to the putative links between member and community wellbeing, with Aotearoa New Zealand Men's Shed research largely corresponding to this pattern.

Given this, the aforementioned concerns regarding men's health and Men's Sheds potential as avenues for wellbeing and community capacity building this research project aimed to answer the following questions:

What roles do rural Men's Sheds play in the life of their members and their communities of locale?

What developmental challenges might Sheds and communities face in maintaining their collaborative reciprocal relationships?

In alignment with the professional interest of the researcher, as discussed next, it is hoped that the study bolsters the body of knowledge in this under-researched area providing stimulus for further Shed/Community development in this country.

1.3 RESEARCH INTEREST

This research project has been "under construction" for seven years. Foundations were laid when the author became aware of Men's Sheds in 2012. Over the ensuing five years he had the privilege of assisting a community development project working with an urban community to develop their own Shed. This involved coalescing local interest in establishing a male-specific initiative and engaging men from their community to influence the direction the Shed would take. Together, men in the local urban community built a small but functional Shed which continues in operation to this day. During this journey, the researcher found himself fascinated and occasionally deeply moved as he witnessed men's willingness to work together and support each other. Many of these men carried some very difficult life challenges but found meaning and meaningful friendship in working together to produce items of value to their neighbourhood. In working shoulder-to-shoulder with the Shed members the researcher saw and experienced the

satisfaction of developing new skills and the resulting impact on individual's wellbeing. Many of the items produced were associated with combined efforts to strengthen the wider community of eastern Christchurch in the wake of the 2010-2012 earthquakes. It was in this context, as Shed coordinator, that the researcher liaised with other organisations and other Sheds within the network and began to formulate questions about reciprocal relationships between individual and community wellbeing. When the researcher left the Shed to pursue postgraduate study, he wanted to reflect, in a structured, evidenced-informed manner, on what he had experienced. This thesis is an outcome of that process of which some key terms used herein are discussed next.

1.4 KEY TERMS

1.4.1 MEN'S SHEDS

Men's Sheds are described within the promotional literature issued by Shed Associations as venues where men meet in the context of a joint task which has multiple benefits for them and their local communities (AMSA, n.d; Menzshed New Zealand, n.d.). Men's Sheds, sometimes referred to herein as Sheds are diverse organizational entities that find their expression in a variety of forms and formats in a range of countries predominantly, but not exclusively, in the global west. Accordingly, Sheds might appear in industrial sectors in small or large population centres, attached to community cottages in the suburbs, under tents or on riverbanks (Southcombe, Cavanagh, & Bartram., 2015). They may be constituted of a number of older men meeting twice weekly in a small workshop - a common but not exclusive configuration of Sheds (Ballinger, Talbot, & Verrinder, 2009). Alternatively, the Shed may manifest as a heterogenous group of community members including women and young people cycling through a larger facility five days a week. Whilst, from current knowledge, the majority of members are of European ethnicity some Sheds reflect significant ethnic diversity and may be purposed to support specific ethnic groups or other groups with defined needs (Golding, 2015). The provender of Sheds is likewise diverse with some producing complex object d'art for fundraising purpose alongside prosaic items such as picnic tables or wooden toys for community projects (Sunderland, 2013).

The purpose of the above descriptor is to create a wide frame of reference for the reader as to the heterogenous nature of Men's Shed's reflective of their own unique contexts

1.4.2 SHEDDIES

As noted above, Sheds are constituted by networks of relationships between individuals. How those individuals choose to represent themselves is largely a matter of individual and/or group preference with different countries or localized regions developing differential terms. For the purpose of this thesis, following the Aotearoa New Zealand work of Anstiss (2016), the term Sheddies will be deployed to refer to those people that attend Men's Sheds.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis is formatted as seven chapters. The following outline provides a synopsis of each chapter to assist readers engagement with the study and provide ease of access to specific areas.

1.5.1 CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins by reviewing international and local literature pertinent to the extant concerns regarding the health and wellbeing of men including definitions of these key terms. The review continues by chronicling the development of Men's Sheds as defined organizational entities from their beginnings in Australia to their current global distribution. Within this process the corpus of international Shed research is surveyed according to several interrelated fields of enquiry: education/training; health promotion; disability; ageing studies; mentoring; community development; human resources. This exploration is inclusive of research literature related to the claims made for and against Sheds. Attention then turns to the phenomenon of Men's Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand including the Movements' developmental journey, current status, and the foci of local research interest. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the rationale for this study.

1.5.2 CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

Chapter Three discusses the methodology used in this research providing information on the qualitative approach taken and the social constructionist perspective undergirding the approach. The initial influences behind the selection of the methodological approach and development of

the research design are proffered alongside a description of the methods used, ethical considerations, the sampling rationale and recruitment process. Data collection, management and analysis processes are then detailed accompanied by consideration of the strengths and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of reflective learning identified by the researcher during the design, data collection and analysis process.

1.5.3 CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS - KEY INFORMANTS

This chapter presents the findings from the key informant interviews of this project. It begins with a brief comparative description of the Wexford and Trundell communities and their Sheds. Beginning with the Trundell Shed the findings of each key informant interview. The chapter concludes with a comparison and overall thematic summary of findings from both Sheds including noteworthy minor findings.

1.5.4 CHAPTER FIVE FINDINGS - FOCUS GROUPS

The fifth chapter conveys the findings from the focus groups conducted with members of Wexford and Trundell Sheds. The context for each focus group including the composition of the group and their distinctive dynamics is first outlined. The findings of each group are then presented followed by a conjoint thematic summary of shared and distinct findings.

Consideration is then given to noteworthy minor findings identified across key informant interviews and focus groups. The chapter concludes with a summary of shared and distinct findings between key informant and focus group interviews in preparation for a discussion of themes in Chapter Six.

1.5.5 CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION

This chapter begins by describing how the themes identified in the findings relate to the major research questions from this study. Each theme is then discussed in detail with reference to the literature including the theories and models of individual and collective wellbeing presented in Chapter Two. Next the shared challenges the Shed's face are presented followed by the specific implications of those challenges for each Shed. Further implications for the Men's Shed movement in Aotearoa New Zealand, the community and policy context and the social work

profession will then be explored. The chapter concludes with a summary of the discussion which integrates the main points in preparation for the final chapter of this thesis.

1.5.6 CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION

Chapter Seven draws together the learning from Working Well Together. The chapter begins with a brief review of the research objectives and the methodology used in this study. The key themes from the findings and the implications therein are briefly summarized in preparation for a detailed outline of specific recommendations for the relevant stakeholder groups. These include the Wexford and Trundell Sheds and the Aotearoa New Zealand Men's Shed Movement. Integrated into these recommendations are links to developmental resources created as part of this project and existing resources developed from this study and overseas which are attached as appendices. Further recommendations address the communities in which established Sheds are located; communities considering Shed development; Local and Regional Government; Health, Education and Welfare organizations both statutory and non-statutory; the national policy context. Recommendations for social work and community development practitioners and further research are then presented separately. The chapter concludes with reference to limitations of this project, the authors' personal reflection on the research journey and a closing summary of what it has meant and might mean to see Sheds and communities continue working well together.

2 CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature undergirding this study to establish a clear rationale for the approach to achieving the research objectives. Accordingly, the chapter begins with defining the concepts of health and wellbeing. This includes introduction of a specific theory of individual wellbeing and a model of collective wellbeing. Next, an overview of men's health from an international and local perspective is presented. Further, the emergence of Men's Sheds as a global and national phenomenon is charted in context of Shed research conducted internationally. This process will explicate categories of Shed research already undertaken and identify current gaps within the literature. As the chapter concludes, the place of this study in addressing an under-researched area within Men's Shed research will be presented.

2.2 HEALTH AND WELLBEING – TOWARDS DEFINITIONS

2.2.1 HEALTH

The constitution of the World Health Organisation (1946) supplies the following definition of health and its context within human rights:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition. The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States (WHO, 1946).

This definition indicates that health is manifest in three ways, the health of the body, the mind and the health of relationships. This provides a basic framework for understanding health and ill-health, and, for the sake of convenience, will be used as the basis for understanding health as it relates to men and Men's Sheds in this study.

However, it is important to note, that whilst outside of the scope of this exploratory study, the concept of health is not limited to the WHO (1946) definition. Indeed, many commentators argue for a broader and concomitantly more nuanced approach to health, that is cognizant of wider dimensions such as the global and local politico-economic context to which persons and communities are subject (Cram, 2014; Leonardi, 2018). Still others suggest that the WHO definition has its roots in the largely mono-cultural, logico-scientific perspective of the global north (Cram, 2014). Such commentators argue therefore, that the WHO definition is not representative of the multi-textured understandings of health informed by the spiritual and ecological perspectives of indigenous and marginalized peoples (Charlier et al., 2017; Cram, 2014). They point towards inclusion of these perspectives as they relate to cultural differences and localized understandings of what might constitute health, as new more inclusive and less reductive definitions of health are sought (Bates, Marvel, Nieto-Sanchez, & Grijalva 2019; Charlier et al., 2017; Leonardi, 2018). One example of a health issue particularly pertinent to this study is suicide and suicide prevention. Most established theory on the aetiology of suicide is located in the global north (O’Keefe, Tucker, Cole, Hollingsworth, & Wingate, 2018). Authors studying indigenous suicide suggest an approach, informed by existing theory, that accounts for the historical impact of colonization and dominance of western health models which have resulted in structural inequities for specific ethnicities (Getz, 2018; Hatcher, 2016; O’Keefe, et al., 2018; Waiti, 2017). Such authors contend that effective suicide prevention interventions need to be informed by indigenous epistemologies, emphasizing culture, spirituality and the interrelationship of self, other and the natural environment as joint sources of knowledge and well-being (Wilson, 2008.) Concomitantly, further study of Men’s Sheds would ideally include reference to these alternative epistemological understandings of what it means to be healthy. This issue is addressed in the recommendations at the conclusion of this thesis.

2.2.2 WELLBEING

Similar to the notion of health with which it clearly intersects and overlaps, the term wellbeing is subject to multiple constructions and interpretations (Allin & Hand, 2014; Cram, 2014; Jayawickreme, Forgeard, & Seligman, 2012; Roy, Riley, Sears, & Rula, 2018). Initially the division of wellbeing into interrelated economic, physical, psychological, and socio-cultural domains,

seems logical and moderately straightforward. However, fields of study including economics, political philosophy, medicine, psychiatry, psychology and sociology, have all made contributions adding to a multiplicity of theory which is at times bewildering for researchers and the general public (Allin & Hand, 2014; Jayawickreme et al., 2012; Joshanloo, 2019).

Moreover, Cram (2014) notes that, again similar to notions of health, most theoretical definitions of wellbeing and the analytical frameworks and measurement tools that descend from them, originate in the global north. With indigenous theories of health and wellbeing operating from different epistemological and cosmological positionings than western approaches (Bates et al., 2019; Charlier et al., 2017; Cram, 2014;), the notion of accurately measuring wellbeing across heterogenous population groups is problematic (Allin & Hand, 2014).

Given the challenges described above, and the constraints of this study as a small student research project, an in-depth exploration and explanation of the wellbeing literature is not feasible. However, for the purpose broadening understanding of diverse conceptualizations of wellbeing and to inform discussion of wellbeing outcomes via Sheds in Chapter Six, several conceptual frameworks are explored at this juncture which will be referenced later in this study. The first is the well-known Māori model of wellbeing, Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994).

2.2.2.1 TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ

This model of conceptualizing and representing health and wellbeing has been deployed in a number of health, education and social services contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand across the last 35 years (Cram, 2014). The physical representation pictured below in Figure 2 has been deployed by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF, 2019) as part of the Foundation's 2019 Mental Health Awareness Week.

FIGURE 2: TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ



Source: Mental Health Foundation

As depicted above, Durie's Model (1994) describes health and wellbeing as a whare/meeting house membered by the facets of taha wairua/spiritual wellbeing, taha hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing, taha tinana/physical wellbeing and taha whānau/family and social wellbeing. The foundation is formed of people's connection with the whenua/land out of which life is developed and sustained (MHF, 2019).

This model represents an invitation for residents of Aotearoa New Zealand to engage with an understanding of wellbeing extending beyond that of the global north. Use of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) will be the subject of recommendations for further Men's Shed research in Chapter Seven.

The second conceptual framework is an outline of the categories of western wellbeing theories collated by Jayawickreme et al. (2012) in developing their Engine of Well-Being framework.

2.2.2.2 WESTERN WELLBEING THEORIES

Jayawickreme et al. (2012) describe the range of theories addressing the concept of wellbeing in psychology as falling into four categories which they name as Wanting, Liking, Needing and Meaning theories.

According to Wanting theories “an individual achieves well-being when he is able to fulfil his desires... In economic terms, well-being is tied to satisfying most of one’s preferences” (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 330.) This could be simply defined as wellbeing through accomplishment or getting what one wants.

Liking or Hedonic theories in western psychology focus on “subjective reports of positive emotions, life satisfaction, and happiness, and they assess how people feel and think about their quality of life” (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 330). Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) is a construct frequently associated with such theories comprising experiences of momentary emotions and mood alongside a person’s cognitive self-evaluation of their progress in life (Diener, 2000).

Needing theories provide an “objective list of goods required for ‘well-being’ or a ‘happy’ life. These theories do not completely discount what people choose (Wanting) and how people feel (Liking), but they contend that what people need is more central to well-being” (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 332).

As such they represent an externally defined basis of what is required for human wellbeing as emblemized in Maslow’s (1971) Hierarchy of Needs that encompass physiological psychological and sociological domains.

Meaning theories construct wellbeing as being related to a person’s sense of “meaning, purpose and autonomy” (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 333). These theories differ from Liking accounts focused on positive emotion which can be transitory (Jayawickreme et al., 2012;). Meaning making and experiencing a sense of profound purpose can be experienced in the context of tragedy and psychological struggle (Frankl, 2006) and have been found to be significantly correlated to overall life satisfaction (Ryff & Singer, 2002). Each of these theoretical groups will be referenced in Chapter Six as they pertain to Men’s Sheds and wellbeing. The third conceptual framework is the Well-Being Theory of Seligman (2002a, 2002b, 2011) which is discussed below.

2.2.2.3 SELIGMAN’S WELL-BEING THEORY

The positive psychology movement seeks to understand and support human function based on strengths, at individual family and community levels, rather than through a continued focus on

pathology (Seligman, 2002b). Seligman's original theory used the term happiness instead of wellbeing and was comprised of three elements: positive emotion, engagement and meaning (Seligman, 2002a). However, concerned that the term happiness was apt to be conflated with notions of cheerfulness and as such did not represent the multidimensionality of human experience, he revised his theory at the beginning of this decade. Adding two further elements to his account, namely, positive relationships and accomplishment, Seligman (2011) settled on the term 'wellbeing' as more reflective of the purpose and potentialities of human beings. Applying the term 'flourishing' to the pursuit and attainment of wellbeing, Seligman's theory (2011) related this pursuit relative to five elements: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These are abbreviated into the acronym PERMA and are detailed in Appendix One. This theoretical understanding of individual wellbeing will be revisited when themes arising from this study are addressed in Chapter Six. The fourth conceptual framework, as described below, is that of Collective Wellbeing developed by Roy et al. (2018).

2.2.2.4 COLLECTIVE WELLBEING

Roy et al. (2018) postulate that Community Wellbeing is constituted of individual and group domains that reciprocally influence each other:

Collective well-being incorporates individual community members' perceptions of life in the community. Thus, collective well-being is dependent on individual well-being, but this association is bidirectional, and the properties of the group also influence the individual... positive affect and well-being can be spread among people in a community. Well-being at the community level influences well-being at the individual level, and a change in positive affect and well-being of one individual has a ripple effect on others. Thus, collective well-being is a property of a group of people (Roy et al., 2018 p. 1802).

This thesis, Working Well Together, proffers Men's Sheds as being organizational agents that reciprocally mediate wellbeing at the intersection of individual and community experience. As will be seen in Chapter Six, Sheds make contributions within each of the collective wellbeing domains described below:

'The vitality domain includes perceived overall health and positive functioning, as well as emotional experience and emotional intelligence. The opportunity domain includes the ratio of perceived financial stability and satisfaction to perceived financial stress and worry, as well as perceived ability to achieve life goals. The connectedness domain assesses the level of connection and support among community members. The contribution domain incorporates residents' feelings of meaning and purpose attributed to community engagement and belonging. The inspiration domain includes community members' perceived access to activities that are intrinsically motivating and stimulating.' (Roy et al., 2018 p. 1803).

The work of Jayawickreme et al. (2012), Seligman's Well-Being Theory (2011) and the concept of Collective Wellbeing (Roy et al., 2018) described above will be utilized to discuss the findings of this study relating to wellbeing in Chapter Six. The prospective use of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) in future Men's Shed research in Aotearoa New Zealand will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Having considered and explored the concepts of health and wellbeing that will be interwoven throughout this study the focus of this chapter now turns to exploring the health of men.

2.3 MEN'S HEALTH

This section outlines concerns regarding gendered health disparities between men and women and is presented on the basis of the World Health Organisation (1946) definition of health supplied earlier. Beginning with a brief overview of several international perspectives, the state of men's health in Aotearoa is then considered. The section concludes with the introduction of Men's Sheds as contexts supportive of men's health.

2.3.1 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

In considering gendered health differentials from a global perspective, Baker et al. (2014) note that men are still experiencing earlier death and poorer quality of life than their female counterparts. In summarizing international evidence Baker (2018) notes that in "2016, average male life expectancy at birth was 69.8 years compared to 75.3 years for women". In addition, the

difference between men and women in life expectancy at birth (LEAB) “increased globally from 4.2 years in 1970 to 5.5 years in 2016” (Baker, 2018, p145).

At the beginning of the millennium, Aoun, Donovan, Johnson and Egger (2002) described men as being significantly more likely than women to die from cardiovascular disease, cancer, suicide, violent injury and vehicle accidents. Latterly, Baker (2016) notes, despite progress towards prevention, detection and treatment of cardio-vascular disease, male health still lags significantly behind that of women in the areas described by Aoun et al. (2002).

This gendered disparity is accorded several different explanatory factors (Baker, 2016; Baker, 2018; White et al., 2011). These include, occupational-related risk, traditional notions of masculinity, poor health literacy and health-seeking behaviours (Baker, 2018; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Meershoek & Hortsman, 2016; Seidler, Dawes, Rice, Oliffe, & Dhillon, 2016; Wellstead, 2014). Other authors emphasize broader meta-contextual factors regarding how the social determinants of health sit within the neo-liberal political context (Marmot, 2017).

Baker et al. (2014) and Baker (2018) explain gendered health disparity as the confluence of higher levels of exposure to physical and chemical hazards in work contexts and risk-taking behaviours associated with male norms and constructs of masculinity. Regarding occupational-related risk, Baker (2018) notes that men are over-represented in illness, injuries and fatalities related to workplace risks as they continue to outnumber women in high risk occupations (Stergiou-Kita, Lafrance, Pritlove, & Power, 2017).

Exploring the topic of western masculinity, Fleming, Lee, and Dworkin (2014) note the deleterious impact of various social constructs that emphasize attitudes such as independence, aggression and denial of illness. Baker et al. (2014) suggest that such constructs may inform men’s tendency to be less likely to seek medical assistance and to underreport symptoms of illness (Hooper, 2016; Johnson, Huggard, & Goodyear-Smith, 2008; Phillips, 2006; Wellstead, 2014). Stergiou-Kita et al. (2017) join with Baker (2018) in acknowledging the prevalence of this problem amongst unskilled or semi-skilled workers who have a significantly lower life expectancy than their skilled and educated counterparts. As Waling and Fildes (2017) argue, this tendency to deny illness and delay

health-seeking is an internationally recognized problem that confounds potential solutions to men's health issues.

MacDonald (2016), however, challenges the efficacy of the use of a deficit-based masculinity construction as a root-cause of gendered health disparity. Whilst acknowledging the problematic nature of some masculine discourses on male health, MacDonald (2016) argues for a more nuanced understanding that is cognizant of social determinants of health. Marmot (2017) lists these determinants as including access to adequate education, housing, employment, sustaining food sources and health care. He suggests that in light of growing global economic disparity within and across nations, these indices have an extremely significant impact on the health of less-affluent population groups (Marmot, 2017). White, Seims, Cameron and Taylor (2016) note the extra importance of these determinants in understanding the health of males. They detail a growing body of evidence suggesting men may be more vulnerable to the impacts of negative social determinants than women, as they are less adaptive to adversity and are more socially isolated (Cullen, Baiocchi, Eggleston, Loftus, & Fuchs, 2016; White et al., 2016). Beech and Bamford's 2014 research emphasizes the deleterious impact of such social isolation on the physical and mental health of men, particularly after middle age (Wenger, Davies, & Scott, 2017).

A further metacontextual factor in the western hemisphere, which is inextricably interrelated with the social determinants approach to health, is the impact of neo-liberalism on health care for both genders (Baum et al., 2016; Meershoek & Hortsman, 2016; Pellegrino, 1999). Achieving primacy in many western nations across the last forty years, neo-liberalism can be described as a political philosophy privileging the free market economy as the primary means of managing social and economic difficulty (Brunton & Pick, 2014). Under this philosophy, an individual is primarily defined by their ability to participate in the market, i.e. to offer and consume goods and services (Brunton & Pick, 2014). In this way, persons and health services become market commodities subject to competition and manipulation (Meershoek & Hortsman, 2016) rather than health services being the ethical responsibility of a moral society in protection of persons (Pellegrino, 1999). Such competition is frequently portrayed in the political arena as the pursuit of effectiveness, efficiency and providing a diversity of choice for the consumer (Brunton & Pick, 2014; Tafvelin, Hyvonen, & Westerberg, 2012). However, many authors strongly contest this

notion, noting an increasing pressure internationally on health, education and social service systems tasked with addressing greater needs with less resources (Baines, 2010; Harington & Beddoe, 2014; Harlow, Berg, Barry, & Chandler, 2011; Tafvelin et al., 2012).

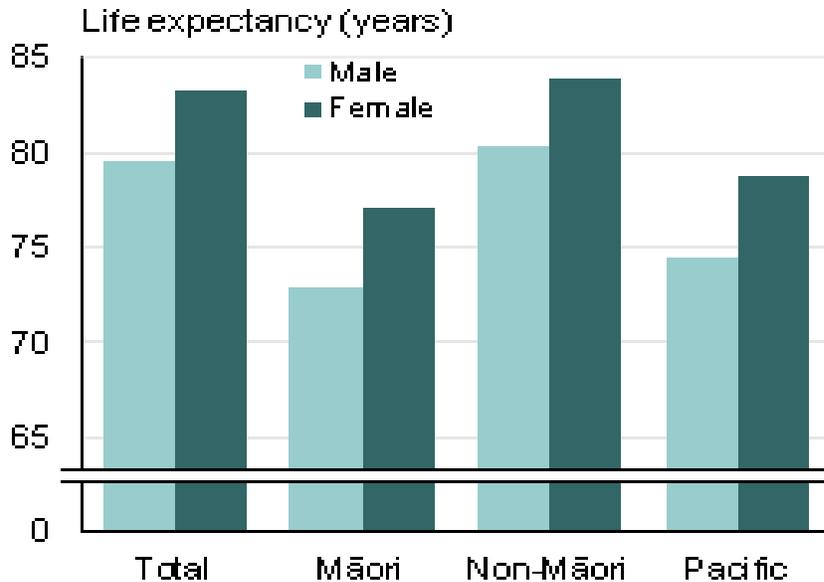
Regardless of which combination of the above factors are deployed to explain gendered health disparity, there seems to be sufficient evidence to support concern regarding the trends in men's health globally. These concerns are also reflected in the Aotearoa New Zealand men's health context which is described below.

2.3.2 MEN'S HEALTH IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

This section juxtaposes an Aotearoa New Zealand perspective regarding men's health differentials against the international picture described above. This begins with an overview of pertinent statistics and continues with an exploration of explanatory factors including an examination of the impact of colonialization. Particular attention is given to male suicide as an issue of concern.

Earlier in this decade, Kowal, Byles and Towers (2014) echoed the aforementioned international perspective noting men's lower life-expectancy, generally poorer physical and mental health outcomes and greater likelihood of dying from non-communicable preventable diseases than women. The difference in life expectancy from the most recent figures available is displayed below.

TABLE 1: LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY ETHNIC GROUP AND SEX 2012-2014



Source: Statistics New Zealand

This table indicates that, based on death rates in Aotearoa New Zealand for the period 2012–14, overall life expectancy at birth (LEAB) was 83.2 years for females and 79.5 years for males, a difference of 3.7 years. Whilst this has decreased from the highest differential of 6.4 years for the period 1975-77 it remains significant (Statistics NZ, 2019.). When ethnicity is factored in, an even more nuanced picture emerges. At the time of measurement, LEAB was 77.1 years for Māori females and 73.0 years for Māori males, as compared to 83.9 years for non-Māori females and 80.3 years for non-Māori males (Statistics NZ, 2019). In terms of Pasifika New Zealanders, LEAB was 78.7 years for Pacific females and 74.5 years for Pacific males (Statistics NZ, 2019).

Similar to international perspectives, this gendered disparity attracts differential explanations.

Mirroring international concerns, men are disproportionately represented in work-related injury, illness and death statistics. Statistics New Zealand (2019) reported that in 2018, “Males had the highest incidence rate of 128 work-related injury claims per 1,000 FTEs, compared with 69 claims

per 1,000 FTEs for females... Males made more claims for fatal work-related injuries than females in 2018 (96 percent of the total)”(Injury Statistics Work Related Claims by Sex, para. 1).

The majority of these claims came from traditionally male-dominated industries such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, construction, manufacturing, utilities services, transport and mining (Statistics New Zealand, 2019).

Regarding work-related illness, WorkSafe New Zealand (2017) notes that “A worker is more likely to die of a work-related disease than a safety incident, such as a fall. Every year around 600 to 900 people die from work-related disease in New Zealand. About 80% of these are men” (Work Related Health, para. 2).

In relation to suicide, the most recently available provisional figures from 2016 indicate that there were 553 deaths by suspected suicide. Of these deaths 412 were males and 141 were females which equates to a rate of “17.0 per 100,000 and 5.8 per 100,000 respectively” (Ministry of Health, 2019) seeing men’s suicide rate at almost three times higher than women. Further attention will be given to the topic of male suicide later in this review.

In terms of the influence of masculinities on male health, Wellstead (2014) suggests that male help-seeking behaviour in this country mirrors international concerns, whereby men are less likely than women to engage with health professionals. Wellstead (2014) noted that, for some men, a perception of lack of access to information was implicit in this concern whereas others appeared captured by perceptions of what constituted normal behaviour for men. Citing male norms of stoicism and resilience regarding delaying or avoiding presentation to health services, Fish, Prichard, Ettridge, Grunfeld and Wilson (2019) alongside Yousaf, Grunfeld, and Hunter (2015) noted that this issue was compounded in rural areas which are a focus of this study. To ameliorate this concern, Johnson et al. (2008), preceding Baxter et al. (2019) argue that a male-specific approach needs to be adopted in primary care in Aotearoa New Zealand to address gendered health disparities. They advocate that for such approaches to become systematized and sustainable, a national men’s health policy undergirding practice should be established. Pointing to the Australian and Irish examples, Baxter et al. (2019) suggest that this advent would

mandate greater investment in men's health research which, they note, is majorly underfunded compared with such research for women (Baxter et al., 2019).

A further area of inequity to be considered is the differential between non-Māori and Māori men who live on average a full 7.3 years less than their non-Māori counterparts (Statistics NZ, 2019). Similarly, Pasifika men have a LEAB 5.8 years lower than non-Māori and non-Pasifika men (Statistics NZ, 2019).

Phillips et al. (2017) account for this ethnic disparity by highlighting the negative impact on Māori and Pasifika health of social and economic changes, in the 1970's and 1980's, including rising unemployment and reduced access to housing and health services. As neo-liberalism took hold, Māori and Pasifika, already more vulnerable in socio-economic and cultural terms, were more heavily affected by the user-pays environment which saw greater inequity in the distribution of health resources (Phillips et al., 2017).

Wider even than the neo-liberal political context is the impact of colonialization and racism (Harris et al., 2006; Reid, Cormack, & Paine, 2019). Reid et al. (2019) note the pervasive and continuing impact of colonialization on most indigenous peoples across the world in context of alarming trends in the physical and mental health of Māori. They describe Māori health as characterized by "systematic inequities in health outcomes, differential exposure to the determinants of health, inequitable access to and through health and social systems, disproportionate marginalization and inadequate representation in the health workforce" (Reid et al., 2019, p119). This impact is demonstrated not only by lowered LEAB but in gross over-representation in the Global Burden of Disease 2010 risk factors (Wilson & Blakely, 2013), indicating a generalized poorer quality of life, and in rates of death by suicide (Getz, 2018; Ministry of Health, 2019; Waiti, 2017). The Ministry of Health (2019) provisional suicide data notes that, "Over the ten-year period the rate of suicide for Māori was consistently higher than the rate for non-Māori, for both males and females." Of particular pertinence to this study, the suicide rate for Māori males "increased markedly from 2013 to 2016 (21.2 per 100,000 and 31.7 per 100,000 respectively)" being twice that of non-Māori males (Ministry of Health, 2019).

This position, vis-à-vis lack of equity and resulting impact, is strongly supported by the recent work of Goodyear-Smith and Ashton (2019). In their chronicling the historical development of the Aotearoa New Zealand Health System, they detail ongoing systematized inequity regarding the health outcomes of Māori, Pasifika, and low-income populations.

Against this somewhat bleak picture regarding men's overall health and the health of indigenous peoples in particular, researchers have noted that most areas of disease-related death amongst men are potentially preventable (Aoun et al., 2002; Baker et al., 2014; James, Wirth, Harville & Efunbumi, 2016; Oliffe et al. 2016). These areas include those most associated with male mortality, notably cardiovascular disease, different forms of cancer and suicide (Aoun et al., 2002; Baker et al., 2014; James et al., 2016; Oliffe et al., 2016; Robertson & Baker, 2016). The issue of suicide amongst males in terms of its international prevalence, current rates in Aotearoa New Zealand, etiological factors and a brief theoretical overview will be presented next.

2.3.3 MALE SUICIDE

Whilst the picture is more nuanced than some popularist commentators may indicate, it appears that globally, despite some significant cultural variation, men are at significantly higher risk of dying by suicide than women (Lester, Gunn, & Quinnett, 2014).

Reflective of this global pattern, as noted earlier, the ratio of male to female suicide in Aotearoa New Zealand is almost 3:1. The most recent provisional figures from the Ministry of Health (MOH) indicate the highest rate (per 100,000 persons) in male suicide is 24.9 in the 15-24 age bracket (N=86) closely followed by a rate of 23.9 (N=142) among men aged between 25-44 (MOH, 2019). Men in the 45-64 age range have a rate of 22.2 (N=127) with men aged over 65 years evidencing a rate of 16.0 (N=52) (MOH, 2019).

There are many factors associated with this phenomenon internationally, the breadth and culturally specific nature of which are beyond the scope of this study to explore fully. However current scholarship has endeavoured to summarize these factors as interest in male suicide as a gendered phenomenon increases (Lester et al., 2014). Notable factors identified by researchers include deficits in help-seeking behaviour; the atypical nature of male depression; the role of social isolation and perceived loneliness; drug and alcohol abuse; Cultural and group-specific

factors; the effects of testosterone on impulsivity and aggression; the lethality of men's preferred means of suicide (Lester et al., 2014).

As noted by O'Keefe et al. (2018) there is a multiplicity of theory regarding the aetiology of suicidality. Some approaches emphasize individual psychological factors (Shneidman, 1996; Wenzel & Beck, 2008) whereas others consider the broad sociological context (Durkheim & Simpson, 2002) or the interpersonal context (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden, Witte, Cukrowicz, Braithwaite, Selby, & Joiner, 2010).

Joiner's (2005) Interpersonal Theory of Suicide explains the individual's progression towards a suicide attempt in terms of three major constructs: perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability. Perceived burdensomeness refers to the perception that a person is not effective in their lives and is therefore a burden on others. The construct of thwarted belongingness relates to feeling or perceiving oneself as socially disconnected and lonely. When an individual experiences both these constructs simultaneously, this influences a motivation to suicide (Van Orden et al., 2010). The last construct, acquired capability, refers to how a person may develop the ability to act on these feelings and perceptions as a result of exposure to life experiences that increase tolerance of pain and fearlessness of death (Joiner, 2005). The confluence of these three constructs are thought to raise the risk of an individual attempting suicide (Joiner, 2005; Van Orden et al., 2010). It is to this theory that attention will return when the utility of Men's Sheds in addressing male suicidality is explored in Chapter Six.

2.3.4 MEN'S HEALTH PROMOTION

In reviewing health promotion initiatives for men, Bottorff et al. (2015) posit that preventative practices include addressing issues of diet, substance use, safer work practices, physical activity and timely use of effective medication. Mellor, Connaughton, McCabe and Tatangelo (2017) argue that such strategies have been indicated as useful in improving men's overall health outcomes when deployed within a socially supportive context that ameliorates the impact of social isolation on health (Lindsay-Smith, O'Sullivan, Eime, Harvey & van Uffelen, 2018; Wenger et al., 2017; White et al., 2016). Similarly, Te Rau Ora (TRO), the national peak body for Māori health development, advocates for a multi-faceted approach to Māori health (Te Rau Ora, n.d.).

In relation specifically to the issues of Māori suicide, TRO suggest “whānau and community driven approaches to prevent suicide, that take into account the economic, physical and cultural aspects of health” (Te Rau Ora, n.d.).

Relatedly, in her Aotearoa New Zealand-based research, Wellstead (2014) postulates the importance of communities interested in men’s health creating a variety of formal and informal information conduits for men to access health-related information and services (Chawner, 2015). One such conduit by which health information may be accessed are Men’s Sheds (Cordier & Wilson, 2014). It is into this arena of definite need, proven strategy and marginal political support that Men’s Sheds emerge as promising organizational entities supportive of men’s health (Kelly, Steiner, Mason, & Teasdale, 2019; Milligan, et al., 2016; Wilson & Cordier, 2013; Wilson, Cordier, Doma, Misan, & Vaz, 2015; Wilson, Cordier, Parsons, Vaz, & Ciccarelli, 2018).

2.4 EMERGENCE OF MEN’S SHEDS

This section chronicles the development of Men’s Sheds, provides an overview of extant Shed research and supporting literature and considers narratives that call for a critical evaluation of the Shed movement.

As noted earlier, Men’s Sheds are described as venues where men meet, in the context of a joint task, which has multiple benefits for them and for their communities (AMSA, n.d; MSNZ, n.d.).

Golding (2015) indicates that the Men’s Shed movement, focusing primarily on men over fifty years of age, originated in Australia approximately thirty years ago. In Australia, over one thousand Men’s Sheds are registered with the Australian Men’s Shed Association (AMSA, n.d.). Cordier and Wilson (2014) state that, AMSA-registered Sheds are incorporated under the Australian Men’s Health Policy and are eligible for funding via the Australian federal government as avenues for promoting Men’s health through social inclusion. As described by Waling and Fildes (2017), the Australian Men’s Shed movement is culturally and organizationally diverse, being found anywhere from inner-city locations to remote rural communities. Accordingly, a Men’s Shed may have multiple manifestations, from a fully equipped dedicated workshop space to a gathering of men on a riverbank (Southcombe, Cavanagh, & Bartram, 2015a). From its

genesis in Australia the Men's Shed movement has spread to Aotearoa New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, the United Kingdom, United States and Europe, with over 1800 Men' Sheds estimated to be currently in operation globally (IMSO, n.d.).

As Sheds have developed as organizational entities so too has the body of literature that describes and analyses their impact on men's health. Men's Shed research can be divided broadly into several interrelated fields of enquiry: education/training; health promotion; disability; ageing studies; mentoring; community development; human resources.

Education researchers have focused on Sheds as centres of informal learning, or knowledge-transfer, through community participation (Brown, Golding & Foley, 2008; Carragher & Golding, 2015; Golding, Brown, Foley, Harvey & Gleeson, 2007; Reynolds, 2011; Skladzien & O'Dwyer, 2010). As centres of learning, Men's Sheds exemplify the qualities of a community of practice whereby shared interests create the context for skill sharing and social development (Cairó Battistutti & Bork, 2017; Patel, 2017). The importance of activity-based learning in a social context for fostering physical and mental health and functional cognitive capacity is strongly supported in a variety of wider literature (Dolenc & Petrič, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2012; Musich, Wang, Hawkins, & Greame, 2017; Netz, Wu, Becker, & Tenenbaum, 2005; Newson & Kempes, 2006; Park et al., 2019; Sani, Herrera, Wakefield, Boroch, & Gulyas, 2012; Tribess, Virtuoso Jr, & de Oliveira, 2012). Participants typically engage in three types of activity including light physical activity, creative and sometimes complex cognitive activity and socially connecting activity. The combined effect of these activity-types when coupled with the experience of meaningful contribution enhance social connectedness (Ang et al., 2017; Antonucci & Akiyama, 1995; Antonucci, Ajrouch, & Birditt, 2014; Ermer & Proulx, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2017; Reynolds, 2011; Skladzien & O'Dwyer, 2010) acting to protect physical and mental health (Haslam et al., 2019; Phillips, 2017; Phillips, Edwards, Andel, & Kilpatrick, 2016).

Health promotion research has posited Sheds as centres of male wellbeing, creating opportunities for informal and formal health promotion within a relationally centred, community context (Anstiss, 2016; Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Flood & Blair, 2013; Ford, Scholz & Lu, 2015; Golding, Brown, Foley & Harvey, 2009; Kelly et al., 2019; Milligan et al., 2015; Nurmi,

Mackenzie, Roger, Reynolds, & Urquhart, 2018). Informal opportunities identified include men discussing health concerns during their interaction at the Shed, thereby providing each other with mutual support and access to information (Cox, Hoang, Barnett, & Cross, 2019; Golding, 2015; Wilson & Cordier, 2013). This practice is identified as being a conduit to introduce formal health promotion initiatives to the Shed, through visiting professionals and men seeking formal health advice outside the Shed (Crabtree, Tinker, & Glaser, 2018; Flood & Blair, 2013; Moylan, Carey, Blackburn, Hayes, & Robinson, 2015; Wilson & Cordier, 2015).

In the disability field, Hansji, Wilson and Cordier, (2015) and Wilson, Cordier, Parsons, Vaz, and Buchanan (2016), situate sheds as potential places of social inclusion or enabling spaces. In these spaces, men recovering from, or managing, illness and disability find structure to their week and meaningful companionship facilitative of a sense of social inclusion and existential purpose (Wilson et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016). These facets enhance their physical and mental health and bolster their subjective sense of wellbeing (Ang et al., 2017; Diener, 2000; Peluso & Andrade, 2005; Warburton & Winterton, 2017).

Within ageing research, Reynolds, Mackenzie, Medved and Roger (2015), note potentially improved health and wellbeing outcomes for older men, with Shed participation reducing loneliness and social isolation (Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Wenger et al., 2017; Nurmi et al., 2018; Ormsby, Stanley, & Jaworski, 2010). Milligan, Payne, Bingley and Cockshott, (2015) identify similar outcomes with Golding (2014) and Anstiss, Hodgetts and Stolte (2018) positioning Sheds as transitional spaces that enable men to cope with the retirement process. Haslam et al. (2019), writing in the wider context of ageing studies, found such spaces are vital to the process of navigating the journey from paid work to retirement. Similarly, other researchers have posited customary structured activity, such as provided by Sheds, as a key ingredient to successful aging (Barnes & Parry, 2004; Coles & Vassarotti, 2012; Menec, 2003; Morgan & Bath, 1998).

Pertaining to mentoring, Morton's (2015) survey of twenty-seven Aotearoa New Zealand Men's Sheds identified Sheds as sites where older men can safely engage in the skill development of younger people through shared activity (Rahja, Scanlon, Wilson, & Cordier, 2016; Wilson, Cordier, Milbourn, Mahoney, Hoey & Buchanan; 2019). Morton's (2015) work has added to several

Australian studies in this area (Cordier et al. 2016; Wilson, Cordier & Wilkes-Gillan, 2014; Wilson, Cordier, & Wilson-Whatley, 2013). Cordier et al. (2016) argue compellingly that such arrangements are of reciprocal benefit for the wellbeing and social identity of both parties, with Morton (2015) extrapolating the benefits to the wider community. In this way Men's Sheds are positioned as sites for development of individual, group and community wellbeing by building social capital and social cohesion via volunteerism (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Jiang, Hosking, Burns, & Anstey, 2019; Murayama et al. 2015; Shintaro Kono & Burton, 2019; Yotsui, Campbell & Honma., 2016;).

Following the theme of Sheds contribution to community development, Southcombe et al. (2015a) use a community capacity building (CCB) framework (Liberato, Brimblecombe, Ritchie, Ferguson, & Coveney, 2011) to understand indigenous Men's Sheds and similar groups in regional Australia. They suggest that Sheds provide meeting spaces to achieve individual and collective empowerment aims, and with proactive and skilled leadership facilitate connection between men and health, education and housing services (Robinson Jr & Green, 2011; Southcombe et al., 2015a). Concomitantly they argue that, enabling men to act collectively in representing their interests to service providers facilitates a sense of agency in exerting influence over their own life conditions (Ife & Fiske, 2006; Southcombe et al., 2015a). Writing in the wider community capacity building literature, Liberato et al. (2011) describe this facilitation of agency as enhancing a community's ability to define, delineate and act on issues they consider developmentally significant. Similarly, using a CCB framework, Roger, Nurmi, Wilson, Mackenzie and Oliffe (2016) have sought to explicitly describe the links between individual, group and community wellbeing in four Canadian and Australian Men's Sheds. They identified increased member wellbeing, a stronger positive group identity and tangible physical and social benefits for the wider communities in which these Sheds sit (Foster, Munoz, & Leslie, 2018; McNeil, Cavanagh, Bartram, & Leggat, 2012; Roger et al., 2016). Community benefits included maintenance of local historical sites, mentoring of intellectually disabled young people and supporting social inclusion and cohesion through running community events (Roger et al., 2016). These examples place Men's Sheds within a wider macro-political frame in which involvement in Shed's can be understood as

participating in processes of wider community advocacy and change (Ife, 2013; Foster et al., 2018; Kenny & Connors, 2017; Mendes, 2017).

The intersection of personal, community and political change is especially relevant for rural communities, locally and internationally, which generally struggle to attract adequate resourcing from health, welfare and education services (Doolan-Noble & Richardson, 2018; Hvenegaard, Mündel, Beckie, & Hallström, 2016; Nguyen, Wells, & Nguyen, 2019). Decline in rural professional workforce numbers, the barriers of distance, economic decline and pervasive social change are among the interrelated factors attributed to this struggle (Scott-Jones, 2016). Whilst not addressing these concerns directly, Sheds are described as well-positioned within rural communities as hubs of voluntary service making significant contribution to their rural context through community projects and the previously discussed health benefits (Misan, Oosterbroek, & Wilson, 2017; Roger et al., 2016; Southcombe et al., 2015a). Sunderland (2013) describes how a typical rural Men's Shed project, such as making picnic tables for a local community preschool, provides a context for men sharing woodwork skills, developing conversational skills and sharing health concerns. As community organisations, Sheds have notably contributed to rural community recovery in environmental and natural disasters (Ayres, Patrick, & Capetola, 2018; Warburton & Winterton, 2017).

Lastly, Men's Shed research encompasses the use of human resource practices by Shed leadership (Ang, et al., 2017; Cavanagh, McNeil & Bartram, 2013; Southcombe, Cavanagh & Bartram, 2015b). Positing the importance of prioritizing the Shed's mission, promoting social connectedness, attending to health and safety, connection within their local community, planning and financial management, the Shed literature parallels wider management/leadership discourse (Babnik, Breznik, Dermol, & Trunk, 2014; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kopaneva & Sias, 2015; Stirling, Kilpatrick & Orpin, 2011; Walk, Zhang, & Littlepage, 2019).

In summary, across the research disciplines, the central theme that undergirds benefits attributed to Men's Sheds is the primacy of supportive relationships between men (Ang et al., 2017; Crabtree, et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2019; Moylan et al., 2015; Roy et al., 2018). Culph, Wilson, Cordier and Stancliffe (2015) identify a relationship between the social context of Sheds and a

variety of specific outcomes, from developing trade-related skills to improved mental and physical health. Reviewing 103 Men's Shed studies, Golding (2015) ascribes such outcomes to the culture of 'mateship', constituted as friendships that develop in the context of shared voluntary service.

In considering this body of research, it is important to note that, as with many emerging fields of inquiry, Men's Shed research is still in its comparative infancy. Milligan et al. (2013), Wilson and Cordier (2013) and Kelly et al. (2019) all acknowledge that Shed research faces several challenges. These include the body of Shed research being comprised of a comparatively small number of largely qualitative studies and the of consistent application of validated theories and models across the research corpus (Milligan et al., 2013; Wilson & Cordier, 2013; Kelly et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, the body of Men's Shed research continues to develop, with an estimated total of 124 studies pertaining to Sheds completed to 2016, including a growing body of collaborative trans-hemisphere projects (Roger et al., 2016) some of which take a critical stance regarding the potential of Men's Sheds.

2.4.1 CRITICAL NARRATIVES

In contrast to the positive benefits of Men's Sheds described earlier, some authors raise cautions about all male contexts (Fleming et al., 2014; MacKenzie et al., 2017; Salter, 2016). MacKenzie et al. (2017) suggest that Sheds who do not maintain a reflexive awareness of their group culture could become bastions for the promulgation of a traditionalist masculinity. Kaplan, Rosenmann and Shuhendler (2016) associate such a masculinity with fixed gender roles, limiting definitions of sexual identity and proscribed modes of relating that, as noted earlier, often contribute to poor health outcomes. Indeed, Salter (2016), positions some Men's Sheds within a wider masculinist movement in Australia, which he describes as vehemently oppositional to the emancipatory agenda of feminism. Following this, Mackenzie et al. (2017) assert that Sheds need to consciously expand their practice in engaging men of diverse masculinities, cultures and sexual orientations, thus avoiding a narrow construction of masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). As argued by McKinlay (2005) men are not a homogenous group but are characterized by diversity at many levels including ethnicity, philosophy, sexuality and cultural worldviews. Writing from a feminist perspective, Foley (2018) acknowledges these concerns are valid and important.

However, she suggests that the potentialities for men to develop non-hegemonic ways of relating within a mutually supportive context, alongside the established benefits of Sheds, outweigh potential risks (Foley, 2018). Joining with MacKenzie et al. (2017) and Golding (2015), Foley (2018) posits that the risks can be ameliorated through reflexive leadership that models and promotes a less rigid set of masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Robertson, 2006; Robertson, Williams, & Oliffe, 2016). Clearly the above concerns deserve attention so that Men's Sheds can be of greatest benefit to a variety of men, internationally and in an Aotearoa New Zealand context.

2.5 MEN'S SHEDS IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The following section traces the history of the Shed movement in this country and outlines the research performed to date.

Following Anstiss (2016), Men's Sheds have been developing in Aotearoa New Zealand over the last twenty-five years, building on a culture of backyard sheds at private homes characterized as sites of innovation and adaption (Bruce, 2010). According to the website of Menzshed New Zealand (MSNZ), as at October 29, 2019, there are 108 Sheds listed as operating and thirty under development (MSNZ n.d.). According to Sunderland (2013) there were thirty-five Sheds operating nationally in 2013, therefore current figures represent a growth rate of over 200% in the intervening six-year period. Sheds are located across the country from Kaitaia in Northland to Invercargill in Southland, with approximately half of these being located in small rural centres (MSNZ, n.d.). In contrast to federally funded Australian initiatives, Men's Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand do not directly receive government funding and tend to establish themselves through grassroots community endeavour, with MSNZ being a volunteer-based national body (MSNZ n.d.). MSNZ supports development of Men's Sheds through providing consultation via a network of regional representatives, resource sharing, networking opportunities and making local research available (MSNZ n.d.). Men's Sheds are becoming publicly recognized as valuable community organisations, locally and nationally, for their benefits to their members and communities (Bruce, 2010; Light, 2015; Newman, 2018). The third national Men's Shed

conference was conducted in 2018 with the conference theme being “the difference Sheds and Sheddies make to both their own, and the wider, community” (MSNZ n.d.).

2.5.1 MEN’S SHED RESEARCH IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Concomitant with the steady development of the Men’s Shed movement in Aotearoa New Zealand, the local literature continues to expand. Sunderland’s (2013) study of the Taieri Men’s Shed in Otago has been complemented by comparable research from Anstiss (2016) on Auckland’s Northshore, with both projects utilizing ethnographic methodology (O’Leary, 2014). Sunderland (2013) emphasizes that work undertaken within Shed’s needs to be purposeful, and beneficial to the wider community, individual members, and the Shed as a collective. He describes members valuing their ability to exercise self-governance, the need for Shed’s to maintain relationships with local communities and the importance of external stakeholders respecting the autonomy of Sheds (Sunderland, 2013). Anstiss (2016) focusses on men’s communal re-construction of identity through joint construction projects during the often-difficult transition to retirement. He notes the importance of material practice, i.e. joint creation of objects, as being generative of health and dignity in later life (Anstiss, 2016). These local findings echo the meta-theme of the international literature, emphasizing meaningful, productive work within a socially supportive, male context as being generative of health and wellbeing for men individually and collectively (Anstiss, 2016; Sunderland, 2013). As noted earlier, the work of Morton (2015) has contributed to a growing body of literature regarding Men’s Sheds as sites of intergenerational mentoring. She describes reciprocal benefits gained by Shed mentors, their mentees, and the wider community, emphasizing the importance of the relationship between Men’s Sheds as diverse organizational entities and their community contexts (Morton, 2015). With this contextual interrelationship being a particular focus, the case for pursuing the current study will be detailed below.

2.6 MAKING THE CASE FOR THIS STUDY

As the earlier discussion established, the value of further research into mechanisms for supporting men’s health is well established internationally and locally (Baker, 2016; Baxter et al., 2019). Given the ongoing pressure on the Aotearoa New Zealand Health System, there have been

calls for the intersection of government health services and community driven initiatives to receive further attention (Goodyear-Smith & Ashton, 2019; Reid et al., 2019; TRO; 2019). Accordingly, investigating the links between individual and community wellbeing via Men's Sheds seems timely and appropriate. To date much of the extant Men's Shed literature focusses on the individual benefits for men (Kelly et al., 2019). Little is known regarding the impact of Men's Sheds on community wellbeing, despite Shed's being heralded as significant sites of community development (Golding, 2015; Wilson & Cordier, 2014). Therefore, this study gives deliberate attention to the reciprocity that seems to exist between what men receive and contribute from participation in Sheds and the impact this may have in local communities. Rural communities have been selected due to the added resource pressure they face in adapting to increasing and pervasive change (Hvenegaard et al., 2016; McCrea, Walton, & Leonard, 2016; Scott-Jones, 2016). As noted earlier, having identified reciprocal benefits, the study's overarching purpose is to identify what factors enhance or impede reciprocity so that Sheds and communities can build capacity to work well together.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a review of the literature that undergirds this study. Consideration has been given to international and local definitions and perspectives on the health and wellbeing of men. The literature seems to indicate a clear disparity between the overall health outcomes of men and women, with men typically dying earlier and experiencing a lower quality of life than their female counterparts, in some western contexts including Aotearoa New Zealand. A variety of social, cultural, economic and psychological factors have been associated with this disparity which has been proffered as a serious global health concern. In relation to addressing this concern, the emergence of Men's Sheds as a global phenomenon has been chronicled. With Shed's being promoted as hubs of male wellbeing, bolstering the physical and mental health of men, an overview of those contributions through specific areas of research interest has been outlined. These areas included education/training; health promotion; disability; ageing studies; mentoring; community development; human resources.

Some mention of the community capacity building benefits of Sheds has been made within a small number of existing studies (Misan et al., 2017; Roger et al., 2016; Southcombe et al., 2015a). However, the relationship between Shed's role in member wellbeing and potential interaction with community wellbeing is yet to be fully explored and, from what is known, is yet to be addressed explicitly in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly in rural contexts. Accordingly, this study seeks to add to the body of knowledge regarding reciprocal relationships between the health and wellbeing of Shed members and their local rural communities. The following chapter details the methodological approach that guided the research process.

3 CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this research. It will provide information on the qualitative approach taken and the theoretical perspective undergirding the approach. The initial influences behind the selection of the methodological approach and development of the research design will be outlined.

Following a description of the methods used, the ethical considerations as they were framed and enacted in the study will be presented alongside the sampling rationale and recruitment process. Data collection and management processes will be then be detailed. This will be accompanied by a brief description of factors influencing the approach to data analysis. The process of data analysis will be comprehensively described prior to the strengths and limitations of the study being considered. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of key learnings identified by the researcher during the design, data collection and analysis process.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

A traditional generic qualitative approach (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) to gathering and analysing data was chosen for this study utilizing semi-structured key informant interviews (Bryman, 2012) and focus groups (Liamputtong, 2011). Thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to locate, order, and offer explanation of themes from the data corpus.

Qualitative approaches are characterized by valuing inductive and deductive approaches to knowledge generation explicitly accepting the importance of multiple subjectivities (O’Leary, 2014). Furthermore, the input and perspectives of the researcher and their relationship with researched are explicitly acknowledged across the research endeavour (O’Leary, 2014). Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin (2007) argue that such qualitative approaches can generate data which richly reflects the experience of individuals in social contexts.

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework undergirding this study is informed by a social constructionist perspective. Barusch, Gringeri and George (2011) note that a defined understanding of the theoretical perspective behind any research methodology is vital in producing rigorous quality research that is trustworthy and valid.

The ideas and theoretical strands associated with the social constructionist perspective are themselves 'under construction' and social constructionist perspectives within a constructivist paradigm can be said to share a number of key tenets regarding knowledge (Burr, 2003; Payne, 2005). These include knowledge as a provisional, malleable quantity across time and knowledge as socially mediated and co-constructed through dialogue (Shotter, 2008). Additionally, social constructionists assert that given the provisional and socially mediated aspects of knowledge, any knowledge claims must be subject to critique (Riach, 2017), in such knowledge's application to social action (Payne, 2005).

Social constructionist perspectives suggest that, "‘reality’ is not revealed to us, but is instead reached through a process of construction" (Vall Castelló, 2016, p. 129). From these perspectives, knowledge exists within an ever-changing context of complex interactions between persons and their ecological and socio-political environments. As such social constructionism pays close attention to the personal and subjective everyday context and experience of those people who co-construct knowledge together (Berger & Luckman, 1967).

In analysing knowledge-construction relationships, critical theorists emphasise understanding the balance of power between parties engaged in knowledge-construction (Hage, Leroy, & Petersen, 2010). Such critics suggest that knowledge is not neutral but exists within political contexts and therefore should be viewed with critical circumspection (Riach, 2017).

Lastly the ongoing pursuit of malleable, co-constructed and critically analysed knowledge is purposed in enabling action that brings tangible benefits to the parties involved in the research process (Hage et al., 2010; Payne, 2005).

As such this study is not only grounded in the tenets of social constructionism, the methodology, methods and interpersonal application are intended to help build the communities in which the inquiry is taking place (Apgar, Mustonen, Lovera & Lovera, 2016).

Situated within a social constructionist perspective on what constitutes knowledge and the pursuit thereof I now consider the factors that influenced the research design.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 INITIAL INFLUENCES

The direction and design of the study was influenced by three factors. Firstly, my personal interest in working relationships and men's well-being formed across a 33-year career social service career. Secondly, coordinating a Men's Shed for five years in a community development context further enhanced my motivation to understand the purposes, processes and potential inherent in Sheds. Thirdly, since 2014, I have engaged with the growing body of international Men's Shed literature. This body of research describes Sheds as sites of meaningful, productive work within a socially supportive, male context being generative of physical and mental wellbeing for men individually and collectively (Wilson & Cordier, 2013; Milligan, et al., 2013).

These three factors provided the context for the development of the research question, guided the methodological approach and suggested an initial structure for question schedules.

3.4.2 SELECTION OF METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Given that Men's Shed are a heterogeneous, socially constructed phenomenon reflective of geographical, socio-cultural and psychological factors I was cognizant that the approach was congruent with context and subject under study (Elliot & Timulak, 2005; O'Leary, 2014). Therefore, any methodology needed to facilitate a thorough exploration of these factors.

A qualitative methodology employing semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups was well positioned to facilitate such an exploration. This approach towards in-depth social inquiry is well supported within the general methodological literature (Bryman, 2012; Cresswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Patton, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Moreover, numerous precedents of similar methodological approaches exist in Men's Shed research internationally,

boding well for its application in this project (Milligan et al., 2015; Reynolds et al., 2015; Southcombe et al., 2015a; Waling & Fildes, 2017; Wilson, Cordier & Wilson-Whatley, 2013).

Milligan et al. (2015), used semi-structured interviews with Shed leaders regarding developmental challenges and opportunities associated with Sheds as community organisations focused on men's well-being. They juxtaposed these findings with focus group data regarding participants' experiences on Shed attendance and wellbeing. Similarly, Waling and Fildes (2017) deployed focus groups to provide forums for mutual support amongst indigenous men during the interview process. Rich data from these groups was compared with findings from semi-structured individual interviews with community leaders.

These examples clearly identified the benefits of employing two data collection methods for the purposes of data triangulation as a means of enhancing the overall rigor of a qualitative study (Barusch et al., 2011; Gill, Treasure, Stewart, & Chadwick, 2008; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

3.4.2.1 THE METHODS

The research project utilized semi-structured key informant interviews (Bryman, 2012) and focus groups (Liamputtong, 2011) as data collection methods. The thematic analysis process described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to locate, order and offer explanation of themes from the data corpus.

Semi-structured interviews are a widely accepted qualitative data gathering technique privileging the role of participants in shaping the discourse and direction of the interview within the overall theme of the investigation (Gubrium, 2012). As such, this facilitates in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of participants in interaction with the researcher (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Two individual leaders from each Shed under study were interviewed as key informants in this way, prior to the focus groups so that information from these interviews might inform the focus group question schedule (O'Leary, 2014).

Focus groups within qualitative research are a means of engaging participants in a joint construction of meaning around a particular topic in which there is mutual interest and

investment (Bryman, 2012; Liampputong, 2011). One focus group with between six and nine participants was conducted at each Shed.

3.4.2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN

Following the selection of the methodological approach and methods I developed the design via a multistage, iterative process with input from my academic supervisors, existing literature and a senior research colleague. Firstly, with guidance from my academic supervisors I developed a research question: What role do rural men's sheds play in the life of their members and the rural community in which they are located. With ongoing reference to literature regarding questionnaire development and analysis procedures and supervisory scrutiny the question informed formulation of a semi-structured interview schedule adaptable to both key informant interviews and focus groups (O'Leary, 2014). I also sought guidance from existing Men's Shed's research literature using similar methods regarding question content and complementarity between interviews and focus groups. (Milligan et al., 2015; Waling & Fildes, 2017). Piloting the question schedules with an experienced qualitative researcher with knowledge of Men's Sheds I made further amendments to the content and structure of several questions. In order to support my process of reflective learning (Kolb, 1984; Robertson, 2006; Schon, 1983) I recorded such feedback in my research journal. In developing several tools to aid the reflective process, I sought structured feedback from key informants, post-interview, regarding the relevance and utility of the question schedules. This feedback contributed to further amendments to the question schedule.

Overall the procedures undertaken in regard to the design reflect the approach of Barusch et al. (2011) and Bryman (2012) who advocate for supervisory and senior researcher support to produce rigorous and trustworthy research. O'Leary (2014) affirms such processes as vital in the professional development and safe practice of student researchers.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study design was subject to review and approval by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (HEC: Southern B Application 18/24 – See Appendix Six – 14.3). The ethical code of

the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers guides my practice as both a social worker and researcher. Section 8 of the Code (ANZASW, 2015) specifies my responsibilities vis-à-vis research practice and mandates that any research undertaken is subject to approval of the relevant Human Ethics Committee.

At the inception of the research project I developed, with supervisory support, a research proposal that was submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Southern B, no. 18/24). The MUHEC approved the application with clarification of recruitment numbers, role of shed coordinators in recruitment, editing of focus group transcripts, use of ethnicity data and minor changes to information sheets. With the approval of the MUHEC for my research proposal and with a timeline and reporting protocol negotiated with my academic supervisors I then began the process of engaging with the Men's Shed community. Ethical processes regarding informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, recording, member-checking, the scope of data security and right to withdraw from the study were explained in writing and in person to all participants prior to the commencement of interviews. Written consent to engage in the research was obtained from all participants. The protocols for support should difficult material be encountered during the interview process were explained. The right to pause the interview to attend to personal considerations was exercised twice during the project. The researcher followed up with one participant regarding their wellbeing immediately after an interview offering access to further support. This offer was declined. The right to withdraw from the study was reinforced when return transcripts were returned for member checking. Several edits were made by participants during this process and all agreed to release of their transcripts.

3.6 THE DESIGN IN ACTION: SAMPLING, RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

3.6.1 SAMPLING

In structuring the process of engagement, recruitment, participant selection and data collection I first prepared discrete sampling criteria. Bryman (2012) refers to generic purposive sampling as frequently associated with traditional qualitative methodology. In this strategy the nature of the research question informs both the context of investigation and the sampling criteria utilized for individual participants.

As noted earlier the research question was: What role do rural men's sheds play in the life of their members and the rural community in which they are located. Accordingly, the two Sheds selected were to be in small rural communities within the same broad geographic area and each Shed was to have developed through volunteer leadership over a five-eight-year span. Participants in the key informant interviews were to have had significant leadership responsibilities in the development of their Sheds for at least three years positioning them to contribute regarding both aspects of the research question.

Focus groups participants were to be selected based on regular attendance at their local Shed meetings, at least three years of active membership and involvement in several community-oriented projects. These criteria defined such persons as positioned to share rich knowledge of Shed participation regarding their experience as individuals and community members.

Patton (2002) suggests that delineating such homogenous factors within a sampling rationale enable a more accurate cross-comparison between each group arguably adding greater transferability of research findings to other similar contexts (Polit & Beck, 2010; Suri, 2011). It is hoped that despite the comparatively small sample these criteria may to a degree exemplify the population under consideration i.e. similar rurally based Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand (Bryman, 2012). Guided by the above criteria several potential populations for study were identified as geographically accessible in terms of distance, an important consideration as a part-time student in full time employment. To engage with this population, I planned to approach the local Men's Shed Regional Representative responsible for supporting development and operation of Sheds regionally. I would then engage with the leadership of two rural Men's Sheds within the selection criteria, explaining the project, supplying supporting documentation and offering to meet with their leadership groups.

3.6.2 RECRUITMENT

The process of engagement, recruitment, selection, and data collection with the Shed communities described below occurred over a 5-month period beginning in July 2018.

Following approval from the Regional Representative I contacted the Shed coordinators of the Wexford and Trundell Sheds (pseudonyms used). The Shed leadership groups discussed and

approved my request to engage with their Sheds, distributed information sheets and we negotiated a Shed-specific process of engagement. On request I met personally with the Wexford Shed coordinator and secured his support in the recruitment process attending the Shed's monthly meeting to introduce myself and the project. I also described ethical considerations and was asked to attend a workshop session to engage with potential participants several of which later attended the focus group. At the Trundell Shed I made an initial presentation to a workshop-session introducing and explaining the project.

From these meetings:

- Each group enthusiastically agreed to participate.
- Individual key informant interviewees were identified and engaged.
- The coordinators agreed to distribute information sheets (see Appendix Six – 14.4 and 14.5) and offered to promote the project amongst members.
- I observed, and at the Trundell Shed participated with, small groups of men working together on several projects which facilitated rapport building.
- During these visits I was able to observe the unique physical and social dynamics of their locations.

3.6.3 DATA COLLECTION

3.6.3.1 INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

Being mindful of issues of confidentiality, anonymity, accessibility, and comfort (O'Leary, 2014) key informants were presented with several options regarding interview locations. One participant opted for the meeting room at his Shed whilst the remainder invited me to their homes. Participants of both focus groups chose to meet onsite at their Sheds in a separate meeting room.

3.6.3.2 RECORDING

Audio recording was undertaken using two devices to ensure adequate sound quality and defray any loss of information through technical malfunction. Each interview was then transcribed

within seven-ten days of its completion. The transcription process was completed in early December 2018. Audio files were stored securely on password protected devices in a locked office along with paper copies of transcripts and notes.

3.6.3.3 RESEARCH JOURNAL, REFLECTION AND REFLEXIVITY

The research notes made during key informant and focus group interviews (Patton, 2002) were supplemented by the post-interview reflection process (Bryman, 2012) where attention was given to both interpersonal dynamics (Lamb, 2013) and verbal/non-verbal content (Federman, Band-Winterstein, & Sterenfled, 2016). As detailed in the introduction to this thesis, I endeavoured to be consciously aware of how my previous experience as a Men's Shed coordinator could bias my input into the discussion as an interviewer – this was the subject of ongoing discussion with my academic and professional supervisors (Cumming-Potvin, 2013). Regarding non-verbal communication, aspects of body language including, eye contact, facial expressions, body posture and gestures (Mi-Suk & Koshik, 2010) were considered alongside aspects of verbal expression including tone, pace, and volume of speech. The combined use of both facets of communication seemed to indicate levels of interest in and attachment to particular topics across the data set. For example, four participants became visibly and verbally more animated when discussing links between their involvement in Men's Sheds and perceived improvement in their mental health.

Information gathered during this reflection and recorded in the research journal contributed to initial ideas for codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The completed transcripts were returned to participants for member-checking within two weeks of the interview or group completion. Three transcripts were subject to minor changes. Barusch et al. (2011) reference member-checking as contributing to the credibility of a study enabling accuracy of information to be verified by those who produced it and maintaining their engagement in the project.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING ANALYSIS APPROACH

The analysis process listed below was informed by both a priori and inductive approaches to the data sensitizing my overall approach to collecting, organizing and interpreting the information.

In terms of a priori factors I have already noted the influence of my personal and professional interests in Sheds and Shed research on the research question, data gathering methods and questions schedules. These factors also informed my search for themes within the text. Alongside a priori sensitization, guidance from my academic supervisors and established techniques for analysing data have further informed my sensitization in searching for themes. The six-stage thematic analysis approach delineated by Braun and Clarke (2006) was instrumental in defining an approach to data organization and analysis providing an external process structure to which I returned for ongoing guidance. Specific techniques such as the Key Words in Context approach explained by Ryan and Bernard (2003) were pivotal to deepening the level of data analysis.

3.7.2 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Although laborious, transcribing the interviews verbatim provided me with an opportunity to become very familiar with the material (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the eight-ten hours per interview allocated to this task, I was able to identify repeated concepts, word, phrases and emphases related to the theoretical sensitivity I developed and have described earlier. I made written memos regarding these points to inform the six analysis phases outlined below.

3.7.2.1 PHASE ONE

Starting with the key informant interviews I read through each transcript twice highlighting sections of text appearing to contain a discrete concept such as the importance of socializing or the availability of tools (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006). On the second reading I allocated initial codes to each segment of the text such as “social connection”, “plant/machinery” isolating key quotes which appeared to summarize the meaning of individual codes. Building on earlier transcription notes I highlighted repeated key words and phrases for further exploration in phase two. I then grouped the initial codes under the headings of the interview document:

- Role of the Shed in men's lives
- Role of the Shed in the life of their local rural community
- Going forward

3.7.2.2 PHASE TWO

Applying the word-search application on my software platform to each transcript I noted how often each key word appeared in the text and grouped these under headings according to their semantic similarities. For example, work/job/build/built/make/repair/project were grouped together under "Work".

Using what Ryan and Bernard (2003) describe as the Key Words in Context technique I then reviewed the narrative context in which the word occurred noting how different contexts reflected differing aspects of a specific words' meaning. A number of words could be placed under more than one heading according to this context. For example, the word chair was used in the context of repairing chairs for older people ("community service") and in the context of the Chairperson of the Shed Trust board ("shed leadership"). On the basis of this review I identified words that had significant and overarching meanings within their different contexts labelling these as Significant Key Words (SKWs). These SKWs were added to the list of potential codes and compared with the initial codes allocated in Phase One noting how these related to or extended to initial codes on a transcript by transcript basis. Some of the original codes remained, several extra were added, and others were renamed depending on how well they represented the phenomenon they described. Other codes were conflated on the basis of the similarity between them. I then reviewed and, in some cases, reallocated or removed the key quotes that I had apportioned to each code.

3.7.2.3 PHASE THREE

Following the lead of Braun and Clarke (2006) I then began to compare, across the individual transcripts, the results of Phase One and Two noting similarities and differences and developing an initial thematic map.

3.7.2.4 PHASE FOUR

In Phase Four I repeated each step of the process described above for the focus group transcripts developing an initial thematic map from this data.

3.7.2.5 PHASE FIVE

Looking for areas of congruence or dissonance between the results of each thematic map I synthesized the material into a joint map of overarching themes and their concomitant conceptual categories (see Appendix Two).

3.7.2.6 PHASE SIX

Using these results, I returned to the literature to compare and contrast these categories as a final means of developing the final thematic map which would structure the presentation of my findings (see Appendix Three).

3.8 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The methodology utilized in this study has several strengths and concomitant limitations. Although the methods and member-checking process facilitated rich, in-depth input the small sample size arguably limits the generalizability of findings. The study followed a tested and replicable process regarding data collection and analysis (Barusch et al., 2011) comparable to similar qualitative research regarding Men's Sheds internationally - although it should be acknowledged the methodology lacked internationally standardized health measures to enable cross comparison between studies (Wilson & Cordier, 2014). Similarly, it is important to note that the study was undertaken by a single student researcher. Therefore, there was limited opportunity for outside input into study design, interviewing or cross-checking codes during the analysis phase although this was bolstered by regular supervisory consultation and structured processes for reflexivity (Cumming-Potvin, 2013).

Despite these limitations the study appears to be among less than ten investigations into the work of Men's Sheds undertaken in Aotearoa. Additionally, it may be among the first to focus on the role of Sheds within the life of a rural community, utilizing dual qualitative data gathering

methods across two separate sheds in the same geographical area. As such this research adds a further dimension to Men's Shed research already conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a description of the methodology and methods used in this research. The theoretical perspective grounding the methodology and praxis of the study has been presented and the outworking of praxis across design, recruitment, data collection and analysis phases of the project has been described.

It has been my experience that each phase of the project has brought different opportunities for learning in the form of challenges and encouragement.

Challenges included: allowing more time for the practicalities of the engagement processes; attending to the process of running a focus group whilst writing notes; following up participants regarding return of transcripts; remaining in the role of researcher having been a Shed developer.

Encouraging outcomes included: The warm response from participants to the extra time I invested in engagement; the importance of dedicated post-interview reflection time; the value of clear processes for support of participants; the benefit, despite the labour, of transcribing the notes in setting up the analysis phase.

Lastly, the intention behind the selection of the methodological approach was that the process be of self-identified benefit to participants. Several people reflected that the opportunity to process their own thinking about the Shed and/or hear the opinions of others was both enjoyable and helpful. One focus group member remarked, "I really enjoyed hearing the history of shed and each of you blokes get from it ... (this is) better learning than my U3A class, I didn't realize how many benefits there are till you start talking." It is towards an understanding of these benefits for such Sheddies that following chapter now turns.

4 CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS KEY INFORMANTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the key informant interviews of this project. Firstly, I provide a brief comparative description of the Wexford and Trundell communities and their Men's Sheds. Secondly, the findings of each key informant interview from the Trundell Shed are presented and summarised with reference to extant Men's Sheds literature and ancillary support from other disciplines. This process is then repeated for the Wexford Shed. The chapter concludes with a comparison and overall summary of findings from both Sheds including noteworthy minor findings.

4.2 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

As small, rural towns of between 1800-2200 residents located approximately fifty kilometres apart Wexford and Trundell share many similarities. Both have been a centre of European settlement for around 140 years and have a high proportion of residents of European descent many of whom are over 65 years of age. Each town has seen a net increase in population over the last five years with both towns attracting new residential subdivisions. Agriculture and horticulture continue to constitute the primary economic base of both towns although an increasing proportion of working-age residents commute up to 50 kilometres to work in a major city. Wexford is the larger of the two towns supporting a sizeable area school whereas secondary students from Trundell typically bus to a larger rural town 20 kilometres distant.

The Sheds themselves share some commonalities regarding the average age, predominant ethnicity profile (New Zealand European) and number of members. In the main, the type of community project work they undertake is similar. Both also charge a nominal membership fee and engage in fundraising projects to support their work including selling items produced in the Shed. In terms of differences the Wexford Shed is a medium-sized, purpose-built facility sited on

public land near the centre of the township. The Trundell Shed leases, via a Shed member, a large farm shed and several containers on a farmlet outside Trundell.

4.3 FINDINGS

As stated earlier, the investigation centred on the roles Men's Sheds in rural areas play in the lives of their members and in the life of their local community. Findings are therefore presented utilizing the three sections of the semi-structured interview guide: The role of the Shed in members lives; the role of the Shed in the life of local rural community; challenges going forward.

4.3.1 KEY INFORMANT FINDINGS

As previously outlined two individual leaders from each Shed were interviewed as key informants prior to focus groups being conducted. This was done in order to gain their differential perspective as leaders and trial the interview format. Trundell informants are presented first followed by participants from the Wexford Shed.

4.3.2 TRUNDELL

The following findings were derived from separate ninety-minute semi-structured interviews with Jack and Karen that took place at their homes as per their request. These visits afforded the opportunity of both formal and informal interactions. Illustrative of this Karen presented several items that she had made at the Shed which provided the context for description of skills and social connections that had been forged in the process. Additionally, Jack's wife briefly joined the conversation and they jointly reflected on the community projects the Shed had completed. Both interactions enabled me to observe the degree to which their involvement with the Shed was intertwined with their weekly lives and routines. At the completion of each interview both stated they had found the experience a rich and enjoyable context for intentional reflection on their work with the Trundell Shed.

4.3.3 INTERVIEW ONE: JACK

Jack, 69, a semi-retired engineer, was the chairperson of the Trundell Men's Shed having served in this role for two years.

4.3.3.1 *ROLE OF THE SHED IN MEMBERS LIVES*

In considering the role of the Trundell Shed in his life and that of fellow Sheddies Jack offered four key points, they were: the companionship of “crewing together”, getting out of the house, achieving a challenge and feeling useful whilst contributing, learning opportunities.

In relation to the first point Jack described the Shed as an opportunity for “companionship... with other likeminded, similar-aged people...”. This was significant for him in that the Shed was his main “point of contact with the community” outside of his work context and family. He explained like-mindedness in terms of shared interests in construction and serving others noting that this companionship occurred in two contexts at the Shed. First was in co-labouring or “crewing together” whereby pairs or small groups of Sheddies worked side by side on such projects as making coffins, predator traps and picnic tables. The second context was at “smoko”, a traditional, industry-related term for morning or afternoon tea breaks. According to Jack “some amazing bits of conversation come out” in the context of “chewing the fat... putting the world to rights over smoko”. These “bits” typically included much humour, storytelling, swapping ideas and occasionally, sharing some life struggles. He noted that this conversational hub was clearly important especially for “some of the older guys” who didn’t “have much of an outlet”.

It was these men, to which Jack referred in making his second key point. In his view, lack of a social outlet could exacerbate relationship difficulties between couples in retirement, whereby, some men “sit at home with ‘mum’ getting on one another’s goat”. This was Jack’s description of tension between partners during the period of relationship renegotiation that may accompany retirement. The Shed enabled these men to “get out of the house” which according to Jack benefitted both parties. He felt the men were afforded “a bit of a lift” emotionally whereby they could, “sit down and have smoko... and say their bit.” Equally, he suggested there was reciprocal benefit in “having some space” for some men’s partners. An example of this was an “elderly gent who (had) started to lose the plot and ... (came) out with some outlandish things at times”. This man was supported to attend the Shed whilst his wife was afforded “a break”, whilst knowing he was “safe for a couple of hours”.

Jack's third key point was that the Shed also provided a context for experiencing a sense of achievement, contribution and "feeling useful". He offered the example of one project which saw the Shed "full of the predator traps" that the Sheddies had completed. For Jack seeing this "great pile of traps together" provided a sense of quantifiable achievement, or what he described as, "the reward factor... the satisfaction in knowing that you have put in the hard yards". For Jack, achievement was closely associated with feelings of "usefulness" which he felt were "very important" for most Sheddies. He defined "usefulness" as, having the capacity to contribute in some way despite age or illness related limitations. Accompanying this definition, he pictured a fictional Sheddie as saying "the project was this big (holds arms apart), but I was able to help out with this tiny bit (holds fingers apart)."

Jack equated achievement, contribution and usefulness with a subjective sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. In these situations, men who were "not necessarily capable of doing the major part of something" had opportunity to "at least help out and feel like 'I gave them a hand'". Jack noted that it was facing those "little challenges" that made "life worthwhile" and that in response to such opportunities men's "mood seemed to lift" across the course of a Shed session.

Jack's fourth point broadened the benefit of project work as described above to include learning new skills. One project involved five men making "elaborate, utilitarian picnic tables" for a local youth camp. Given the exacting design specification Jack described this project as "challenging" and therefore "rewarding" as the tables drew forth joint learning despite "losing a bit of skin here and there". Apart from a "few gripes about this that and the other thing" he observed that participants in this particular project went on to apply "the skills they learnt there to their own little projects".

The picnic tables were an exemplar of several projects that afforded the opportunity to provide direct service to the wider community, a key role the Shed enjoyed locally.

4.3.3.2 ROLE OF THE SHED IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL RURAL COMMUNITY

Concerning the role of the Shed in the Trundell community Jack made two key points, which were: it was a hub of practical service through construction; a key member of the local and regional community network.

In regards the first point, conservation groups, schools and sports clubs were among organisations that had benefitted from the Shed's expertise. The "80-100 predator traps for the local Forest and Bird", referenced earlier required "a production line" approach in which "half a dozen people..." of differing skill levels "crewed together". Jack noted that this project combined the satisfaction of working together and funding the Shed which led to "a big smile on our face at the end of the day". A local primary school benefitted from a "working bee" on their adventure playground to which Sheddies "added some additional bolts... to make sure that this was safe". In this case the "school paid for the materials" and the Trundell Shed donated their time and expertise. In a third example two bowling clubs in the district commissioned the Shed to make hand-portable bowls holders.

This last example also served to illustrate Jack's second point regarding the Shed's place in the local and district network.

Jack noted that at the local level "projects, like the picnic tables, and Langford and Trundell Schools, come to us by word of mouth...". This was largely due to Shed members being involved either directly or tangentially with other organisations that identified and relayed community need. Reciprocally the Shed itself benefitted from that same network needing "the support of the most unlikely people at times". In support of this positive reciprocity he stated that it was vital "to make sure that you are not bad mouthing anybody at any time". The same principle of respectful reciprocity also applied to the Sheds relationship with local commercial enterprise. As Jack described 'local businesses tend to support local entities' therefore the Shed tried "to deal with local businesses wherever" they could, including "the local timber merchants and the Tool Supply". Both of these businesses offered discounts on goods and services and occasionally directed project work towards the Shed.

In terms of district networks, the Trundell Shed also reached outside of the immediate local community to other Sheds. In one case they offered support to a fellow Shed that had been impacted by a natural disaster. Recently, members took on the challenge of hosting a meeting of the Regional Men's Shed Hub. This event attracted members of several Shed's from within the district and even more from across the region. The meeting included a light meal, tool

demonstration and discussion. Given Jack's description of the Trundell Shed as "just a basic little Men's Shed with 20 or so members" this "offering back" to the wider Shed community was very significant for Trundell. In discussing the outcome of the event with his fellow Sheddies they identified several benefits. Firstly, they got "to meet other Sheds" and "have a connection" that could develop further in terms of mutual support and information sharing. Secondly there was a joint sense of pride that they as a smaller Shed could "offer something to people" that was valid and "useful".

Continuing to offer opportunities for individual and community connection was predicated on several key challenges which will be presented next.

4.3.3.3 GOING FORWARD

Jack identified four key challenges faced by the Trundell Shed, they were: growing membership, managing projects, securing a sustainable venue, maintaining Health and Safety standards.

In regards the first challenge Jack said that membership was "exactly what we have been talking about in recent times". He noted that the addition of "two carpenters (to) our group" was "fantastic" in that these "able-bodied, keen and enthusiastic" men had helped deepen the skill base of the Shed. However, Jack noted that the Shed needed "more people...." because having more members extended the range of projects the Shed could complete. He explained that sometimes the Shed was approached "to do things outside our skill or resource" base and had to "turn things down". This was not Jack's "preference" as it limited the Shed's responsiveness within the community.

However, increasing membership came with project management dilemmas which was his second challenge: "Having more people puts the pressure on having more work for them: productive, valuable and valued work...". Given the intermittent nature of community requests a pattern had emerged whereby "if you haven't got something useful for them to do, then they are more inclined to come for smoko then take off". Jack observed that if this happened several times the men "gradually don't bother coming anymore".

Jack clearly felt the weight of this responsibility as Shed Coordinator stating that it fell "to a large extent" on him "to make sure that someone is organizing" workflow. He described this as a

constant juggle, “fighting all the time so that... when people come... you have got work” for them to do, whilst at the same time having material “resources to do the work”.

Accessing another key resource constituted Jack’s third challenge. Having migrated from a woolshed and a stable to the current arrangement on Karen’s farm, securing a sustainable venue with “room to move” was proving difficult. Whilst Karen’s farm shed was “quite a nice venue” for the Sheddies to meet it was “already getting a little bit on the small side...”. In Jack’s view, “the next stage” was “having our own premises... big enough with room to expand... located suitably because of noise restrictions” and with “three-phase power” given the use of machinery. Various avenues had been explored including leasing commercial premises and erecting a structure on District Council land whilst “paying peppercorn rental”. Each had so far proved prohibitive in terms of “the huge financial commitment for an organization with only 20 or so paid members”. Community support and active fundraising over a nine-year had taken them some distance this next stage of development, but this was still a work in progress.

Lastly the challenge of maintaining a safe working space was addressed by Jack. He explained that Health and Safety was “a real issue with Men’s Sheds because you have got untrained people using bloody dangerous equipment...”. Danger was magnified for new and inexperienced “people who... don’t sort of realize that (equipment) doesn’t only bite but that it quite easily removes digits...”. To ameliorate these risks Jack identified the need for a simple training programme to protect members and the Shed against the question of liability. He described a problematic dynamic whereby “when nothing has gone wrong... we tend to think we are safe”. However, “when it does go wrong” there was the question of “who is going to carry the can and how big is the can going to be?”. Jack described both of these elements as constituting a significant challenge to Men’s Shed’s across the country.

From Jack’s perspective as Trundell Shed Chairman the narrative shifts to input from Karen a key member and contributor to the work and life of the Trundell Shed.

4.3.4 INTERVIEW TWO: KAREN

Karen, 79, a semi-retired farmer, was a key member of the Trundell Shed, hosting the Shed premises on her farmlet a few kilometres outside of Trundell.

4.3.4.1 *ROLE OF THE SHED IN MEMBERS LIVES*

In describing the roles of the Shed in her life and those of her fellow Sheddies Karen made four key points, they were: pleasure and meaning derived from service, company and fun via working together, the value of activity and learning for physical and mental wellbeing, the Shed as a safe space for people recovering from injury or illness.

In exemplifying the first point Karen described fabricating and decorating two coffins for a couple in a neighbouring town. Karen noted that the “huge pleasure” she received from the project had two aspects. The first was “making the best job” she possibly could, testing her skills and exercising her creativity. Secondly Karen explained that the coffins also constituted a community service for local elderly people in that a bespoke Trundell coffin most often cost around a quarter of a commercial equivalent. Therefore, the coffins were personalized yet functional and cost-effective. As such, the project afforded her an opportunity to “help a number of people” in a specific manner which was one of her personal life values.

Working on coffins had also provided the context for co-work with other Sheddies. This constituted Karen’s second point, the benefit of company. She described a special project with frequent collaborator “Bill”, regarding a severely ill 99-year-old female rest home resident, wherein, they were approached to “make and decorate her a coffin” over a weekend which they “did willingly”. Despite the sober nature of the task Karen spoke with palpable warmth of the “camaraderie, fun and laughter” associated with the project and, with humour, related that the lady concerned had recovered and was “now 102”. She stated that these opportunities for purposeful company were significant as, being widowed at 39, Karen had “been alone along time...”. The Shed now provided the context for what she described as “lovely company twice a week” and “lots of fun” which, at nearly 80 years of age, had added “a lovely new dimension” to her life. In depicting the atmosphere of morning teatime at the Shed Karen suggested similar benefits for her fellow Sheddies. These interactions, either in the tearoom attached to the Shed or under the pergola in a nearby paddock, could last “sometimes for an hour”. She reported that they were “a sight to see...” being characterized by “banter, chat and laughter”. These interpersonal characteristics were in her view the key features of the Shed that were of special importance to a number of men who came just for morning tea. Karen noted that this was

especially important for those men who needed the opportunity to “get away from home” as respite from caring for “very dependent wives”. Stepping outside of the “caring role” into an emotionally buoyant and positive atmosphere was important for the wellbeing of these individuals and contributed to their sustainability as carers for their spouses.

Karen associated the companionship available at the Shed with her third point regarding the link between activity, learning and wholistic wellbeing. She noted that her “mental health” had “always depended on... being busy”. In this regard she attributed the “amazing difference (the Shed) has made” to her wellbeing to creative active-learning opportunities she would not have accessed on her “own account”. In this process Karen accessed aspects of her creative self that she did not know she possessed. This started by “making little slatted boxes for the Shed to sell...” and continued on into “all sort of things” including furniture, kitchenware, garden art and wooden toys. Together, we viewed photographs of these articles, many of which were sold for fundraising purposes to support the ongoing work of the Shed. That her hard work and creativity could contribute to the Shed which nurtured those very capacities was an additional benefit to the sense of wellbeing Karen ascribed to Shed membership.

In regards her fourth point Karen gave two examples of the Shed being a safe and supportive venue for older men recovering from injury and/or managing illness. One man suffering with dementia was regularly brought to the Shed by a fellow Sheddie. Karen stated that the Sheddies “look(ed) after him” and involved him where they could in tasks appropriate to his capacity. This gave “his wife a morning to herself...” for which she had relayed to Karen she was “hugely grateful” knowing that her husband was in a “safe place”. The second example involved another man who, recovering from a stroke, “was on a walking stick and couldn’t do anything”. To begin with this man “...just stood and watched” and was evidently frustrated by being unable to contribute. However, during one project, Karen deliberately created an achievable task: relocating partially fabricated “predator traps” from one side of the workshop to another workstation for completion. Although this task was repetitive and “laborious...it gave him something to do”. This simple opportunity for activity and contribution was highly significant for this individual who later developed his own workshop at home. He credited the Shed and Karen for supporting “his determination to get better”. Karen described this man as one of their success

stories whereby in exercising “his determination” towards recovery had contributed to and exemplified the multifaceted role of the Shed in the Trundell community.

4.3.4.2 ROLE OF THE SHED IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL RURAL COMMUNITY

Karen identified three major points regarding the role of the Shed in Trundell, which were: completing community service projects; providing a unique context for men to associate together; being a locally defined and driven community entity.

In relation to the first point, assembling wooden-framed predator traps for a local body conservation authority, as described above, was just one of numerous community service projects undertaken at the Shed. Other examples included “picnic tables for the youth camp, repairing retaining “walls at the old people’s home”, “a chook house for the school” and fabricating special “bowls holders for two bowling clubs...” In each case the recipients of the items were part of the informal network of local community organisations. Requests for assistance usually came via “someone with the Shed who hears of something” and relays the idea “or people coming directly to the Shed and saying, ‘will you do this...?’”

The production of such items was related to Karen’s second major point. In listing other service-oriented groups in the Trundell area, she stated that the Men’s Shed was unique in its production focus thereby providing an “opportunity for men who may have no other outlet.” This outlet was exemplified by one project in which several men in their eighth decade cut kindling wood for fundraising. In conversation with these men the researcher identified that each had recently survived significant reversals in their physical health. Despite these challenges each appeared to enjoy their storying-telling and general banter. They informally noted that whilst they could not contribute heavy labour for community projects, they could cut kindling and thus contribute to the work of the Shed. In this way the Shed created both a unique opportunity for socialization and, through what it produced, enhanced the capacity of other local community organisations.

Lastly Karen outlined the development of the Shed as a locally driven and resourced community entity. From “an inaugural meeting around five or six years ago” interested parties “got together and things went from there...” In the initial stages the men “had the use of a stable, then a woolshed and a community funder gave them \$7000 for set up costs”. The Shed had also

benefited from the input of a local tool retailer who discounted equipment and a local businesswoman who ran the Town's lumber yard. This woman was long known to Karen who described her as "a sterling girl... generous with gear and a discount on timber" who had sold "quite a lot of (shed produce) in her window." Such ongoing support was emblematic for Karen of the Shed's respected place in the Trundell community. Enhancing such relationships was among several key developmental imperatives Karen identified for the future of the Trundell Men's Shed.

4.3.4.3 GOING FORWARD

In considering developmental challenges for the Shed, Karen suggested three key points which were: deliberate attention to pastoral care processes; proactive outreach to other organisation; sustainability of tasks and location.

Concerning the first point Karen saw a need to both deepen and strengthen supportive relationships between existing members and to support new attendees. Key to achieving these two interrelated goals was coordinating an approach to foster what she described as "social-mindedness" between the men. She explained this concept as the capacity to "think... 'ooh, I'd better go and see that person or ring them up'". From her perspective this did not seem to come naturally but she believed that fostering such an approach may encourage men to maintain contact outside of Shed sessions. It was her view that such contact could ameliorate the effects of social isolation for individuals in the community and serve to "strengthen bonds" within the Shed.

In terms of her second point Karen indicated that she would like to "see (members) go out into the community" to participate in projects. However, in describing these challenges she also noted the limitations of being "a woman in a Men's Shed". It was her view that given the purpose of the Shed in drawing men together, that male members needed to come "to their own conclusion of what could be done". She explained this as consciously sharing leadership responsibility suggesting one means of achieving this: male members "doing the research" on what the community needed. This research would then be applied "to produce something that is needed and useful" to the Trundell community which would act to further raise the profile of the Shed.

It was her view that the more the Shed did “for the public the more response” the Shed would receive in terms of raising its profile. The purpose of profile-raising from her perspective was two-fold: to attract new members and promote support for the work of the Shed including funding. Both of these tasks she saw as vital for the Shed to be sustainable.

In regards her third point Karen was mindful of balancing outreach as described above with substantive issues of physical sustainability for the members and the current building. In relation to members she observed that, there were “only three men fit enough to... do manual jobs”. With the majority of members being “older and infirm” she noted that “...pottering there in the Shed is what they are capable of... they are not here to overexert themselves”. Therefore, project work needed to reflect members capacity.

Similarly, the current Shed, located in one of her farm buildings, had reached its physical capacity in terms of storage space and safe working conditions. However, “making a concerted effort to find somewhere permanent” that wasn’t dependent on her remaining “well and fit when I’m 90” created an even “bigger hurdle”. In explaining this Karen noted that the pressure of fundraising and planning activities associated with establishing and maintaining a new facility may compromise the undergirding purpose of the Shed. This purpose in her view was supporting “men’s physical and mental health”. In this regard Karen stated that the Shed was “the sort of institution that you don’t want to rule men’s lives...” given that it was the Sheds informal and voluntary nature that facilitated positive health outcomes. She indicated that if “everybody’s gets the feeling of being forced” to work because of a financial imperative then that was the opposite of “what you need” to run a successful Men’s Shed.

4.3.5 SUMMARY

This section juxtaposes Jack’s and Karen’s findings between which there were significant areas of agreement.

Jack and Karen shared similar perspectives regarding the roles of the Shed for men in terms of companionship, physical and mental wellbeing through activity, indirect support for spouses, learning, satisfaction via community contribution.

In considering the key roles of the Shed in Trundell, Karen and Jack jointly noted community service via projects followed by differing emphases on the Shed as a community organization. Karen's focus was on the Shed as a locally defined and driven entity. Jack located the Shed within local and regional networks.

Lastly, concerning key challenges, Karen and Jack co-identified venue and membership sustainability and separately named different aspects of Shed management. Pertaining to management Karen advocated for systematic processes for organizational outreach and internal pastoral care with Jack highlighting workflow alongside processes for strengthening health and safety.

4.3.6 WEXFORD

The following findings derived from separate 120-minute semi-structured interviews with Shed leaders Ozzie, at his home and Reg at the Wexford Shed. The location of these interviews was of particular significance. Ozzie offered me a tour of his home workshop from which I was able to develop a contextual perspective on his work as an engineer, craftsman and inventor. Reg used our premeeting preamble to tour me through the Wexford Shed including the recently commissioned engineering section which he and Ozzie had jointly championed. These informal interactions afforded me the opportunity to observe the passion both had for their craft, their Shed fraternity and local community.

4.3.7 INTERVIEW ONE: OZZIE

Ozzie, 63, an electrical technician, was a trustee of the Wexford Men's Shed, a role he had held for 12 months.

4.3.7.1 ROLE OF THE SHED IN MEMBERS LIVES

Ozzie offered four key points regarding the role of the Shed in the lives of himself and his fellow Sheddies, they were: Shoulder-to-shoulder social support; informal mentoring and learning opportunities; developing leadership skills and preparation for retirement.

Regarding the first point Ozzie emphasized the relaxed, participatory environment of the Shed which he described as being "... social but not". He explained this as the difference between having to "front up" to a highly formalized organization with prescribed hierarchical social

relationships versus to simply “turn up” and be part of “a bunch of guys working... shoulder-to-shoulder”. He defined shoulder-to-shoulder connection as simply working next to someone else whereby, “If you never said a word... you are still getting something out of the experience”. This warm co-occupation on a shared task enabled Ozzie to have a sense of being socially included or to “feel part of things” which he noted was highly beneficial for his mental health.

This relaxed, inclusive and task-focused environment provided context for Ozzie’s second key point in which the Shed as a site for informal learning and mentoring. Regarding the nature of learning, Ozzie stated that no one was at the Shed “... to be a tutor or to be taught or to be somebodies’ worker”. Instead Ozzie emphasized equality of relationships providing the example of one Sheddie who knew “... *all* sorts of stuff about wood....”. This man was not regarded as “some God...” but was “just another bloke in the Shed” whom others could approach for assistance or advice.

Ozzie played a similar mentoring role utilizing his diverse skills as a mechanical and electrical engineer to help others. He offered the example of “lending a hand” to a fellow Sheddie with a very complex endeavour involving electronics and mechanized technology. At the start of the project it seemed clear to Ozzie that this man “didn’t really have a clue what he was doing”. He reported that during an initial joint brainstorm his colleague was discouraged stating “We can’t make that!”. However, Ozzie was convinced that together they could find a workable solution saying, “of course you can, *we can make that*”. This conviction seemed instrumental for Ozzie’s friend who three days later text Ozzie stating, “I’ve finally figured it out”. The project progressed well from there with Ozzie reporting that this friend now “picks up the bloody welder and has a go... which is so far from where he started that it’s ridiculous”. Ozzie found such experiences “a real buzz...” whereby “guys will turn up and have a go (and say) ‘this is really good; I have never done any of this before’”. He referred to this process as men “expanding themselves”, enlarging their sense of personal capacity of which he felt privileged and excited to be a part. He explicitly noted that the “buzz” he experienced via contribution was of great benefit to his sense of self-efficacy and was supportive of his mental health. Clearly his contribution was valued by others as Ozzie’s support and skills were referenced repeatedly by his peers during the Wexford Focus Group.

Ozzie's third key point regarding leadership development was closely inter-related to the above "buzz". Helping people "take the blinkers off" was his phrase for supporting others to "expand themselves" by developing a wider vision of what they could achieve. As a Trustee of the Wexford Shed, concomitant with his input into individuals, Ozzie's leadership was manifest in his contribution to developing the mechanical engineering capacity of the Shed. He took a lead alongside another Trustee in this process, reorganizing the workspace, purchasing equipment and training people how to use it safely and effectively. He described this leadership role as "being part of the DNA which makes the Shed work" and rated this as an even bigger "buzz" whereby he helped improve the conditions in which individuals could develop. Given Ozzie's self-description as a "bit of a recluse..." who "probably wouldn't leave the property without the Men's Shed" his multifaceted contribution and the satisfaction he takes from this is noteworthy.

Ozzie's fourth key point involved the Shed's role in preparing men for retirement. Ozzie observed that the "guys that turn up to the Shed before retirement are the smart ones because they have opened another door before they retire...". Ozzie had seen the negative impact on the physical and mental health of peers entering retirement and "do nothing because they haven't thought about it". He therefore suggested that those men that "open the door" to the Shed prior to retirement give themselves a series of options that fell into two categories. The first he described as social options or, "what they can do with the Shed" in terms of social connections working alongside others. The second category was options for self-development or, "what they can do with themselves" regarding development of new interests and skills. These considerations framed his own contemplation of retirement with the Shed being "...something I can do that will keep me active... I can miss out on work, but I won't miss out on the Shed". Activity for Ozzie encompassed the social, physical and mental opportunities that the Shed offered individuals. Community-related projects provided context for such opportunities and will be addressed below.

4.3.7.2 ROLE OF THE SHED IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL RURAL COMMUNITY

Ozzie identified two key points in relation to the Wexford Shed's role in their community: as a venue for community service projects, and a place of intergenerational connection.

Regarding point one, Ozzie described two categories of community service: event coordination and producing objects. Recently the Shed used their expertise to help organize a large, multi-organization community event associated with the beginning of Spring. The Shed's involvement enabled the smooth execution of the event which involved several thousand people and served partially as a fundraiser and promotional opportunity for the Shed itself.

Such reciprocal benefit was also manifest as the Shed produced articles for other community groups. Ozzie provided the example of creating a Mud-kitchen for a local school noting that whilst three men performed the majority of the work, "across the weeks everybody had little ideas or took interest". He related that the sense of co-production continued in the installation of the kitchen whereby, "Ron and Darren put the thing on the back of my trailer... we met over at the school... and the kids were real excited by it." Seeing the delight of the children was "a buzz..." as given the unaffected enthusiasm of children there was no guessing "as to whether they enjoyed it or not." Ozzie noted that in terms of reciprocity the school received a valuable addition to its plant and the Sheddies gained a satisfying sense of joint contribution that was valued and appreciated. This project reinforced bonds between the men and helped reinforce the place of the Shed in the community.

This example also serves to illustrate Ozzie's second key point that the Shed provided a context for intergenerational connection in Wexford. He referenced two further manifestations of this connection, firstly, the Shed's contact with the local aged care facility, Curnow Fields. Men in their 80's and 90's visited the Wexford Shed on Thursday mornings to "sand things have a bit of a yarn and a cuppa tea... nothing too strenuous". As Ozzie's recalled these gatherings, he described reciprocal benefit for both Sheddies and residents. The latter "go away happy, having had an outing", the former being enriched by "by talking to these old fellas and the stuff they have done...". Ozzie clearly valued the opportunity of hearing the resident's stories of life in the 1930's and 40's".

Secondly Ozzie described the Shed as being a resource repository of tools and materials donated by older people. He gave several examples of such people having "saved materials for 40 years". He explained a pattern he had noticed whereby these persons, typically men, reach a life-stage

when they begin to think “it won’t be much longer till I move, and I have a shed full of Rimu what will I do with that?”. He noted that receiving the donated goods was “a great honour” as these people were saying in effect “I trust you with it”. Ozzie also described the potential for further reciprocity whereby the Shed informed donors “you can give it to us and come back in, join the Shed and use it whenever you like...”. Ozzie described this process as giving “dignity to the donor” and “opening a door” to possible membership in the Shed. Recruitment of new members is further explored in the next section.

4.3.7.3 GOING FORWARD

Ozzie foresaw two interrelated key challenges for the Wexford Shed going forward, they were: changing public perceptions of Men’s Sheds; encouraging recruitment and participation of younger members.

In regards the first challenge he deployed his characteristic phrase “taking the blinkers off” in a different context: shifting an apparent perception among the wider public that the “Shed is just a workshop... a bunch of retired guys making wooden things”. He was concerned that this perception may limit the potential growth of the Shed. The message he wanted to promote is that the Shed “is a place we nurture our creativity where you can be 12 or 92”. He offered an example of enabling a shift in perception by “showcasing some stuff... things that are beyond the ordinary”. He described this as “getting a bit American, blowing our own trumpet” using the unique talents of individuals within the Shed which included anything from landscape painting and knife making to blacksmithing and robotics. It was his intent to create a context for display of talent that would make people go “... wow... there are people here...right here available to everybody...all this equipment...and they do all this fantastic stuff...”. Ozzie envisaged such a promotional campaign working in concert with local community events such as the Spring gathering referred to earlier.

In his view this would help the Shed “expand... out to people who are capable and creative, exercising their imagination...”.

Changing perception to lead to expansion was closely related to Ozzie’s second challenge: recruiting and holding younger people in membership. Firstly, Ozzie noted that addressing this

challenge was key to Shed's survival because "the skills that myself and a bunch of these retired guys have had have been traditional... but then well... they're going to die eventually (laughs)". In this regard, Ozzie wanted to avoid the outcome of having "a Shed with nobody in it".

In terms of attracting younger people he described the importance of creating a bridge into the Shed via catering to their interests thereby "meeting people where they are at". This required the Shed to move in "the direction things are going" whereby "the guys, in their 30's and 40's, like to do things with electronics and robotics...". In response to this challenge Ozzie, alongside other Trustees proposed the development of a "clean zone" free of debris from woodwork or metal work where members can follow their interests in robotics and electronics. The Shed now had several members in their 40's and Ozzie was confident that if their interests were catered for that they will not only stay, they would enrich the learning and development of older members.

4.3.8 INTERVIEW TWO: REG

Reg, 67, a retired engineer, was the Chairperson of the Wexford Men's Shed, role he had held for 8 months.

4.3.8.1 ROLE OF THE SHED IN MEMBERS LIVES

Reg identified seven key points regarding the role the Shed played in his life and the lives of others, they were: Creating connections in a new community; providing a well-equipped workshop; a reason to get out of the house; physical and mental activity; companionship and discussion; knowledge and skill sharing; engaging and serving the wider community.

In regards the first point Reg described the challenge of integrating into a new community in later life noting "the best way to do that" was to be prepared "to join an organization." As a former engineer, Reg noted that joining the Shed with its focus on making things was ".... just a no-brainer" decision that has helped him connect with the Wexford community.

In relation to point two, prior to retirement Reg had been accustomed to a "large workshop" in which he "could potter around..." completing wood and metalwork projects. On retirement and relocation to Wexford he no longer had such a space therefore the Shed provided a substitute workshop and access to a range of machinery.

He related this to his third point that visits to the Shed provided a reason for “getting out of the house”. Reg stated that “getting out” was vital for him and for other retirees in order to access “the companionship of being... with other people” not being “trapped at home”. He described the consequences of not leaving the house as being “buggered” which he explained as a decline in physical and mental wellbeing.

Pertaining to the maintenance of holistic wellbeing Reg’s fourth key point emphasized the importance of activity which for him meant having to “have something to do with (his) hands all the time”. As a person who eschewed hours of reading or television Reg noted that inactivity led to “deep boredom” in which his brain went “stagnant” and he felt agitated or “stir-crazy”. He stated that the impact of this was “not good” for him and that the Shed provided the ideal “antidote” to such boredom. As a former blacksmith, Shed visits to “make things out of metal” made him “happy” as he was doing something that he “really loves” combining creative physical and mental activity.

This activity frequently occurred in context of companionship and discussion with others which was his fifth key point. Speaking of companionship, Reg noted that some people “just come along and have a chat... for the companionship”. In his experience such people would “wander around and ... have a talk... for an hour or two and bugger off home again...” which he described as “just as satisfying” for them as partaking in project work. Companionship occurred not only at the Shed but extended into Reg’s wider social world. If he “needed a hand with something” or wanted to “go down to the club and have a beer” he could contact “one or two guys” from the Shed that he had “got quite friendly with”. He described these relationships as reciprocal in nature.

In terms of discussion, Reg felt the companionship described above facilitated, on occasion, frank and open conversations between men regarding health and wellbeing. He described these discussions as opportunities for “burden sharing” which encompassed topics that he felt men “wouldn’t normally talk about...”. He exemplified such sharing in describing a discussion about prostate cancer between three men that emerged over a “cup of tea”. During this discussion the men had “talked openly” about the physical and psychological impact of the disease by “sharing their own experiences”. In Reg’s view this discussion had helped ameliorate a sense for the

individuals of “feeling on their own”. Reg attributed the open quality of this discussion to the all-male environment. He felt that having “...somebody male to talk to” was facilitative of health issues being “brought out in the open a whole lot more... than they would be anywhere else”.

The warmly engaged social environment also created a context for his sixth point, knowledge and skill sharing. In his experience Reg often turned up at the Shed “thinking I’m going to do this...that way”. However, once he was underway, “3-4 guys in the Shed” would say ““I would have done it this way””. Reflecting on their advice Reg had frequently found himself thinking “aww shit that’s a lot easier””. In accepting such advice, he reported having “re-honed” some woodwork skills. He described these opportunities for knowledge and skill sharing as “part of the ethos of the Shed”. Under this ethos “anybody can come along” and if they “don’t know anything” Sheddies will try to “teach (them) what (they) want to know” or demonstrate “how to do something.”

Reg’s seventh point was that joint community service-oriented projects reinforced a sense of comradeship between Sheddies and provided connection to the wider Wexford community. He described one such project, the Banks Hill School Mud Kitchen. This project involved multiple members across “various stages over a 2-3-week period”. He reported that it “was really satisfying” personally and as a team “to rock up with this kitchen on the trailer and present it to the kids”. Reg laughingly depicted a “proper little ceremony” whereby the children “did their little song and dance” followed by “a speech from the Headmistress and a cup of tea”. In relaying this example, he emphasized the community service aspect of “producing something that’s going into a place like that that can really appreciate it and use it.”

The significance of community engagement and serving the community provides a useful junction into the following section.

4.3.8.2 ROLE OF THE SHED IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL RURAL COMMUNITY

Reg provided three key points regarding the role of the Shed in the Wexford community; they were: Building objects for local community organisations; providing assistance to elderly locals; being a locally developed organization integrated into a strong community network.

Reg’s first point related to responding to the needs of community organisations. These needs were often identified via a process of intercommunity dialogue whereby “...somebody talked to

somebody who suggested the Shed". The request was then "brought to one of (the) members" who would then approach "one of the trustees" asking, "can we build this?".

Beneficiaries of this dialogue included, schools, community groups, sports clubs and civic facilities. Objects included but were not limited to seating, gates, tables and pergolas. These objects enhanced the built environment of Wexford in two ways: firstly, they were aesthetically crafted, thereby improving the visual appearance of the town, secondly, they served a direct, functional purpose. Reg offered two specific examples of Shed craftsmanship in support of this dual contribution: exactly crafted wooden gates made for the local cemetery replacing a set which had fallen into disrepair; a series of commercial-grade, metal framed picnic tables which facilitated locals use of Wexford's main public park.

In his second key point Reg described elderly individuals within the community also benefiting from the Shed's support. In a typical situation a "little old lady" without the means or knowledge "to get her favourite chair repaired" could "bring it over" to the Shed. Reg described the Sheddies satisfaction from achieving a difficult repair and helping out someone local as doing "the job... (for) pleasure, basically". He suggested that this small example was of real significance given Wexford's comparative isolation and its high percentage of elderly residents.

In relation to his third key point Reg suggested that individual and community benefits such as the above were envisaged by local people as the development of the Shed began around ten years ago. Reg described the "instrumental" efforts of a local "high school technical teacher" who "formed a group of guys" that engaged in "a shit-load of fundraising and begging" to "get the Shed off the ground". From Reg's understanding the local district council eventually donated land and a local business donated the Shed in kitset form. The Shed was then assembled by local volunteer labour and initially outfitted with locally donated machinery. Reg described the developmental process as a "community thing" being "pushed as a community thing" and therefore "kept within the community".

Reg repeatedly emphasized the "locally-owned" nature of the Shed's development and the strength of the local network. In explaining the circumstances that support such collaboration he opined that "...it boils down again to (Wexford) being a wee rural community where everybody

has got everybody's back." An example of "having each other's back" was the regular community-wide events the Shed contributed to. These events typically involved 5-6 community organisations working together to formulate, market and produce 4-6 major community events across a 12-month period.

Remaining attached to local networks is one of the challenges Reg addresses in the following section.

4.3.8.3 GOING FORWARD

Reg described three challenges to maintaining and developing the work of the Wexford Shed, they were: retaining the operating ethos; plant maintenance and extension; attracting new members.

In relation to the first point Reg presented two aspects of their operating ethos that were, in his view, vital to maintain. Firstly, the "whole reason for the Shed being here" was "to get a group of men together for companionship". This focus on the value of relationships put into context the project work whereby "making things" was "a by-product" given that "the Shed was formed as a meeting place to bring the guys together."

The second key aspect was retaining the Shed's charitable status. If project work was for "a member of the community or a charity organization" the Shed tended "to do the work for them without charge...". Reg explained that this was important for two reasons: maintaining credibility as a community organization and not to "become another business...". Eschewing a business model was important from two perspectives. Firstly, the Shed did not want to compete with local tradespeople who needed work and secondly it was important that the Shed not "feel like work" to those who attend. Attaching a sense of compulsion to a voluntary organization was potentially problematic in Reg's view as people attended because "they wanted to" not because they "had to".

Reg indicated there was an inherent tension between retaining this status and accessing enough funding to maintain and possibly expand the plant which was his second key challenge. He stated that the Shed had to have "an income, albeit small..." to cover "power and insurance... new machines and repairs." Currently these ongoing costs were met via three mechanisms: the sale

at community events of Shed produce such a chopping boards and other small wooden items; labour costs charged to the local district council for completion of projects such as the picnic tables described earlier: Shed membership fees. These funds were insufficient however to address the perceived need for expansion and tool upgrade. Whilst grateful for the donated space and tools Reg noted that there was limited expansion space being “placed in the middle of a public park”. Also, the donated handyman-grade equipment was nearing the end of its useful life. Both were significant issues to which there was no easy solution. As a small community organization qualifying for and repaying a loan to purchase land and erect and equip a larger building would in Reg’s words take “1000 years” and was not achievable.

Reg related this dilemma to his third challenge: building the Shed’s capacity to attract new membership. He suggested that if the Shed was constituted solely of “a bunch of 80-year-old men doing woodwork with a hammer and chisel” younger people considering Shed membership “might say ‘I am not interested’”. The Shed currently had a “couple of youngish guys” who were “into electronics”. Reg felt that extending to encompass their interests would be “part of the way the Shed evolves...” whereby keeping “these new guys interested... they will bring in more guys”. From his perspective “keeping up with progress” in terms of new technology would help the Shed “keep growing and keep going”. With this in mind the Shed were fundraising for a 3D printer.

4.3.9 SUMMARY

This section compares Reg and Ozzie’s findings between which there were numerous points of intersection.

In describing the roles of the Shed in men’s lives Reg and Ozzie concurred regarding the primacy of life-enhancing social connections and provision of informal mentoring and learning opportunities. Reg separately emphasized the Sheds as a well-equipped workshop space providing helpful physical and mental activity, creating connections for new residents and for community service. Ozzie viewed the Shed as a catalyst and crucible for developing leadership skills and remaining engaged in productive activity as he prepared for retirement.

In addressing the key roles of the Shed in Wexford, Ozzie and Reg both noted the unique contribution the Shed made to capacity building through construction projects. Allied to this, Reg

focused on the Shed as a locally developed organization integrated into a strong community network assisting individual elderly locals. Similarly, Ozzie positioned the Shed as a context for multiple layers of intergenerational connection.

Lastly, regarding forthcoming challenges, Reg and Ozzie agreed that encouraging the recruitment and retention of younger members was vital for Shed sustainability with each enumerating slightly different aspects of this challenge. Noting the importance of retaining the relational operating ethos of the Shed Reg also stressed the maintenance and development of the venue and equipment. In this he shared similar views with Ozzie pertaining to development of an electronic/robotics workshop space to attract younger members. Ozzie suggested this development as a strategic element in changing a public perception of the Shed as focused solely on retired men engaged in woodwork.

4.3.10 OVERALL SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMANT FINDINGS

In cross comparing the four sets of individual findings clear patterns of convergence emerged.

THE MULTIPLE ROLES OF MEN'S SHEDS FOR MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY

In relation to the role of the shed in members lives and the life of their local rural community three key themes were identified: Social connection; Mental connection; Community connection.

4.3.10.1 SOCIAL CONNECTION

There was unanimous agreement between key informants that the Sheds primary role was providing an important positive context for social connectedness that enhanced the physical and mental wellbeing of members Social contact occurred in two main contexts: physically working together on projects and engaging in discussion during break times. Such regular companionship was found to be protective against the deleterious effects of social isolation with its concomitant implications for physical and mental health and wellbeing.

4.3.10.2 MENTAL CONNECTION

Social connection in a context of productive physical activity in turn provided a milieu for forging mental connections through the stimulus of problem solving and learning new skills, via informal

mentoring, and new leadership opportunities. These were associated with enhanced mental acuity and subjective self-efficacy facilitative of greater levels of personal satisfaction all of which enhanced mental wellbeing.

4.3.10.3 COMMUNITY CONNECTION

The physical products resulting from these social and mental connections facilitated a third level of connectedness with the wider community. All participants constructed the Shed as a context for fulfilment of personal values and achievement of subjective satisfaction related to community service that enhanced their overall wellbeing. Equally they viewed products and the service represented therein as representations of the Shed's key role in their local community: building general community capacity as an expression of localized community development within strong community networks. In reflecting on Sheds as an expression of development it is noteworthy that each participant separately articulated a similar developmental process. This process involved six common elements: Local identification of local needs; development of a steering committee; donations of materials, tools and facilities; initial projects; forming a reputation; managing ongoing relationships.

4.3.10.4 MINORITY FINDINGS

Two participants indicated that Shed membership directly benefitted physical health.

Individual findings included the role of the Shed: as a well-equipped workshop away from home; a venue to prepare for retirement a safe space for recovery from illness or injury.

4.3.10.5 CHALLENGES FOR SHED'S GOING FORWARD

In relation to challenges for the Sheds going forward there two key interrelated themes that emerged: sustainability and management.

4.3.10.6 SUSTAINABILITY

There was strong alignment between participants regarding issues of sustainability, which included supporting and growing membership and plant maintenance/development.

Relating to supporting membership deliberate attention to internal pastoral care processes was strongly suggested by one participant. Regarding growing membership two participants centred

on attracting younger members via development of an electronic component to the Shed workshop. Another participant noted that his Shed needed more diversely skilled members in order to address a greater volume and range of community projects.

Three participants con-jointly identified two factors concerning plant sustainability. Firstly, the size limitations of their current workshop and the quality of equipment therein problematized safely and effectively accommodating significant membership increases. Relatedly, the fundraising and organization required to establish another facility seemed extremely daunting.

4.3.10.7 MANAGEMENT

Three of the participants shared general concerns pertaining to management of Sheds including: retaining Shed's mission focus as a voluntary vehicle for companionship between men thereby avoiding: business status, competing with local tradespeople and a dynamic of compulsory participation; maintaining proactive outreach to other organisations whilst managing internal workflow; maintenance of health and safety standards.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The Key Informant findings indicate that from the perspective of these leaders, Sheds are important contexts for fostering social connections between men and their communities which can enhance members mental wellbeing. Wellbeing is bolstered specifically via social relationships, learning and community contribution in the context of productive physical work. Sheds appear to face common challenges regarding sustainability of personnel and plant which in turn create specific dilemmas for those in management/coordination positions.

These findings are strongly supported in Men's Shed studies and related literature (Kelly et al., 2019). In combination with Focus Group findings to be presented in the next chapter the themes and their constituent findings provide a robust platform and direction for discussion in Chapter Six.

5 CHAPTER FIVE - FOCUS GROUPS FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from the focus group interviews of this project. Firstly, the groups and their key distinctiveness are described. Secondly, the findings of each focus group are presented. This is followed by a conjoint summary of shared and distinct findings between both groups that constituted the major themes. Consideration is then given to noteworthy minor findings identified across key informant interviews and focus groups. Lastly the chapter concludes with a summary of shared and distinct findings between both data sources and resulting joint themes that will be further explored in the discussion.

5.2 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

5.2.1 FOCUS GROUP NARRATIVES

Following completion of the key informant interviews, focus groups were conducted at the Trundell and Wexford Men's Sheds. The groups averaged ninety minutes in duration and included longstanding members alongside several participants who had joined within the previous year.

5.2.2 FOCUS GROUP DYNAMICS

The importance of the Shed as a hub of social connection was evident throughout the exchanges that occurred across both focus group interviews. During these exchanges, participants mutually engaged in humorous banter and self-depreciating humour which appeared to reinforce the strong social bonds of the group. Group members verbally supported and extended each other's responses to interview questions. It seemed manifestly evident that the participants genuinely enjoyed and valued each other's company.

5.2.3 TRUNDELL

The Trundell Men's Shed focus group was composed of nine members aged between 40 and 92 years. Seven men and two women participated. Three worked fulltime, five were retired and one was recovering from an accident. Each indicated they were of European descent two having

emigrated from the United Kingdom. Working backgrounds encompassed farming, engineering, health promotion and a variety of trades.

5.2.3.1 ROLE OF THE SHED IN MEMBERS LIVES

The participants made four key points in relation to the role of the Shed in members lives, they were: opportunities for social contact, informal learning, physical and mental wellbeing, service to others.

Pertaining to the first point, social contact was variously described by group members as “company”, “connection”, “community” and “camaraderie”. Regarding the first description Grant noted the tendency amongst people to “seek company in the advancing years” which he thought the Shed facilitated “very, very well”. He explained that there was “never a bad word spoken” but instead there was “good friendship” and “a bit of banter”. In relation to connection, James, who at 92 years was the oldest member, gave an example of three men working together making kindling. He described this as “a good project” because it enabled him “to chat to people” that he “may have not met” whilst fundraising, with the project thereby being productive and satisfying both socially and physically. The concept of a socially connected community was constituted by Kate, the youngest Shed member, of three elements relating to inclusivity. The first was “the warm welcome” she had received after “expecting a whole lot of grumpy old men”. Kate explained this as significant, given that her status as a commuter “working eight hours in the city”, left her feeling isolated from the Trundell community and the Shed acted to redress that isolation. Secondly, “spending time with older people” was significant to her having lost both sets of grandparents to which she was warmly attached. Thirdly, she valued the “advice” and encouragement that she received regarding her skill development which fostered her own identity as a capable craftsperson. Lastly, Roger described “the camaraderie... of having a coffee”. Camaraderie was inclusive of being in a social group, the banter that ensued and sharing “skills with some of the others” all of which were especially valuable to him since he retired.

It was such opportunities for skill sharing that constituted the participants second key point, informal learning which was comprised of two elements, learning and mentoring. Learning took the form of observing design and technique alongside receiving advice, often in the context of

co-participation in projects. Da offered an example of this whereby learning whilst engaged in community projects had demonstrably increased his skill base in his personal work. Grant described a mentoring process wherein “if you don’t know some of the subjects and you want to learn... there is always someone here that will give you a hand”. There were reciprocal benefits for mentees and mentors within the mentoring process. As a mentee, Godfrey noted that he had greatly benefitted from having “people with knowledge” to call on for expert advice enabling him to acquire skills “a whole lot easier”. This facilitated his sense of self “improve(ment)” which he described as important in assisting his recovery from brain injury. As a mentor, Roger noted the pleasure he received through mentoring individuals around specific skills and techniques. Commensurately the role of mentoring assisted him in his commitment to “improving processes” in the Shed through adjusting equipment and making templates which benefitted the overall function of the workshop.

The third key point participants identified was the Sheds contribution to physical and mental wellbeing. In detailing this contribution Da and Patrick, both previously active sports people, noted due to illness, injury and ageing being forced to withdraw ‘little by little” from sports. From Da’s perspective achievable, sustainable physical activity within the social context of the Shed was part of “reason for being” involved “coming up to the twilight years”. There were dual benefits to this. He could engage in physical activity to sustainably maintain his physical health whilst “being able to socialize and meet people....” which he explained as equally important for his mental wellbeing especially as he contemplated retirement. Similarly, Patrick clearly identified that “if it wasn’t for (the Shed)” he “...would just be sitting around home wasting away...”. He stated that the Shed afforded physical activity which maintained a certain level of fitness and importantly offered him a sense of “contribution” to the wider community. Contribution using his trade-related and social skills was significant for his mental wellbeing facilitating an experience of self-worth and life-purpose. Related to this Patrick described his work at the Shed as complementing another voluntary commitment: gardening and mentoring at the local primary school two afternoons per week. He described both voluntary endeavours as bringing structure and satisfaction to his weekly routine.

Concerning the fourth key point James summarized the groups discussion regarding a commitment to activity and community service as “using your older age to good effect”. He noted the intrinsic psychological rewards of community service conducted in the creative tension between acknowledging the limitations of older age whilst embracing the possibilities of what could be achieved. He framed this as dependent on the individual’s “attitude” toward “what you have got left”. This statement was strongly supported by other members of the focus group. Notions of the role of the Shed in community service as described above are explored further in the next section.

5.2.3.2 ROLE OF THE SHED IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL RURAL COMMUNITY

Group participants made three key points regarding the role of the Trundell Shed in their local community, they were: Responding to community needs, the Shed as a gathering place for rural people and as an expression of local community development.

In regards the first point, Grant and Jeff both acknowledged the Shed was becoming known as a place that assisted community endeavour. Grant described this process as starting “off with small things” noting that “... as the years went by... we got into bigger projects within the community”. Jeff noted this was facilitated via “word of mouth referrals” by which individuals and organisations came to the Shed with requests. Roger provided a concrete example whereby the Shed was contacted by the Principal of a local primary school whose caretaker was “out of action for 6 months”. In response, the Shed sent a working party which “...cleaned gutters and nailed down boards and fixed all sorts of things”. Patrick and Grant pointed to similar approaches made to the Shed by local churches and sports groups as well as other schools, one of which commissioned a “chook house” to be completed by the Shed.

In explaining their second key point Grant styled the Shed as a gathering place for rural people who shared similar values that reflected the “rural situation”. He described these values as being shaped by the particular shared demands and challenges of working with the natural rhythms of agriculture and horticulture in a challenging climate. Such values were typically expressed through lending equipment or providing labour, known as “lending a hand” or “mucking in”, to

achieve a joint task. The wider group affirmed that the Shed provided a setting for mutual understanding and expression of those values.

Joint effort was also a characteristic behind the groups third key point regarding the Shed's origins as a community development project. Grant provided the following outline of the development process:

Several individuals within an established and influential social network began to discuss possibilities of a local Men's Shed following their exposure to the concept via a television documentary. They then organized an initial public meeting which "elected a committee (of) 10-12 people" who raised the profile of the Shed within the Trundell community until "the concept was very strong within the district..." In response to this local interest "an enormous amount of people donated tools..." that enabled the Shed to set up a small operation in a stable. Grant described this as the beginning of a "natural progression..." whereby "people came up with different ideas, little projects in our minds that we wanted to do ourselves...". When the stable became too small they moved to a local woolshed in order to facilitate safe operation and a greater range of projects. One such project was "The Coffin Club" conceived by two members who decided that, given their age, making their own coffins would be useful. This idea captured the imagination of Sheddies and the wider Trundell public whereby the Shed now made coffins to order, a valued community service and fundraiser for the Shed.

Jeff paralleled the Shed's process of organizational development with design and build refinements noticeable within the coffin project. He noted that "...the standard of joinery has improved" with Roger's skill at designing templates for producing multiple components. In terms of wider development, the coffin project concept has now been adopted and adapted by various Men's Sheds nationally. Maintaining such developmental momentum will be addressed in the next section.

5.2.3.3 GOING FORWARD

The group noted three key challenges for the future of the Trundell Shed, they were: retaining a relaxed, socially engaged atmosphere, responding to community need whilst avoiding business status, keeping membership affordable.

In regards the first challenge Karen, Godfrey and Kate each identified that the unpretentious, informal atmosphere of the Shed was integral to its success and needed to be maintained. Karen, a veteran of community organisations, stated that there was no other group she had belonged to that had the “absolute freedom to do nothing and enjoy the company of everybody else...”. Godfrey’s view was that that “everyone” was “just so socially engaging...” which enabled him to “slot in straight away”. He explained this as feeling valued and respected which aided his recovery from brain injury. Kate felt that Shed projects were just “by-products” of the warm social connections that were, and should remain, the major focus of the Trundell Shed.

There was unanimous agreement with this view which was related to the groups second challenge: remaining responsive to, but not driven by, community need. Pertaining to responsivity Grant stated that “locals now know about us and are not afraid to contact us as a group”. Karen agreed that the community recognize “if there is something needed” the Shed “could probably” help. This level of community awareness was considered highly valuable by group members, however they identified three potentially concerning implications. Firstly, a sole focus on responsivity could lead to the Shed becoming compelled to produce. For Grant this was analogous to “becoming as business” which was at odds with the voluntary ethos of the Shed. This concern was supported by all focus group participants in relation to retaining the social substance of Shed culture. Secondly, Jeff urged caution regarding responsivity lest the Shed “take away work from legitimate businesses that are trying to eke out a living”. This was echoed by Karen who listed several projects the Shed had declined that, in her view, should be completed by local businesses to support the local economy. Thirdly, whilst supporting people recovering from illness or injury was a valued function of the Shed, there were issues of health and safety and attendant organizational liability. Because of the risk of accidents, Grant noted that it would be problematic should the Shed be expected to become a “baby sitting service” for severely disabled people.

The third key challenge was managing finances so that the Shed remained accessible to anyone in the community. Godfrey affirmed the need to keep annual “subs minimal” so that membership remained affordable. Jack explained that present fundraising efforts enabled this and there was general agreement that every effort should be made to retain the current rates of \$25 per

annum. This commitment would in Grant's words "encourage people to join" which was an important consideration both in terms of the Shed's philosophy as an inclusive community organization and for long term sustainability.

5.2.4 WEXFORD

The Wexford Men's Shed focus group was composed of six members aged between 43 and 76 years. One participant worked fulltime, two part time, the remainder were retired. All were of European descent. Working backgrounds encompassed teaching, carpentry, electrical engineering, information technology, and Corrections.

5.2.4.1 ROLE OF THE SHED IN MEMBER'S LIVES

Group participants described the roles of the Shed in their lives in terms of two key points: enabling social connections, fostering mental and physical wellbeing.

In terms of the first point social connection was referred to variously as "friendship", "fellowship" and "being with". Rappel explained that the Shed provided the context for friendship that extended outside the Shed whereby he could "always call someone" asking for "a hand for an hour" with a task or project. The value of this extended beyond mere assistance and represented for Rappel an opportunity that "money can't buy" to become "more part of the community...".

Similarly, Barney referred to the Shed as a "fellowship of some like-minded blokes" which he considered "bloody invaluable!" as he lived in an isolated rural location where the tools in his workshop didn't "talk back" to him. In relation to this he offered a twofold construct of Shed "fellowship". Firstly, it was an opportunity to "bounce some ideas off people..." who had similar interest in engineering and construction. Secondly, the Shed context contained the kind of socially reinforcing banter which he referred to as "giving each other a bit of shit". Such banter served to strengthen warm inclusive bonds between the men which associated with positive memories of his working life as a tradesperson.

Laird, the oldest of the participants, referred to "being with" in the context of the negative impact of isolation which he associated with retirement and the ageing process. He explained that at his age he tended to be "looking after (himself) at home..." where he did not "tend to communicate". He noted that this negatively impacted his general mood. Therefore, he described "being with

other chaps” in a workshop context as being “good for your physical health and your mental health”. There were three layers to this. Physically he was able to engage in “health-maintaining” light activity, cognitively he was “stimulated” by design work and problem-solving. Thirdly he noted that opportunities for communication and social connection were comparable to his membership of the University of the Third Age.

Laird’s experience leads to the second point in which participants described the interrelated roles the Shed played in their mental wellbeing. These included: knowledge-sharing and learning opportunities, providing structure and purpose, the opportunity for community contact and contribution.

Related to knowledge-sharing, the Shed provided Thunderbird with a multi-faceted context for sharing “a lifetime” of discrete skills and organizational experience as a tradesman and technical teacher. He explained that integrating career knowledge was of tremendous personal satisfaction. Similarly, Rappel, Laird and Ozzie spoke of the satisfaction they received from “passing on” their trade skills to several women and young men. Integral to this satisfaction was observing these persons to be “surprised and thrilled” at what they had created.

Pertaining to learning, Jules related benefitting from such skills given that he “never had any background in fixing things”. He identified the social mechanism for learning as “coming up with ideas talking to Ozzie and others”. Jules related this skill development to a growing sense of personal confidence and self-efficacy whereby “everything just starts to seem really achievable... you have expanded your vision, expanded yourself”.

Regarding structure and purpose, Barney reflected that twice-weekly workshop sessions helped him mentally “focus and organize” himself better which had two key benefits. Firstly, his wife found him “more approachable”, less irritable and more open in his communication which contributed to an improvement in their relationship. He further associated the structural and social aspects of Shed attendance with improved blood pressure which he indicated was “shit-loads lower...” at his last medical review. Correspondingly, Rappel made an explicit link between the regularity of Shed attendance and improved mental health. He attributed this to having “something to focus on... a reason to get out of bed in the morning” and observed that this

external focus was implicit in his recovery from depression and the maintenance of ongoing mental wellbeing.

Lastly, Thunderbird associated the Shed's contribution to member mental wellbeing with multifaceted contribution to the local community. A decade earlier, as he approached retirement, he had settled on using the Shed as a "vehicle" for fostering "men's health and wellbeing and recovery from depression". He described this process as a means of "giving back" to and "building up" the Wexford community which eventuated in substantial wellbeing benefits for him personally. These were inclusive of mutually satisfying working relationships and friendships, structure and a context for quantifiable achievement all of which served to bolster a positive sense of self-identity during the immediate post-retirement period.

The role of the Shed in literally and figuratively "building up" the local Wexford community will now be explored further.

5.2.4.2 ROLE OF THE SHED IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL RURAL COMMUNITY

The men described four key roles for the Shed in the life of Wexford: providing social learning/mentoring opportunities, assisting elderly people, collaborating with other groups and enhancing the built environment.

Regarding mentoring Thunderbird provided the example of engagement with Joffrey "an autistic boy... in his early 20's" whom "nobody would employ". Laird and Ozzie outlined three stages to this process. Firstly, there was time invested in building relationship which necessitated listening to stories which, reportedly, were frequently egocentric and fanciful. "Being listened to..." enabled Joffrey to feel accepted which given the social implications of his disorder was significant. Acceptance by the Sheddies led to Joffrey "bouncing ideas off" members who would "sit and talk with him and get him to do a few things" on projects. Gradually Joffrey's skills and capacity developed to the point that he was able to obtain paid employment.

Similarly, Laird outlined opportunities for local women to develop DIY skills through mentoring at the Shed. He described this as being assisted to "think laterally" and apply pre-existing generic knowledges to develop specific skills, something that, in his view "most ladies" hadn't "had chance to do". Lastly, most of the group had been involved in tutoring children at the Shed on

several school holiday programmes. Rappel explained that the Sheddies taught them “how to use a hammer and... come up with a project, such as a bird feeder, for each one of the school holidays”. Several of the men reflected that seeing the delight of the children at making something they could take home was “really cool” and “very satisfying” and “always a lot of fun”. Clearly the experience energized both the children and the Sheddies.

The second key role of the Shed, assisting local elderly, was manifest in two ways. Firstly, the Shed hosted a weekly group of older male residents from a local aged care home. Rappel observed that “when we have the old guys come down from Curnow... they absolutely love to sit round and have coffee, a few jokes and talk shit...”. The focus group participants attributed this to the following factors: Firstly, the visit represented an outing that was in itself facilitative of social and psychological refreshment. Indeed, one of these residents described their outing as “escaping from Colditz” a notorious German prisoner of war camp in the Second World War. Secondly the group opined that the all-male environment may provide additional refreshment given that Curnow was “probably 95% female between the staff and the clients”. They suggested that contact with the Sheddies with associated banter and storytelling positively reinforced Curnow resident’s social identity as men and individuals.

The second means of assisting local elderly was in performing minor repairs. Rappel provided the example of an “old lady in the pensioners cottages over the road” who “wanted a picnic table and a bed adjusted”. With Wexford, a comparatively isolated rural community, having a high proportion of elderly residents the Shed deliberately sought to do such work on a donation-only basis. The intent, in Ozzie’s words, was to “support somebody who might struggle to get it done somewhere else”. Thunderbird noted that this service also acted as “the best possible publicity for the Shed” and its mission in Wexford.

In relation to the third key role of collaborating with other groups, the men provided two examples. Firstly, Thunderbird cited the local Community Gardens, co-located with the Wexford Shed, as “a prime example” of collaboration. The Sheddies built and maintained the raised garden beds which were planted and harvested by the garden group. Additionally, the Shed provided an organizational “umbrella” under which the Community Garden could raise and administer funds.

Secondly, the Shed worked alongside the local district council and volunteer Wexford Promotions Committee to support between four to six community events annually. These events, which required considerable time and effort, had several benefits including: promoting the Shed, fundraising, and cementing the Shed's role as a key member of the "strong local network" of community groups.

Lastly the men were evidently proud of the Shed's fourth role: enhancing the built environment of Wexford. Thunderbird named several projects, "The cemetery gates, the pergola outside the Police Station... the Tennis Club seats...". The group noted that most projects had derived from contacts within the community network described above and were divided into two categories. The first, as explained by Ozzie, served as fundraisers such as the "picnic tables in Palmers Park". Typically, the Shed would be commissioned by the local district council or another civic group to manufacture such an item for community use. The second category were simple acts of service. These were exemplified by Barney "making parts for community trophies" which were then assembled by another community group and by Rappel coordinating a conservation project "making the trapping boxes for the Department of Conservation". In summarizing this contribution Thunderbird stated, "When you look around town... there's a mountain of stuff that has actually got done...".

Maintaining the Shed's values regarding service and responsivity to the local context are among the challenge's participants identified for the Shed's future development.

5.2.4.3 GOING FORWARD

The men described two key challenges for the Wexford Shed: maintaining fidelity to the Shed's guiding philosophy and growing the membership.

Relating to maintaining philosophical fidelity, the men defined three aspects: core purpose, relaxed structure and community responsivity.

The core purpose was defined simply as a focus on supportive relationships between members from which all other outcomes flowed. In exemplifying this concept Rappel spoke of his connection with a fellow Sheddie who had sought his support following "a bloody awful report

from the hospital". This man "was just new to the area" but felt "comfortable to approach" Rappel who was able to direct the man to additional supports within the community.

Such supportive relationships were integral to the second aspect of the Shed's philosophy, retaining a relaxed structure. This was described by the men as an egalitarian atmosphere of power sharing characterized by "just enough" rules and structure to ensure safe, purposeful function and positive relationships. In this regard several members had visited other Sheds which seemed "weighed under by bloody rules" or characterized by a rigid hierarchy and a plethora of highly detailed rules which each found unhelpfully restrictive. Thunderbird provided a regional and national perspective whereby districts developing new Sheds were encouraged to adhere to this "just enough" philosophy to guide anything from management of conflict to decision-making regarding developmental steps.

The third aspect of philosophical fidelity, community responsiveness, was defined by the focus group as remaining conscious of, and responsive to, its local context. Thunderbird framed this as an iterative process suggesting bi-annual consideration be given as to where the Shed currently "fits in the community". He observed that some Sheds that didn't consider their "community fit" had become somewhat insular, ultimately to Shed's detriment and loss of membership. Rappel supported this, noting that "helping in the community projects" enabled men to "get a lot more out of" Shed involvement via a sense of contribution. Daily, as they travelled around Wexford they could see and be reminded of the difference they had made to their community which, as noted contributed to a personalized sense of meaning.

The theme of external focus was implicit in the second key challenge described by the men, growing the membership. They constituted this as containing two interrelated elements: an inaccurate perception of the purpose and focus of Sheds and the need to remain relevant to the interests and aspirations of younger potential members.

Regarding the first element Jules shared an external perception he had encountered in the community that Sheds were "just for older guys..." which as a man in his 40's had initially inhibited his engagement with the Shed. There was group consensus regarding the pervasive nature of this misperception and its threat to the longevity of the Shed movement. Rappel had

articulated the urgency of addressing this issue in his recent challenge to his fellow Trustees to encourage younger members “because in 6 months all of us people sitting round the table could be dead!”.

Ozzie and Barney suggested that one means of addressing such inaccurate perceptions was focusing on the second element of growing membership, remaining relevant. To achieve this Ozzie explained that the Shed needed “to get things that are of interest to the next generation” to “attract people into the place” and “do the stuff they can’t do at home”. In this regard Rappel and Laird felt that a 3D printer may be an attractive addition to the plant. Whilst affirming “the tools aren’t actually what we are about...” Barney suggested they may be an appealing “conduit” for accessing “the very supportive community” the Shed represented. On writing the Wexford Shed were pursuing this strategy.

5.2.5 OVERALL SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

In comparing the Trundell and Wexford focus groups several patterns of convergence emerged. When analysed in relation to their constituent meanings, collated into discrete groups and compared with the extant literature three themes were identified and are detailed below.

THE MULTIPLE ROLES OF MEN’S SHEDS FOR MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY

In regards the role of the Shed in the lives of the participants and their local rural community three themes were identified: Social connection; Mental connection; Community connection.

5.2.5.1 SOCIAL CONNECTION

Both groups strongly indicated that providing a context for regular social connections was the most significant role played by the Shed and which served to facilitate all other roles and outcomes. Such connections were most often forged in the context of project work were reinforced during break times and occasionally extended outside the Shed. These interactions countered the effects of social isolation and were in themselves protective of members mental wellbeing.

5.2.5.2 MENTAL CONNECTION

There was joint agreement that mental connection or wellbeing was further fostered by several identifiable roles the Shed played including: providing weekly temporal structure for activity

outside the home; facilitating beneficial physical and cognitive activity through exercising problem solving and creativity during construction; creating a learning/mentoring environment which bolstered the aforementioned cognitive activity and contributed to subjective self-efficacy and generativity.

5.2.5.3 COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Responding to community needs was recognized by both groups as a key element to their existence. Several members of each group noted the Shed was a context for them to demonstrate their personal ethic of voluntary community service which enhanced their mental wellbeing. Each Shed constructed 'community needs' in slightly different ways. For example, Wexford described a five-fold focus: mentoring individuals and groups; serving local elderly people and hosting other groups; collaborating in co-production of community events; community construction projects. These responses afforded Wexford group members a degree of connection to the wider Wexford community.

In contrast Trundell focused solely on their contribution to community service projects.

Community projects for both Sheds shared common characteristics: deriving from contacts within wider local networks, involving similar organisations such as schools, conservation groups and sports clubs and producing a similar range of products.

Additionally, both groups constituted themselves as local entities although each emphasized slightly different aspects. Trundell focused on the process of local development from amongst community members across time. Wexford highlighted its current position amongst a strong collaborative network of local rural organizations

5.2.5.4 CHALLENGES FOR SHED'S GOING FORWARD

In relation to challenges for both Sheds, one central theme was co-identified: maintaining philosophical fidelity to Men's Sheds ideology. A second theme was identified by Wexford participants, growing membership.

5.2.5.5 PHILOSOPHY

Regarding the first theme both Shed's emphasized retaining the following precepts: Focusing on positive supportive relationships between members; a relaxed non-hierarchical milieu; responding to community need. Within this theme the Trundell Shed separately highlighted the importance of keeping subscriptions affordable and not becoming a business entity. This issue had two aspects: avoiding the obligation of having to produce; not competing with local trades people.

5.2.5.6 SUSTAINABILITY OF MEMBERSHIP

In regarding the second theme, growing membership, the Wexford Shed delineated two aspects. Firstly, addressing inaccurate public perceptions of the Shed's focus equating membership with retirement and Shed activities being limited to woodwork. Secondly, the imperative to attract younger people potentially by extending the range of activities offered to include electronics.

5.2.6 NOTEWORTHY MINOR FINDINGS (NMF)

Over the course of data gathering and analysis there were five findings that did not represent majority views but nonetheless, in light of the literature, were considered noteworthy and therefore of significance to the broader context of this study. These findings in are listed below in relation to supporting literature and are accompanied by a brief rationale that supports their putative significance.

5.2.6.1 THE SHED'S ROLE IN PROACTIVE PREPARATION FOR RETIREMENT

Key informants, Ozzie and Jack together with focus group member Da referred to the benefits of engaging with Sheds prior to retirement. They described these benefits as having a focus for physical and mental activity that not only gave their weeks structure but also drew them into social contact with others. These benefits have been clearly noted in relation to other findings from the body of data. However, the noteworthy distinctive is that these men are actively planning their retirement with a view to their own mental and physical wellbeing. Ozzie referred to men that he knew whom had not considered the impact of retirement on their social connectedness and sense of weekly life rhythm. He considered those that sought to address

these issues as the “smart ones” who would have “something to do with themselves” and “somewhere to be” on retirement.

5.2.6.2 QUANTIFIABLE PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENT, SELF-EFFICACY AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Key informants Reg and Jack jointly attested to quantifiable physical achievement via making objects as having a palpable effect on their subjective sense of wellbeing. Reg spoke of his “love” for blacksmithing, a large part of his life’s work as a tradesperson and the lift in his mood from being able to “make things out of metal”. Jack referred to seeing other Sheddies feel “useful” when they considered their role in assembling the “great pile of predator traps” associated with one project. Similarly, to Reg, Jack referred to seeing “men’s mood lift across the course of a session”. Whilst related to the general theme of improved mental wellbeing via Shed membership these examples focus tightly on the role productive and creative physical activity leading to the generation of objects.

5.2.6.3 IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH SPOUSES AND FAMILY

Focus group members Laird, Barney and Godfrey alongside key informants Jack and Karen referred to benefits received by spouses and other family members through their men attending Sheds. Barney noted that his wife found him more “approachable”, Laird said his family was “thrilled” that he attended the Shed as they saw the benefits for his mental and physical health. Godfrey spoke of the role of the Shed in his recovery from a brain injury and how this had positively impacted his relationship with his wife who had previously been his only support in the recovery process. Jack and Karen remarked that the wives of men who were unwell or in recovery from illness or injury had acknowledged the value of “having a break” from their loved one. These examples clearly depict the ancillary role of the Shed in contributing in small but significant ways to the wellbeing of others outside of their direct membership.

5.2.6.4 BEING A WOMAN IN A MEN’S SHED

This topic was raised by key informant’s Kate and Karen and was referred to albeit in a different context by the Wexford focus group. Kate was uncertain of the welcome she might receive as a woman attending a Men’s shed. Karen noted occasional discomfort she felt in taking a leadership role as a woman in a group primarily constituted of and targeted at men. Wexford focus group

members were divided over the issue of women being members of the Shed with some advocating for total inclusion and others noting the benefits to an all-male environment. Whilst these issues did not attract significant discussion during interviews this topic is being considered and debated in Shed's across Aotearoa.

5.2.6.5 DEFINING PASTORAL CARE PROCESSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key informants Karen and Jack both referred to the challenge of creating enough structure to fulfil pastoral care intentions. Karen felt it was important that men took responsibility for "following up" with their peers when said peers missed sessions or it became known that they were unwell. For Karen the purpose was creating a deliberate culture of care which she sensed did "not come naturally for most men". Jack spoke of the frustration he experienced as a Shed coordinator balancing his paid work commitments and voluntary work at the Shed acknowledging that follow up did "tend to suffer". Given that social relationships were acknowledged by all participants as the foundation of the Shed movement it seems important to attend to the mechanism by which a healthy, connected and supportive milieu can be proactively fostered.

Aspects of the first two and fifth NMF's will be discussed further in Chapter Six with the third and fourth NMF being the subject of recommendations for further research in Chapter Seven.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented focus group findings from the Wexford and Trundell Men's Sheds regarding the role of the Shed's in members lives, the community life of their local town and current challenges the Sheds faced. I was interested in how Sheds might contribute to men's wellbeing and how Men's Sheds as organisations might enhance their local communities.

In relation to the individual and community roles of the Shed the findings of both Shed's when compared rendered congruent themes relating to social connection, mental connection and community connection. Social connections forged in the context of project work were described as protective of members mental wellbeing and were the substantive reason behind participant attendance. Mental connections in terms of strengthening cognitive function and fostering

mental wellbeing were facilitated by satisfying regular, structured and productive physical and cognitive activity related to learning in the context of completing community projects. Such projects formed the basis of community connection which was constituted of engagement with and contribution to their wider communities as local rural organisations.

As they considered challenges going forward the Sheds co-identified the importance of maintaining a strong focus on supportive relationships within a non-hierarchical organizational milieu through which the Shed was responsive to community needs. Keeping subscriptions affordable and maintaining a charitable status were identified separately by the Trundell Shed. The Wexford Shed separately emphasized bolstering membership sustainability.

When the key informant and focus group findings were compared there were marked areas of convergence regarding roles of the Shed in the lives of participants and their communities.

All key informants and both focus groups concurred regarding the role of the Shed as a hub of social connection in members lives that enhanced mental wellbeing through companionship, activity and community contribution. Two individual contributors and three focus group participants noted the Shed's role in maintaining the physical wellbeing of men.

Regarding the role of the Sheds in community life there was similar agreement between key informants and focus groups in two key domains. Firstly, Sheds were considered hubs of community service toward individuals and groups via construction projects that shared similar origins, organisations and products. Secondly, Sheds were co-depicted as expressions of localized community development sharing similar aims and developmental processes.

In terms of challenges going forward there was considerable agreement between the two modes of inquiry. Key informants and the Wexford focus group highlighted the theme of sustainability in terms of growing membership, facilities and equipment. Both focus groups and three key informants prioritized the management task of maintaining the guiding philosophy of Sheds as informal, volunteer contexts for mutually supportive social connections between men.

This study now proceeds towards a discussion of the meaning of the themes identified in the findings, the implications for both Sheds and the future development of the Men's Shed movement.

6 CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings of key informant interviews and focus groups yielded three major interrelated themes relating to Sheds roles in facilitating social connection, mental connection and community connection for their members. Each of these connections enhanced members' wellbeing with community connection found to be an intersection point on a bi-directional pathway whereby the wider communities engaged in reciprocally beneficial relationships with Sheds. This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of how these themes relate to the major research questions from this study. Each theme is then discussed in detail with reference to extant literature. Material from these themes will then be compared with models of individual and community wellbeing including recent research positing causal pathways via which Shed's facilitate social wellbeing, and mental and physical health in their members (Kelly et al., 2019). Next, the shared challenges the Shed's face will be presented followed by the specific implications of those challenges for each Shed. Further implications for the Men's Shed movement in Aotearoa New Zealand, the community and policy context and the social work and community development professions will then be explored. The chapter concludes with a summary of the discussion which integrates the main points.

6.2 THEMATIC OVERVIEW

The purpose of this study was four-fold. Firstly, I wished to elicit the roles that rural Men's Sheds played in the life of their participants and the broader life of their local rural communities. Secondly, on the basis of these roles I wished to understand the challenges Sheds faced in their ongoing development. Thirdly, I wished to apply these understandings and their associated implications to constructing a set of sustainable development recommendations for the Sheds studied, Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand and the community and policy context. Lastly, I sought

to understand how these implications may impact on the social work and community development professions interaction with Sheds.

Analysis of the findings regarding the roles of the Shed in the lives of their participants yielded three major themes. The first theme was that Shed's primary role was providing a context for social connection between men. This connection was initially facilitated through working together on projects and then through further conversations within and without the immediate Shed milieu. These social connections were the foundation for the second and third themes: mental connection and community connection. The Shed's role regarding facilitating mental connections and associated health benefits was constituted of three interrelated sub themes. These were: providing weekly structure/routine and connectedness as participants approached or entered retirement; a focus on production of artefacts; opportunities for learning and mentoring within an intergenerational and/or recovery context. The theme of community connection was composed of the Shed's role of connecting men with their wider community through service projects which brought them into contact with other community groups and individuals. These projects represented the intersection between the role of the Shed in the lives of members and the Shed's role in community life. Regarding the community contribution of Sheds, analysis of the findings yielded two themes related to community capacity building: Sheds as hubs of voluntary service and as expressions of localized community development.

In relation to the second purpose of this study, the identification of challenges for Shed development yielded three themes. They were management/leadership; membership; money/financial sustainability. The first theme was comprised of three subthemes pertaining to philosophical fidelity, facilitation of pastoral care processes and creation of a safe and healthy working environment. Regarding the theme of membership there were two subthemes relating to ensuring longevity of the Shed beyond the current cohort of participants. They were active promotion of the Shed within the wider community and targeted recruitment of younger members. The last theme, relating to money or financial sustainability was comprised of three subthemes: affordable subscription, adequate facilities and maintenance.

With regard to the third purpose of this study each of these themes and subthemes yielded explicit implications for the participating Shed's, other Shed's with Aotearoa New Zealand and the community and policy context. These implications will be clearly identified within a framework later in this chapter in preparation for recommendations in the final chapter.

The professions of social work and community development with their focus on holistic wellbeing, participation, collective empowerment and systemic practice are arguably well placed to assist Sheds in their development. In light of this, further implications regarding the role of these professions with Sheds will be identified and discussed.

Having overviewed the key themes derived from analysis of the findings and described a process for identifying associated implications, the following sections provide detailed explanation and exploration of these.

6.3 SOCIAL CONNECTION

As noted above, the Shed's role in providing the context for life-enhancing social connections between men, through working together and talking together, was the primary theme yielded from the findings. That such connections support all other health and well-being outcomes emanating from Sheds is arguably the central and most important theme of the corpus Men's Shed literature (Golding, 2015; Kelly et al., 2019; Wilson & Cordier, 2015). As noted by Anstiss (2016) and Milligan et al. (2015) the physical environs of the Shed represent a protected space in which men can form supportive relationships that are protective of wellbeing. The importance and distinctive dynamics of working together (Crabtree et al., 2018) and talking together (Cox et al., 2019; Culph et al., 2015; Morgan, 2010) within the Men's Shed context are explored below.

6.3.1 WORKING TOGETHER

Ozzie, key Informant from the Wexford Shed, referenced the importance of working "shoulder to shoulder" on projects in the Shed as a non-threatening context for the beginnings of meaningful social connection. This concept is strongly supported within Shed research (Golding, 2011; Wilson & Cordier, 2013; Reynolds et al., 2015). Following Milligan et al. (2015) workshop task activity provides the initial catalyst for social connection between Sheddies and, as such, is

a significant component of their interaction (Golding & Foley, 2008). Indeed, the production context of the workshop is arguably one of the most distinctive features of Sheds (Golding, 2015; Milligan et al., 2013; Milligan et al., 2015). Milligan et al. (2015) note that this distinctive seems particularly appealing to men who have been previously employed in a workshop context. For these men, this may have a twofold benefit. Firstly, the task-focused setting may provide a known set of norms that structure interactions (Milligan et al., 2015) and act to reduce the social anxiety inherent in joining a new group (Culph et al., 2015). For others, working “shoulder to shoulder” in the workshop setting may trigger positive memories of previous working lives that enhance their engagement with the Shed and each other (Misan & Hopkins, 2017). A noteworthy aspect of this engagement identified in the data was project work providing an opportunity for socially affirming humorous banter. Such banter was variously described as “ribbing”, “winding up” and “talking shit”, and served the function of socially including others into the group. This use of banter is described by Murphy (2017) as an act of “solidarity maintenance” (p108) whereby persons move from individual to group identity through the counterintuitive use of put-downs. Lyman (1987) suggests this interplay as a means of building fraternal bonds is characteristic of, but not limited to, male groups. As such, banter in the context of shared labour enables Sheddies to become insiders from which position they can then deepen interpersonal bonds through conversing together at different levels (Culph et al., 2015).

6.3.2 TALKING TOGETHER

With working together providing the setting for initial engagement and inclusion, ongoing social connection via the Shed offered the possibility of deeper social relationships associated with higher levels of interpersonal support (Moylan et al., 2015).

Regarding this, Culph et al. (2015) identified three descending levels of social relationship within their study of three Australian Sheds. They characterized these as general interactions, companionship and friendship, followed by deeper conversations, noting that descending to the next level was predicated on achieving engagement in the previous level (Culph et al., 2015).

Similar conversational progressions were described in the interviews for this study. Participants described the first level, general interactions (Culph et al., 2015), as occurring over tasks and

morning tea. This included storytelling, problem solving and most frequently, humour. Similar large group interactions are described in a wide range of Shed research in terms of establishing a welcoming and inclusive social milieu (Ballinger et al., 2009; Hayes & Williamson, 2007; McGeechan et al., 2017; Ormsby et al., 2010; Sani et al., 2012). At the level of companionship and friendship (Culph et al., 2015), participants noted that small groups of men occasionally shared their experience with significant health concerns such as prostate cancer. Sharing of health concerns provided common ground for mutual support and, on occasion, led to members seeking formal health advice (Crabtree et al., 2018; Moylan et al., 2015; Wilson & Cordier, 2015). This informal approach to health promotion has been referred to as 'health by stealth' whereby men are informally inducted into health-seeking discourses activities and action (Golding, 2015; Wilson & Cordier 2013). In writing regarding the manifestations of social connectedness, Haslam, Cruwys, Haslam and Jetten (2017) refer to this process as manifesting the helpful side of forming a strong group identity whereby individuals can positively influence each other. Deeper conversations (Culph et al., 2015) were exemplified by one participant's first-person account of providing psychosocial support and connection to services to a Sheddie who had received a serious medical diagnosis (Morgan, Hayes, Williamson, & Ford, 2007; Moylan et al., 2015).

According to Wilson and Cordier (2015) such conversations act as means of informal health promotion whilst creating the context for formal health promotion initiatives tailored to the specific profile of individual Sheds.

Working and talking together provide the mechanism by which Sheddies experience social connectedness, the perception of being engaged in and supported by a caring network of social relationships (Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Crabtree et al., 2018; Haslam, et al., 2017). This connectedness has been strongly and robustly associated with improved mental, physical and cultural health outcomes (Ang et al., 2017; Antonucci et al., 2014; Cox et al., 2019; Ermer & Proulx, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2017; Nurmi et al., 2018; Ormsby et al., 2010). As such, providing a context for social connectedness appears to be the key role played by Sheds from which all other connections follow. Multifaceted mental connection, the next clear theme emerging from this study, will be considered next.

6.4 MENTAL CONNECTION

Analysis of the findings of this study suggested that mental connection, afforded by participation in the Sheds was constituted of several elements that contributed to overall mental wellbeing and a decrease in the incidence of poor mental health. These outcomes are strongly supported in reviews of the Men's Shed literature (Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Kelly et al., 2019; Milligan et al., 2013). These elements, which are discussed below, included: temporal structure/routine when in or nearing retirement; a focus on production of artefacts; learning and mentoring in an intergenerational and/or recovery context.

6.4.1 WEEKLY STRUCTURE, ROUTINE AND RETIREMENT

Most focus group members and three key informants emphasized the role that Shed participation had in providing structure and routine for their week (Kelly et al., 2019; Lefkowich & Richardson, 2018). They enumerated the benefits of this in two ways: a reason or purpose to "get out of the house" (Foster et al., 2017; Morgan, Willmott, Ben-Shlomo, Haase, & Campbell, 2019; Nurmi et al., 2018; Ormsby et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2018); the familiarity of "work-like" routine in preparation for retirement (Ballinger et al., 2009; Crabtree et al., 2018; Munoz et al., 2015).

Regarding a sense of purposeful living, studies indicated that having regular external commitments involving activity was demonstrably protective of both mental health and physical health in the lives of older adults (Cho, Park, Jang, & Kim, 2018; Haslam et al., 2017; Haslam et al., 2019; Morgan et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2018). In terms of mental health these appeared to be related to the psychological benefits of physical activity associated with physiological, psychological and psychosocial factors (Dolenc & Petrič, 2018; McDonald, O'Brien, White, & Sniehotta, 2015). Physiologically, regular moderate and occasionally demanding physical activity was potentially associated with both increased neurotransmitter synthesis and release alongside balanced neurotransmitter function with a resulting positive effect on mood and affect (Deslandes et al., 2009; Matta Mello Portugal et al., 2013; Netz et al., 2005). Such activity was noted as significant by several focus group members. In examining the psychosocial component

of structured, regular group activity Lindsay-Smith et al. (2018) found that the social component of such activity was strongly associated with decreases in subjective loneliness and improved social wellbeing. From an individual psychological perspective activity outside the house as described by most study participants, may distract individuals from preoccupying difficulties providing a sense of meaning, achievement and self-efficacy all of which may enhance individuals sense of mental wellbeing (Ang et al., 2017; Peluso & Andrade, 2005; Warburton & Winterton, 2017). Haslam et al. (2017) summarizing a significant body of international research correlated social connectedness experienced through a variety of social networks, such as Wexford and Trundell Sheds, with reduction in cognitive decline, lower rates of depression and increased life expectancy (Gleibs et al., 2011; Hare-Duke, Denning, de Oliveira, Milner, & Slade, 2019). They posited that identification with other positive social network group members bolsters an older individuals' sense of self thereby strengthening a person's self-efficacy which can buffer against the physiological and psychological effects of stress (Hare-Duke et al., 2019; Haslam et al., 2017). There are clear connections between this finding and the boost in wellbeing described by all individual and most focus group participants. Accordingly, as noted earlier, the benefits of social connectedness for Sheddies are widely referenced in Men's Shed studies indicating that Sheds maybe considered wellbeing hubs (Kelly et al., 2019; Milligan et al., 2013; Wilson & Cordier 2013).

One specific public health issue which is positively impacted by the confluence of purposeful living, meaningful activity and social connectedness, is suicide prevention. Whilst suicidality was not referenced specifically by study participants the Sheds role in ameliorating the effects of depression, which is associated with increased risk of suicidality, was a significant item in their discussion. As noted in the literature review, male suicide is a significant public health concern internationally and locally (Lester et al., 2014; MOH, 2019). Male suicide has been associated with a multiplicity of factors including two specific considerations that Sheds are well poised to address i.e. deficits in help-seeking behaviour and the role of social isolation and perceived loneliness (Lester et al., 2014).

Regarding help seeking, acting as avenues for informal and formal health promotion (Morgan et al., 2007; Wilson & Cordier, 2014) Sheds can help men address deficits in help-seeking behaviour (Chawner, 2015; Seidler et al., 2016; Wellstead, 2014). Furthermore, they directly connect men

with sources of assistance as described by several Sheddies in this research project (Southcombe et al., 2015a; Wilson et al., 2015).

Pertaining to social isolation and loneliness, Joiner's (2005) Interpersonal Theory of Suicide depicts suicidality as the interaction of three constructs. These are: perceived burdensomeness i.e. the belief that one is not productive and therefore a burden to others; thwarted belongingness or perceiving oneself as isolated, lonely and disconnected from others; acquired capability or a lowered threshold for suicidal action based on an increased tolerance of pain and fearlessness. Shed research, including the findings of Working Well Together, indicates that via providing meaningful, satisfying, productive, activity and promoting social connectedness, Sheds address the first two constructs of Joiner's (2005) theory (Lefkowich & Richardson, 2018; McGeechan, et al., 2017).

Regarding positive physical health outcomes as reported by several study participants, Warburton and Bredin (2017) concluded from their meta-review of recent research that regular, physical activity of any level of intensity is associated with clinically significant health benefits. This represents a departure from previously prevalent thinking that indicated a dose-specific relationship between physical activity and physical health benefits in older age (Warburton & Bredin, 2017). Furthermore, this finding has implications for how physical activity within Sheds is understood. Whilst there is yet no robust objective evidence associating Men's Sheds with improved physical health (Kelly et al., 2019) the subjective perception of such improvements via routine physical activity has been widely reported in international Shed studies (Ayres et al., 2016; Crabtree et al., 2018; Henwood et al., 2017; Moylan et al., 2015; Munoz et al., 2015). A broader understanding of the general benefits of such activity as suggested by Warburton and Bredin (2017) may therefore elevate the status of self-reported health benefits such as those mentioned by participants in Working Well Together, although this will require further investigation.

The second benefit of structure afforded by the Sheds was provision of work-like activities that approximate employment (Ang et al., 2017; Kelly et al., 2019). It is important to consider the relationship between these activities and the transition to retirement referenced by at least eight

of the participants in the current study. In an example of this, one spoke of the negative impact of “boredom” resulting from lack of physical and cognitive activity associated with retirement. Similarly, another observed that some men who gave little thought to retirement consequently experienced a period of disorientation and poor mental health when they finished paid employment (Barnes & Parry, 2004; Wang, 2007; Oliffe et al., 2013). Anstiss et al. (2018) referred to these experiences as consequences of the “dis-placement” from venues and practices associated with work that act to orient and “anchor” them in their physical and social space. Shed membership using the terms deployed by Anstiss et al. (2018) acts therefore to enable men to “re-place” themselves in physical and relational surroundings that “re-anchor” their individual and collective identity. In relation to this, two WWT participants referenced the need to consciously prepare for retirement in terms of interests and relationships. The recent work of Haslam et al. (2019) rated the importance of such social preparation as equal if not superior to financial planning for successfully adjusting to retirement. They described four key elements crucial to such preparation which included: gaining access to several significant groups and their associated psychological resources, maintaining pre-existing valued group memberships, developing meaningful new groups, managing compatibility between memberships (Haslam et al., 2019). These recommendations were reflected in the lived experience of several participants in the current study who listed membership in sports, arts, conservation, service and church groups alongside Shed membership. When asked what distinguished Shed membership from other groups they were part of, most participants emphasized the focus on production of items and the particular contribution this made to their mental wellbeing. This will now be considered.

6.4.2 PRODUCTION

Producing objects of tangible value and utility occupied a significant proportion of discussion across the entire corpus of interview data. Skills such as metalworking, woodturning, painting, carving, welding, electrical engineering and template design were utilized in production processes that yielded such diverse items as picnic tables, flight simulators and garden art. In describing the role of such productivity in mental wellbeing participants noted the following elements: creative expression, problem solving, learning and co-contribution.

Carragher (2017) utilized Erikson's (1982) concept of generativity in describing the confluence of these elements within Men's Sheds in Ireland. She argued that Shed's provided a context for men to use existing skills and develop new ones within a socially supportive environment that enabled them to contribute to their local community (Carragher, 2017). Similarly, Adams-Price et al. (2018) pointed to the role that longer-term involvement in generative creative hobby activity had in enhancing transition to and satisfaction in later life. In their development of a Creative Benefits Scale Adams-Price et al. (2018) defined a creative hobby as "repeated participation in a specific expressive activity that is personally meaningful and offers opportunities for growth, learning, and skill development" (p. 243). Each of these factors were reflected in the activities described by Sheddies in this study. From an intrapersonal to interpersonal perspective Anstiss (2016) and Sunderland (2013) emphasized the link between individual and corporate identity, in relation to the use of tools and the production of items. Anstiss (2016) posited the shared use of tools in fashioning objects as sites of cooperation and socialization that contributed to shared learning. This process was emblemized in Jack's description of the satisfaction taken by Trundell Sheddies in mass producing predator traps and creating picnic tables to an exacting design. Writing from the professional perspective of Occupational Therapy, Sunderland (2013) observed that such constructive work, particularly producing objects of use in their community, defined the corporate identity of the Taieri Blokes Shed. Drawing on the work of Green (1968) Sunderland (2013) described constructive work as "work that requires self-investment, skill, craft and personal judgement" (2013, p. 194). Each of the elements of constructive work were manifest in Trundell Sheddies using the Shed to learn to creatively and skilfully produce small wooden toys that also were sought-after sources of Shed revenue. The benefits to the maintenance of cognitive function in older age of such productive activity, involving creativity and problem solving within a learning process are well established (Newson & Kemps, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2012; Park et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2016; Phillips, 2017). The concept notion of Sheds as centres of holistic learning will be explored next.

6.4.3 LEARNING

Learning was the third element of how Shed's afforded mental connections that contributed to the mental wellbeing of participants. Learning in Sheds was composed of three specific aspects:

bi-directional knowledge transfer within a community of practice; re-learning in the context of recovery; mentoring and intergenerational learning. Each aspect is explored below.

Regarding knowledge transfer, all participants brought with them tacit or internalized knowledge and explicit or codified externalized knowledge (Cairó Battistutti & Bork, 2017). Secondly, they all held an interest in extending their knowledge base (Williamson, 1997). Thirdly, learning took place in a largely informal, non-hierarchical, social context (Ballinger et al., 2009; Carragher & Golding, 2015; Golding et al., 2007; Kimberley, Golding, & Simons, 2016; Reynolds, 2011; Skladzien & O'Dwyer, 2010). This context, over time, came to constitute a broad community of practice (CoP) within which knowledge was exchanged (Farnsworth, Kleanthous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999).

Within this CoP, learning or knowledge transfer (Cairó Battistutti & Bork, 2017; Wenger, 1999) occurred across two main domains: specific skill development and social development. The first domain was constituted of specific skills related to the production foci of the Shed. These proficiencies existed on a continuum between trade-related skills such as welding and wood working and art-related skills such as painting or carving (Ballinger et al., 2009; Golding, 2015).

Transfer of these specific skills was most often facilitated through two mechanisms: Informal observation and semi-formal instruction both of which occurred within a specific social situation (Cairó Battistutti & Bork, 2017; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). These mechanisms are consistent with Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971) that posits modelling of the required behaviour in a social context as the means of learning (Farnsworth et al., 2016).

Informal observation involved visually observing skilled others in the performance of a particular task that required specific coordinated behaviours (Patel, 2017). Semi-formal instruction most often involved learners being physically and verbally guided through a task set by a skilled other (Patel, 2017).

In the second domain, Shed's provided a context for a wide range of socially oriented learning related to multidimensional constructs of health and wellbeing. Golding (2014) suggested three levels of social learning in Sheds. Firstly, he noted that men "gain new insights into the importance and ways to enhance fitness, relationships, healthy eating, identities and men and

emotional wellbeing (Golding, 2014, p. 123). Secondly, he suggested that participants may “learn to cope with change associated with not being in paid work, with ageing, disability and retirement” (Golding, 2014, p. 123). Lastly, and in Goldings’ (2014) view “most importantly, men develop and share lives and new identities in a third place beyond paid work and home, bestowed through and by association with the Shed” (Golding, 2014, p. 123). Golding’s (2014) construction of the Sheds as learning communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999) intersected clearly with earlier descriptions of Sheds multi-dimensional role in preparation for retirement (Haslam et al., 2019). Research participants further extended the scope of the CoP to include those members who used the Shed as a bolster for recovery from or living with infirmity.

6.4.4 RE-LEARNING: RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS, INJURY AND LIVING WITH DISABILITY

An aspect of both Trundell and Wexford Sheds as inclusive CoP’s was providing a safe place for participants managing health difficulties. Such difficulties encompassed three areas: physical health, including recovery from stroke, acquired brain injury and managing dementia; mental health, typically managing depression and anxiety (Culph et al., 2015); physical, intellectual or developmental disability (Hansji et al., 2015; Stanley et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2015).

From the interviews and focus groups there were first person accounts of the social and occupational support Shed members received. One man described re-learning trade skills that had been compromised by an acquired brain injury (ABI) (Shaikh, Kersten, Siegert, & Theadom, 2019). This was achieved through a process of scaffolded learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In this process small, achievable tasks were undertaken in the context of high levels of support which was reduced as he gained competence and confidence to increase his capacity (Vygotsky, 1978). This man noted that success of this process was predicated on the proactive encouragement, acceptance and support from his fellow Sheddies. According to Shaik et al. (2019) these components, alongside supported independence, good living conditions, and psychological adjustment to the community constituted the prime conditions for community integration for those living with ABI.

Another example from the interviews was the support offered to a man who was suffering from dementia. This man was included by his fellow Sheddies in simple, safe tasks that afforded him a sense of participation (Hansji et al., 2015) and gave his wife some respite from care giving responsibility (Hedegaard & Ahl, 2019).

Relating to mental health as discussed earlier several men gave specific examples of the benefits of Shed attendance (Culph et al., 2015). These were comprised of meaningful companionship leading to a sense of inclusion, temporal structure and existential purpose (Ang et al., 2017; Peluso & Andrade, 2005; Warburton & Winterton, 2017). These factors were identified as particularly salient to men managing anxiety and depression specifically (Culph et al., 2015). Participants described the Shed as acting like a buffer zone ameliorating the effects of mental illness and providing a context for recovery (Lindsay-Smith et al., 2018).

The finding related to disability was derived from a first-person account of the support the Shed provided to a young man effected by a degree of intellectual disability. Prolonged engagement with this person in developing basic social and trade skills contributed to him engaging in employment for the first time (Wilson et al., 2019). This example indicates the Shed's capacity to be a context for mentoring, which will be discussed next.

6.4.5 MENTORING AND INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

Mentoring has been described as a trusting relationship characterized by the mutually beneficial exchange between a more experienced person and someone less experienced to aid the latter's development (Allen, Eby, Chao, & Bauer, 2017; Baker et al., 2019). The international literature is replete with examples of mentoring being applied in cultural, business, professional, religious, community and educational settings (Zhou, Lapointe, & Zhou., 2019).

Men's Shed mentoring literature has two major foci: peer mentoring (Ballinger et al., 2009; Kimberley et al., 2016), and intergenerational mentoring in both formal and informal contexts (Cordier et al., 2016; Morton, 2015; Rahja et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2013).

Pertaining to peer mentoring, there are several examples of mentoring relationships described in this study that encompassed four levels of mentoring engagement identified by Carragher and

Golding (2015): incidental observation; informal skill sharing; project mentoring; formal skill demonstration and teaching sessions. The first two levels have already been recently discussed in regard observational learning (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). In relation to project mentoring one key informant described a complex multi-stage project involving electronics and engineering. Through this project this man assisted his mentee with concept development, acquiring specific skills and conducting experimental trials leading to a finished product. As a result, the key informant reported finding significant personal satisfaction from his role as mentor (Baker et al., 2019). This was constituted of achieving a professional challenge, the social connection from working alongside a fellow Sheddie and, most importantly, seeing his colleague's skill and confidence grow (Kimberley et al., 2016). He described this last factor as "a bit of a buzz" whereby he had helped his colleague "take the blinders off" i.e. becoming open to his own developmental potential (Rahja et al., 2016). Similarly, a Trundell Shed participant described enduring personal satisfaction derived from helping his fellow Sheddies and those of two other Sheds become more productive through demonstrating and teaching his skill of making templates (Carragher & Golding 2015).

Both of these examples evidence the tangible mutual benefits inherent in the mentoring relationship (Baker et al., 2019; Kimberley et al., 2016; Morton, 2015; Rahja et al., 2016). Although arguably different in substance, such reciprocal benefits are reported from investigations of intergenerational mentoring at Men's Sheds (Cordier et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2013)

The preponderance of these studies have been conducted in Australian contexts with a notable exception being Morton's (2015) study of intergenerational mentoring within Aotearoa Men's Sheds. In both countries a significant proportion of Men's Sheds appear to engage in some forms of youth mentoring, although, given the rapid growth of the Shed movement, this is difficult to monitor (Cordier et al., 2016; Morton, 2015).

These findings are reflected in the current nature of mentoring described with the Wexford Shed which has been conducted largely in response to community demand through three avenues. Firstly, Wexford conducted workshop sessions for primary-aged children as part of school holiday

programmes. These programmes attracted up to thirty children and were a source of enjoyment and satisfaction for both the Sheddies and children. Secondly, they supported attendance at the Shed by specific young people such as Joffrey. Lastly, through the coordination of fortnightly Ladies Nights (Krašovec, 2017) women and girls are mentored by Sheddies regarding specific projects involving trade and artistic skills.

Such aspects of intergenerational practice constitute just one of the means by which the Shed afforded Sheddies and the wider community opportunities for beneficial reciprocal connection which is strongly associated with wellbeing (Foster et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2019).

It is to the theme of such reciprocal connection between individuals, groups and their communities that this discussion now turns.

6.5 COMMUNITY CONNECTION

As referenced earlier in the chapter, community connection was considered the nexus point at which the role of the Shed in the lives of members intersected with the role of the Shed in the community. Expressing this concept, study participants at Trundell and Wexford Sheds positioned their organisations as sites for collectively building community capacity (Aimers & Walker, 2011; Ife 2013; Liberato et al., 2011; Minkler, 2012). This community capacity building was identified as occurring within two domains. Firstly, participants considered Shed to be hubs of voluntary service that had reciprocal benefits for Sheddies and a variety of community groups and individuals (Ayres et al., 2018; Foster et al., 2018; Roger et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). This notion was consistent with the guiding concept of the Shed movement nationally (MSNZ, n.d.) and internationally (AMSA, n.d.; IMSO, n.d.). The International Men's Shed Organisation (IMSO) notes that, "Objectives of Men's Sheds include advancing the health and well-being of the participating men and creating opportunities for the men to contribute to their local communities" (IMSO, n.d.). Regarding the second domain, several participants positioned Sheds as organized expressions of community development (Aimers & Walker, 2016; Ife 2013; Roger et al., 2016). In their 2016 study of Sheds in Australia and Canada Roger et al. suggested that Men's

Sheds met community development criteria as they enhanced the capacity and resource base of groups, communities and neighbourhoods. Both domains will be explored below.

6.5.1 SHEDS AS HUBS OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Regarding community capacity building each Shed constructed the role of their Shed in responding to community needs in slightly different ways. Wexford described a five-fold typology of voluntary service. This included: mentoring individuals and groups (Cordier et al., 2016); serving local elderly people and hosting other groups (Austin, Des Camp, Flux, McClelland, & Sieppert, 2005a; Kloseck, Crilly, & Mannell, 2006); collaborating in co-production of community events (Munoz et al., 2014; Snaveley & Tracy, 2002); community construction projects (Misan & Hopkins, 2017; Reynolds et al., 2015; Roger et al., 2016). Trundell described specific community construction projects encompassing target groups such as schools, conservation groups and sports clubs (Anstiss, 2016; Golding et al., 2008; Sunderland, 2013) and supporting individual members with specific infirmities (Hansji et al., 2015; Stanley et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2015).

This difference of approach between Sheds appeared to be reflective of several factors including: their organizational capacity in terms of available volunteers and their different skills, interests and physical capabilities; their range of community connections; the focus of their leadership group. These dynamics are reflected in international Shed research that emphasizes the heterogeneity of Sheds as determined by the range of geographical, socio-cultural and political contextual factors that impact individual organisations configuration and capacity (Ahl et al., 2017; Foster et al., 2018; Hayes & Williamson, 2007; Wilson et al., 2015).

Despite these differences both Sheds completed projects for similar organisations such as schools and fellow community groups. A number of these projects have been discussed in detail already. However, the following three exemplify what Foster et al. (2018) describe as “the bidirectional benefits” (p. 535) of community service projects to Sheddies and those community members they serve.

With reference to first person accounts from the findings the Mud Kitchen built for a local school by the Wexford Shed had a number of important bi-directional outcomes. Firstly, through

participation in the design and completion of the kitchen, Sheddies fashioned a sense of collective identity and pride in the project which built bonds between the men (Haslam et al., 2017; Golding, 2015; Kimberley et al., 2016; Roger et al., 2016). Secondly the Sheddies experiencing the delight of the children in receiving the Kitchen served to reinforce positive intergenerational contact for both parties (Kaplan et al., 2006; Van Willigen, 2000). The potency of building such bonds in terms of fashioning connected and resilient communities is well established (Carr & Gunderson, 2016; Warburton & Winterton, 2017). Thirdly the school benefited from product that was locally derived, cost effective, tailored specifically to their needs and was an artefact that had meaningful and demonstrable connections to their wider community (Roger et al., 2016). Arguably each of these benefits constituted an element of local community capacity building that bridged the organisations and individuals involved in terms of building connected and resilient communities (Carr & Gunderson, 2016; Kenny & Connors, 2017; Liberato et al., 2011; Warburton & Winterton, 2017).

Trundell participants described a team project with similar outcomes whereby a local school called for assistance in the event of injury to their caretaker prior to the start of a new term. In response to this significant, specific and time pressured situation, a project team from the Shed completed several key tasks that enabled the school to reopen on time. This project afforded several opportunities to the Shed and the community. Firstly, the Shed was able to respond as a team to achieve a quantifiable outcome and make a substantial contribution to a vital local organisation whose mission was under threat (Munoz et al., 2014; Roger et al., 2016). Experiencing their agentic response as cohesive and worthwhile built both the morale of members and collective attachment to the Shed (Misan & Hopkins, 2017). Secondly, at a community level, Imperiale and Vanclay (2016) argue that community self-organization to meet unexpected challenges fosters bonds within geographic communities facilitating community wide resilience during change processes (McCrea et al., 2016).

The third example of bi-directional benefits involved participants fixing some outdoor furniture for an elderly woman who lived close to the Wexford. This was identified as significant from several perspectives. Firstly, the Shed's efforts could make a quantifiable difference to a community member who given her life stage, geographic context and financial means could be

considered vulnerable (Carr & Gunderson, 2016). Aside from getting the work done having this work completed by other community members and responding in kind, through baking, could have arguably increased the woman's sense of engagement with her own community (Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Ryan, Agnitsch, Zhao, & Mullick, 2005). Additionally, this particular job represented a welcome cognitive and physical challenge to the Sheddies trade-skills given its comparatively complexity (Park et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2016; Phillips, 2017). Lastly, the focus group noted that being remunerated in the form of home baking was particularly gratifying given that it was a personal and enjoyable expression of thanks.

These three different projects serve to illustrate the multidimensional bi-directional (Foster et al., 2018) benefits of community service in terms of tangible outcomes for Sheddies and the community. Regarding outcomes for Sheddies, these centred around the benefits of volunteering and community connectedness (Haslam, et al., 2017; Ryan et al., 2005; Warburton & Winterton 2017). Firstly, Sheddies had the opportunity to use and in some cases further develop their skills to benefit others which, as previously discussed, have been associated with enhanced wellbeing and life satisfaction (Ang et al., 2017; Carragher, 2017; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, Lockstone, Holmes, & Oppenheimer, 2018). Secondly, through being involved in a variety of intergenerational connections, Sheddies also arguably enhanced their own subjective sense of connection to different sectors of their community (Carr & Gunderson, 2016). Ryan et al. (2005) draw these two elements together. They posit volunteering as a function of community attachment whereby volunteers achieve a level of social embeddedness which reinforces internal sense of self as agents committed to communitarian values (Ryan et al., 2005). In sum, volunteers experience external and internal affirmation and external connectedness through their activity (Davies, Lockstone-Binney, & Holmes, 2018; Morrow-Howell, Lee, McCrary, & McBride, 2014; Ryan et al., 2005; Warburton & Winterton, 2017).

In terms of outcomes for communities the above examples demonstrate three principal benefits. Firstly, Sheds contributed to the built environment (Melcher, Stiefel, & Faurest, 2016) through artefacts such as the mud kitchen and school repair programme that assists organisations within a community to achieve their key objectives (Roger et al., 2016). Secondly the interface between groups such as Sheds and schools contributes to the social environment through fostering social

cohesion via intergenerational connection (Carr & Gunderson, 2016). Both of these elements are in turn associated with community-level wellbeing (McCrea et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2018). Lastly projects like assisting vulnerable elderly provides direct benefit to individuals. Those receiving practical service have their material needs addressed and likewise experienced a greater sense of social connectedness contributing to their overall collective wellbeing (Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Roy et al., 2018).

With Sheds clearly established as hubs of voluntary service that have multidimensional benefits to their members and their community consideration is now given to how Sheds arise from those communities as expressions of localized community development.

6.5.2 SHEDS AS EXPRESSIONS OF LOCALIZED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The notion of Sheds as ‘grassroots’ entities developed within and by communities as a response to local need (Aimers & Walker, 2016; Cope, Currit, Flaherty & Brown, 2016) was a strong theme within the findings of this study. Discussion of development processes by key informants and focus groups members rendered the following six step developmental progression: Local identification of local needs; development of a steering committee; donations of materials, tools and facilities; initial projects; forming a reputation and collaborations; managing ongoing issues and looking forward. These steps are supported by community development ethos and Shed practice literature as described below.

Overall the six-step progression represents the foundational operating ethos of community development (Ife, 2013; Minkler, 2012). This ethos emphasizes the vision, energy and organization of local people within their own community context to respond to their community’s needs (Greenwood, Lounsbury, & Marquis, 2011; Ife, 2013; Liberato et al., 2011). Whereas Hayes and Williamson (2007) reference the pivotal role of established supporting agencies within their Australian Shed development study, both Wexford and Trundell’s initial development momentum derived from the interests of one or more local individuals. Having been introduced to the concept of Sheds via media, these men were reflecting on their desire to contribute (Austin et al., 2005a; Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Roy et al., 2018) with respect to the needs of their local community (Boothroyd, Fawcett, & Foster-Fishman, 2004; Ife, 2013).

They then recruited others to discuss and develop the idea through some form of public meeting to which stakeholder groups were invited and from which small steering groups to drive development were formed (Ife, 2013; Melcher et al., 2016). These groups attracted further interest resulting in the donation of materials, tools and access to or building of facilities from which to operate (Hayes & Williamson, 2007; Melcher et al., 2016). Trundell migrated through a series of donated facilities as their numbers grew whereas Wexford's partnership with the local district council and sponsorship from a building manufacturer enabled them to community-build (Aiken, Taylor, & Moran, 2016; Melcher et al., 2016) their own facility. Through initial projects such as Trundell's coffins and Wexford's police station pergola, members cemented their collective identity and built a local reputation based on local knowledge and action (Kevany & MacMichael, 2014). Wexford had consciously engaged in the strong local network of community organisations that partnered to organize and deliver on joint local events several times per annum. This was particularly useful in raising the profile of the Shed in the wider community and forming mutually beneficial bonds with other organizations (Snaveley & Tracy, 2002).

Through these progressive steps each Shed has arisen from, and now contributes to, the wider community milieu (Ife, 2013; Kenny & Connors, 2017).

This has positive implications for both participants and their local communities. Firstly, participants not only belong to the Shed but contribute to its development as a resource to themselves and as a site of collaboration with the wider rural community (Hvenegaard et al., 2016; McCrea et al., 2016; Warburton & Winterton, 2017). Secondly, Sheds can be viewed by the communities wherein they are located as valuable assets that contribute to the communities' collective sense of identity and capacity to respond to challenge and change (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016; McCrea et al., 2016). This is of particular relevance to rural communities that often experience the impacts of social and economic change earlier than their urban counterparts especially as countries experience the impact of neo-liberalism on service provision (Aimers & Walker, 2011; Davies et al., 2018; Hvenegaard et al., 2016; Scott-Jones, 2016).

As has been demonstrated above Men's Sheds play a potent role in facilitating wellbeing at the intersection of the individual and their community. Accordingly, the concept of wellbeing with

attendant theories and models will now be further discussed in light of the findings from this study.

6.6 RELATING THE FINDINGS TO WELLBEING THEORIES AND MODELS

This section is comprised of three elements. Firstly, how the wellbeing benefits described above relate to categories of wellbeing theory is discussed. Secondly a logic model pertaining to how wellbeing outcomes are derived from Sheds developed by UK-based researchers is presented. Thirdly, the wellbeing findings are juxtaposed against the categories of Seligman’s Well-Being Theory (2011) and the concept model domains of Collective Wellbeing (Roy et al., 2018).

Although, as noted in Chapter Two, deriving exact and universal definitions of wellbeing is a problematic exercise, links can be made between existing theories and models of wellbeing. As noted earlier, Jayawickreme et al. (2012) categorized western wellbeing theories under the headings Wanting, Liking, Needing and Meaning. They described Wanting as pertaining to fulfilling one’s desires, Liking to positive emotional states, Needing to basic human needs including social relationships and Meaning pertaining to a sense of life purpose (Jayawickreme et al., 2012). As demonstrated briefly in the table below each of these facets have been exemplified in the findings of this study.

Table 2: Western wellbeing theory and Study Findings

| Wanting | Liking | Needing | Meaning |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Developing New Skills Recovery from Illness | Humour, Friendship Creativity | Social Connections, Routine, Activity | Community Service, Life-long Learning |

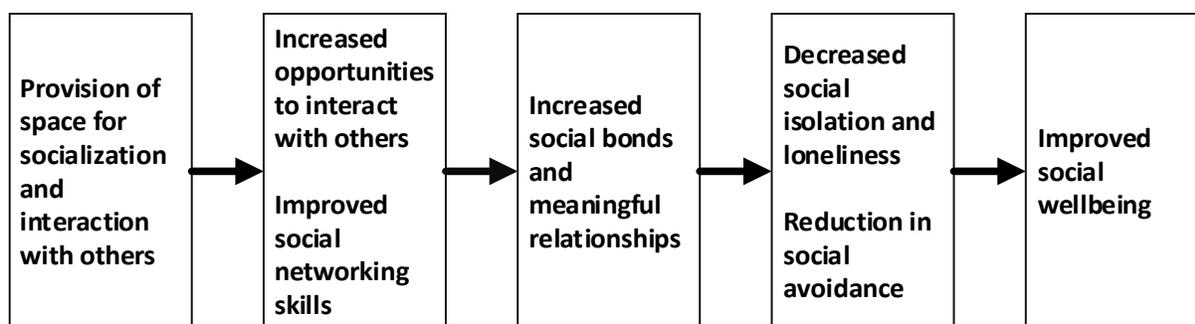
In this manner a clear relationship can be drawn between the different categories of western wellbeing theory and the themes of this study. From the categories of wellbeing theory, the facets listed above are further developed in the work of Kelly et al. (2019).

6.7 LOGIC MODEL OF THE CAUSAL PATHWAYS FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING VIA MEN'S SHEDS

Through reviewing existing Men's Shed literature, Kelly et al. (2019) sought to develop a logic model to visually represent potential, plausible causal pathways linking Shed activities and connections social wellbeing, mental health and physical health. The review analysed sixteen pertinent articles sourced from relevant peer reviewed journals published between 2009 and 2018 that addressed Sheds influence on health and wellbeing (Kelly et al., 2019). Naturally, they were tentative in their conclusions given the small number of qualitative studies based largely on self-report. However, in the view of this researcher, theirs is a utile and accessible model on which to base further enquiry regarding Shed influences on the domains of physical and mental health and social wellbeing (Kelly et al., 2019).

In the following section each causal pathway is outlined in chart form and followed by brief commentary regarding each pathway's intersection with WWT findings. As can be seen in figures 3-5, there is clear connection between the elements of Kelly et al. (2019) causal pathways and the findings from the participants, particularly pertaining to social connection and mental connection labelled as social wellbeing and mental health respectively by Kelly et al. (2019).

Figure 3: Social wellbeing

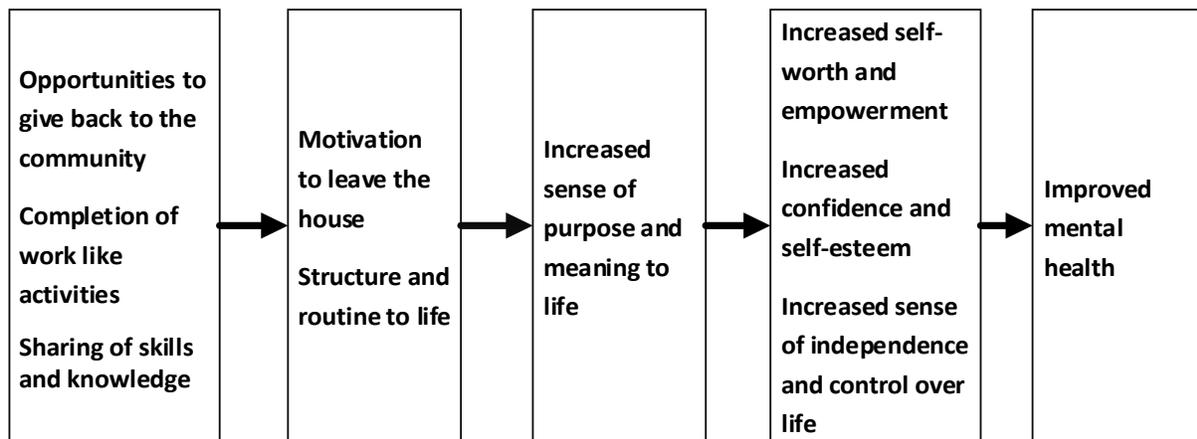


Source: Kelly et al. (2019).

Elements of the pathway described above (see figure 3) are clearly evident in the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 as summarised below.

As noted, the Sheds role in providing the context for life-enhancing social connections was the most significant role played by the Wexford and Trundell Sheds which served to facilitate all other roles and outcomes (Ford et al., 2015; Milligan et al., 2013;). Such meaningful connections were most often forged in the context of project work (Hayes & Williamson, 2007) were reinforced during break times (McGeechan, et al., 2017) and occasionally extended outside the Shed (Keenaghan, 2015). These interactions countered the effects of social isolation (Beech & Bamford, 2014; Haslam et al., 2017) and were in themselves protective of members mental health and wellbeing (Crabtree et al., 2018; Wilson & Cordier, 2014).

FIGURE 4: MENTAL HEALTH

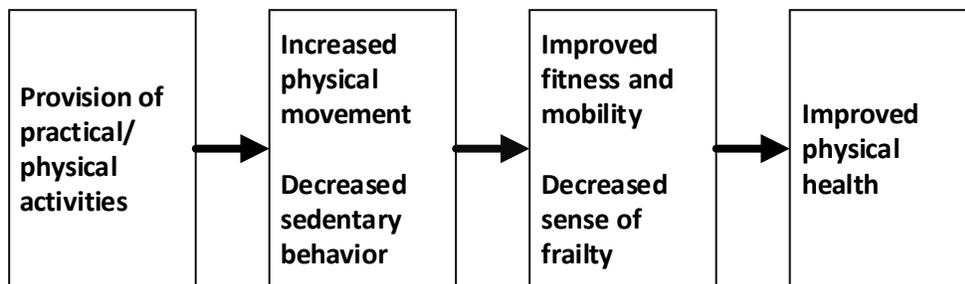


Source: Kelly et al. (2019).

Each element of the above causal pathway can be identified within the findings from WWT as they pertain to Weekly Structure and Routine, Preparation for Retirement, Production, Learning, Re-learning, and Mentoring. These outcomes are strongly supported in reviews of the Men’s Shed literature (Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Kelly et al., 2018; Milligan et al, 2013). Additionally, community connection via service projects was considered the nexus point at which the role of the Shed in the lives of participants intersected with the role of the Shed in the community. This connection was identified by Sheddies as having reciprocal benefits for themselves and their

community (Ayres et al., 2018; Foster et al., 2018; Roger et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). Benefits to Sheddies included an enhanced sense of purpose and self-worth through service (Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Jiang et al., 2019; Warburton & Winterton, 2017) both of which are included in the causal pathway towards mental health.

FIGURE 5: PHYSICAL HEALTH



Source: Kelly et al. (2019).

Although not considered a significant theme, two key informants and three focus group participants noted the Shed’s role in maintaining the physical wellbeing of men through achievable and sustainable light physical activity (Crabtree et al., 2018; Musich et al., 2017; Park et al., 2019). In summary, the themes identified from the participants are aligned with the logic model of causal pathways towards social wellbeing mental health and physical health presented by Roy et al. (2018). This alignment highlights areas for further research derived from the logic model concerning the transferability of findings to other Sheds.

6.8 MEN’ SHEDS AT THE INTERSECTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The following table aligns the categories of wellbeing theories described by Jayawickreme et al. (2012) and Seligman’s Wellbeing Theory (2011) with the domains of Collective Wellbeing suggested by Roy et al. (2018). These works, as referenced in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2 of this thesis, are juxtaposed with the key thematic headings from Working Well Together. Illustrative quotes from interviews undergird the thematic headings and are presented to demonstrate the

connection between theories, model and the thesis findings supporting international evidence of Sheds as hubs of wellbeing for their members and community.

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Liking</p> <p>Positive emotion:</p> <p>Regarding past/present and future.</p> <p>Vitality</p> | <p>Wanting</p> <p>Engagement:</p> <p>Goal-oriented absorption with task that tests and grows skills and provides immediate feedback.</p> <p>Inspiration</p> | <p>Needing</p> <p>Relationships:</p> <p>Proactive engagement in positive relationships.</p> <p>Connectedness</p> | <p>Meaning</p> <p>Meaning:</p> <p>Using signature strengths and abilities to serve something greater than self.</p> <p>Contribution</p> | <p>Wanting</p> <p>Accomplishment:</p> <p>Self-identified achievement, towards personal goals.</p> <p>Inspiration and opportunity</p> |
| <p>Social Connection -</p> <p>- Jack saw men’s mood lift across the course of a workshop session.</p> <p>- “When we have the old guys come down from Colfax... they absolutely love to sit round and have coffee, a few jokes and talk shit....” - Rappel.</p> | <p>Mental Connection</p> <p>- Godfrey had greatly benefitted from having “people with knowledge” to call on for expert advice enabling him to acquire skills “a whole lot easier”.</p> <p>This facilitated his sense of self “improve(ment)” ...in his recovery from brain injury.</p> <p>“Making things out of metal makes me happy”- Reg.</p> | <p>Social Connection -</p> <p>- Laird described “being with other chaps” in a workshop context as being “good for your physical health and your mental health”.</p> <p>- Jack described the Shed as an opportunity for “companionship with other like-minded similar aged people”.</p> | <p>Community Connection</p> <p>- In “using your older age to good effect” James noted the intrinsic psychological rewards of community service.</p> <p>- Wexford men reflected that seeing the delight of the children at making something they could take home was “really cool” and “very satisfying” and “always a lot of fun”.</p> | <p>Mental Connection</p> <p>- Karen attributed the “amazing difference (the Shed) has made” to her wellbeing to creative active-learning opportunities she would not have accessed on her “own account”.</p> <p>- Ozzie’s friend text saying, “I’ve finally figured it out!” ... his “friend now picks up the bloody welder and has a go”.</p> |

FIGURE 6: LINKING THEORIES AND MODELS WITH THESIS FINDINGS

When the findings of this thesis are juxtaposed against extant wellbeing theory, the Well-Being Theory of Seligman (2011) and the work of Roy et al. (2018) Wexford and Trundell Men's Sheds emerge as local hubs of individual and collective connection and wellbeing.

However as both Sheds seek to ensure their sustainability and ongoing relevance to their local communities as hubs of volunteer service and localized community development, they face some demonstrable challenges. Accordingly, it is to the theme of shared challenge that this discussion now turns.

6.9 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – FACING SHARED CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

The participants from Wexford and Trundell Men's Sheds described a number of specific challenges for their organisations moving forward. These challenges, regarding organizational sustainability, yielded themes pertaining to management, membership and money/financial sustainability which are discussed below.

6.9.1 MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP

The importance of the role of leaders in managing Sheds was given significant attention by participants. Although the similarities and differences between the concepts and practices of management and leadership inspire ongoing debate (Holosko, 2009; Lawler, 2007; Sullivan, 2016) in this discussion management and leadership within Sheds will be treated as related concepts (Yukl, 1989; Zaleznik, 1977). This treatment follows Lawler (2007) and Webster, McNab and Darroch (2015) who consider that they are conceptually and practically related but with different facets that find differential expression in response to shifting contextual demands. On this basis, the term manager/leader will be deployed throughout the rest of this study with management being conceptualized as organizational skills and leadership as inspirational skills. This position seems to be supported by the preponderance of evidence from studies conducted on these constructs within Sheds which equally emphasize both skills sets (Ang et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2013; Southcombe et al., 2015b).

The multi-Shed study of Southcombe et al. (2015b) identified three leadership qualities associated with effective Shed outcomes “envisioning, empathy and empowerment” (p. 983). These qualities effectively relate to the three areas of managing/leading Sheds participants identified. These areas were: maintaining fidelity to the guiding philosophies (Hayes & Williamson, 2007; Southcombe et al., 2015b); strengthening pastoral care processes (Ang et al., 2017; Stirling et al., 2011); supporting health and safety (Ang et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2013).

6.9.1.1 PHILOSOPHY FIDELITY – ENVISIONING

Philosophical fidelity was described by participants as maintaining and communicating a clear focus on the guiding ethos that undergirds the Shed movement. This was felt to be important in defining the essential nature of Sheds and providing a consistent framework for their policies and practices (Hassan, Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2013; Hayes & Williamson, 2007; Southcombe et al., 2015b). The five aspects considered most important were: Shed’s primary purpose as voluntary vehicles for life-enhancing companionship between men (Kelly et al., 2019); a relaxed, non-hierarchical milieu (Southcombe et al., 2015b; Wilson et al., 2015); responding to community need (Roger et al., 2016; Sunderland, 2013; Wilson et al., 2018); avoiding the dynamics of business such as compulsory participation and competition with local tradespeople (Golding, 2015); the role of women in Sheds (Foley, 2018; Krašovec, 2017; Mackenzie et al., 2017).

Relating to primary purpose, the importance of manager/leaders maintaining a clear focus on the mission of any organization has been clearly established (Babnik et al., 2014; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kopaneva & Sias, 2015). Kopaneva and Sias (2015) noted that effective management/leadership was contingent on the person or team’s ability to conceptualize and communicate the organizational mission to its members in an authentic, congruent and meaningful manner (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In short, manager/leaders need to believe in, persuasively articulate and model the vision and mission of the organization (Southcombe et al., 2015b; Stirling et al., 2011). Southcombe et al. (2015b) cited these qualities as creating conditions to envision and engage Shed members in pursuing and fulfilling the mission of the Shed regarding social connectedness and men’s wellbeing (Southcombe et al., 2015b). They argue that the quality of leader/member relationships impacts the level of social connectedness experienced by

members and their long-term retention as volunteers, a position that is widely supported (Ang et al., 2017; Southcombe et al., 2015b; Stirling et al., 2011; Walk et al., 2019).

Leadership style and behaviour is also implicated in the second philosophical tenet regarding the maintenance of a non-hierarchical milieu within Sheds as voluntary organisations (Alfes & Langner, 2017; Hassan, et al., 2013; Hayes & Williamson, 2007; Southcombe et al., 2015b). In this regard Cavanagh, et al. (2013) posit the role of management/leadership in providing sufficient structure regarding Human Resource Management (HRM) for the safe and effective running of Sheds whilst avoiding a formal hierarchical approach. Alfes and Langner (2017) refer to this as one of the challenges of paradoxical leadership within volunteer organisations. They noted that in contrast with hierarchical influence strategies characteristic of paid employment, volunteer manager/leaders needed to employ respectful and participative influence strategies linked to the mission of the organization to engage volunteers (Alfes & Langner, 2017). Milligan et al. (2015) refer to this as establishing an organizational culture based on solidarity whereby previous roles within formal social hierarchies do not apply within the Shed. This was supported by the comprehensive multi-Shed study of Southcombe et al. (2015b). They noted that leaders who demonstrated a highly relational and participative leadership style fostered social connectedness amongst members which was associated with self-reported increases in subjective wellbeing (Southcombe et al., 2015b).

A further aspect of such an approach to management/leadership is implicated in the third philosophical tenet under consideration: connecting the Shed to its context in terms of understanding and responding to the local community (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Roger et al., 2016; Southcombe et al., 2015a). Austin, Regan, Samples, Schwartz, and Carnochan (2011) refer to this as a process of facilitating interrelationships between both the external or community aspects and internal aspects of any organization. This process is particularly important given this studies' construction of Sheds as hubs of community service and development (Ife, 2013; IMSA, n.d.; Roger et al., 2016.) Within this process members can be supported to understand and actualise their capacity to improve community life through their service (Ayres et al., 2018; Foster et al., 2018; Roger, et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2018). In line with Shed research several study participants noted that the level of community connectedness needed to be actively reviewed if the Shed was

to remain relevant to its context. Snavely & Tracy (2002) alongside Hvenegaard et al. (2016) frame this as part of the iterative process of rural collaboration whereby organisations commit to mutual ongoing engagement to define, strategize and integrate their collective response.

Alongside engagement in local community networks (Southcombe et al., 2015b), a knowledge of the local business context was deemed important by participants to ensure that the product of the Shed did not compete with local manufacturers and services. This noted to be a core value of the Shed movement internationally (AMSA, n.d.; Golding, 2015).

The last aspect of philosophical fidelity for leaders to consider was the role of women in Men's Sheds. Some participants advocated for total inclusion and others noted the benefits of an all-male environment regarding men's willingness to talk openly in front of women (McGeechan, Richardson, Wilson, O'Neill, & Newbury-Birch, 2017). This topic was a subject of discussion internationally (Golding, 2015; Foley, 2018; Krašovec, 2017; Mackenzie et al., 2017; Salter, 2016). Salter (2016) expressed concern that Shed's and similar all-male groups could become bastions of hegemonic masculinity in which outdated and limiting norms of what constitutes masculinity could be perpetuated to the disadvantage of both men and women. Mackenzie et al. (2017) acknowledged this possibility in their case study of several Sheds. However, they maintained that male-only spaces were highly useful in addressing men's wellbeing and could be conscientized towards respectful gender relations given capable leadership (Mackenzie et al., 2017). This position was supported by Foley (2018) who argued that there was "room and significant benefit for the existence and support for gendered, masculine, community spaces for men" (p. 36).

Clearly much is required of Shed manager/leaders. They are simultaneously tasked with carefully negotiating fidelity to core Shed values, envisioning members regarding those values whilst maintaining a socially, psychologically and physically safe milieu that encourages member participation. It coordinated care of those members that was selected as an area for specific attention and is addressed next.

6.9.1.2 PASTORAL CARE - EMPATHY

Given that social relationships were acknowledged by all participants as the foundation of the Shed movement it seems important to attend to the mechanism by which a healthy and

supportive milieu can be proactively fostered. Following Ang et al. (2017) and Cavanagh et al. (2013) research participants referred to the challenge of creating sufficient structure to fulfil pastoral care functions so that care might be perceived as genuine and supportive. Such functions in Sheds typically occur in two contexts: during sessions and between sessions. Pastoral care during sessions included greeting and fare welling members, facilitating social connections between men, provision of food, attention to health and safety and the use of humour (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Foster et al., 2018). Between sessions such care was expressed by leaders or members following up on men who had missed sessions or who were known to be ill (Southcombe et al., 2015b). In wider literature Morrison & Greenhaw (2018) suggested that such pastoral care processes and competencies constituted a key aspect of leadership in voluntary organisations that enabled people to feel valued and connected to the group. However, these functions were only part of what constituted pastoral care in Sheds. Interestingly the capacity to listen well and respond to individual and group need was also found to enhance individuals' sense of social connectedness (Southcombe et al., 2015b). The above elements suggest that pastoral care in Sheds is a multifaceted and intentional process that requires careful consideration, emotionally congruent implementation and regular evaluation. Alongside effective health and safety policies which will be considered next, Stirling et al. (2011) suggested that such processes crucially influence the shape and strength of the psychological contract formed between volunteers and the leader.

6.9.1.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY – EMPOWERMENT

The importance of the maintenance of health and safety standards within Sheds is recognized internationally (Ang et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2013; Misan & Hopkins, 2017). As noted by participants in this study, Sheds are potentially dangerous physical workspaces that require careful coordination (Southcombe et al., 2015b). The consequences of poor health and safety standards can be disastrous for individuals and organisations which face increasing levels of liability in the event of accidental injury or death (AMSA, n.d.; IMSA, n.d; Stergiou-Kita et al., 2017).

Cavanagh et al. (2013) noted that when coordinators took due responsibility for organizing training and compliance with health and safety standards, this was correlated to increased

member satisfaction and volunteer retention. They argued that basic HRM practices including “training and development, clearly articulated health and safety procedures and planning to allocate activities to particular days of the week” (p. 301) supported members engagement in Sheds activities (Cavanagh et al., 2013). This was supported by the multi-Shed study of Southcombe et al. (2015b) referred to earlier. They found that skilfully mediated health and safety policies enhanced trust between members and Shed leaders and facilitated individual’s perception of social connectedness (Southcombe et al., 2015b). Skilful mediation included having a clear health and safety framework modelled by key individuals and instilled within the group culture (Ang et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2013). In this way health and safety procedures not only protect physical health but may be understood as building the team, empowering the individual and collective to be more productive together. A further two aspects of team building, specifically regarding membership, will be addressed next.

6.9.2 MEMBERSHIP

It was a concern of some participants to ensure the longevity of the Shed beyond their current generational cohort. With Sheds historically targeting mainly older men (Wilson & Cordier, 2013; Milligan et al., 2013) there is a wider concern particularly among volunteer-led Sheds that attention be given to promotion and recruitment of new members. Therefore, strategies that enable effective, targeted promotion supported by easy-to-access recruitment processes seem indicated. This is strongly supported by Ang et al. (2017) in their work regarding HRM practices and Sheds. Alongside Cavanagh et al. (2013), they suggested that Sheds who defined their vision creating an operating framework, supported by policies that delegated responsibilities, were more likely successfully recruit and retain members (Ang et al., 2017). This process is not straightforward however as most volunteer organisations have limited infrastructure and rely on a decreasing pool of volunteers (Davies et al., 2018; Warburton & Winterton, 2017). Furthermore, as Davies et al. (2018) suggest, maintaining and developing membership in voluntary organisations in rural areas is further problematized by trend towards migration to larger urban areas to access services. Managing issues of membership via promotion and recruitment strategies will be addressed below.

6.9.2.1 PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

Addressing public perceptions of the Shed as solely a place for older men doing woodwork was identified by one focus group as a key challenge both locally and nationally (Ballinger et al., 2009; Crabtree et al., 2018). Taylor et al. (2016) in their international research into Makerspaces, defined as “public workshops where makers can share tools and knowledge” (p. 1415), identified changing such perceptions as a dilemma common to makerspace groups. Men’s Sheds were included in their study which outlined a range of potential promotion and recruitment strategies aimed at enlarging the public’s perception of what may be possible in makerspaces (Taylor et al., 2016). These included outreach events in public spaces, open days at workshops, and targeted demonstrations at specific locations such as schools or aged care facilities (Taylor et al., 2016). Interestingly their analysis of findings suggested that despite the often-considerable efforts made to coordinate such outreach activities, the most effective promotional strategy remained word-of-mouth (Taylor et al., 2016).

As suggested by participants in this study the introduction of new technologies such as 3D printing to foster the interest of potential members was also being trialled in a number of makerspaces (Ensign & Leupold, 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). Clearly each Shed or communities looking to develop their own response so that promotional strategies need to tailor an approach that best fits the dynamics of the specific target group and individual community.

6.9.3 MONEY

Achieving sustainable funding is a challenge experienced across the Men’s Shed movement in this country and overseas. As noted by participants in this study the primary focus of funding was establishing, maintaining and possibly extending venue and plant. This included insurance, leasing and building maintenance, repairing and replacing equipment and in some cases purchase of consumables such as lumber and fixings. With Sheds prioritizing accessibility to a wide range of men and their community’s subscriptions are kept low (Milligan et al., 2015) leaving expenses to be accounted for elsewhere. Some Shed’s in Australia and the United Kingdom are supported by large health or welfare organisations who manage funding from contracts, grants and bequests (AMSA, n.d.; Milligan et al., 2015; Southcombe et al., 2015b). However, most Sheds are required to engage in the funding process through events, sale of Shed produce and grant

applications to funding bodies (AMSA, n.d.; IMSA, n.d.; MSNZ, n.d.: Southcombe et al., 2015b; Waling & Fildes, 2017).

These processes are necessarily time and labour intensive and can be discouraging for Sheds who feel they have to fight for their survival (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Misan & Hopkins, 2017). However, as noted by AMSA (n.d.), fundraising events and processes can be used as an opportunity to build esprit de corps as most often they represent another form of collective activity which is the essence of the work of the Shed. The key appears to be how these efforts are conceptualized, planned, delivered and evaluated. Ang et al. (2017) refer to fundraising as one of the key HRM functions delivered by Shed leaders in that those influence both the focus and substance of the fundraising process. Southcombe et al. (2015b) support this view further suggesting that building relationships with funding sources including businesses, philanthropic trusts, local government and central government is a key leadership function.

Some alternative models do exist with Munoz et al. (2015) describing a social enterprise model being employed in one Australian Shed. They describe this model as being “distinct from charitable and voluntary bodies in having an organizational form that explicitly combines a social mission with an enterprise approach” (Munoz et al., 2015, p. 280). At this shed funding is sourced from product, in this case firewood, and contract funding from disability support providers (Munoz et al., 2015). Despite the success of this case the authors urged caution regarding wholesale adoption of this model to Sheds in general (Munoz et al., 2015). They posit that social enterprise is also a political concept, frequently used in returning people to the workforce or generating labour from the unemployed (Munoz et al., 2015). Given this social enterprise per se may be open to manipulation for particular political ends (Aimers & Walker 2011; Ife, 2013; Mendes, 2017). Therefore, a contextual understanding of how a particular social enterprise concept may be used in relation to a specific population group within a given community needs to be carefully developed prior to implementation (Munoz et al., 2015).

6.10 IMPLICATIONS

The discussion has noted the breadth of the roles played by Wexford and Trundell Sheds in the lives of members and within their local rural community. Also identified have been the challenges each Shed faces going forward. From the described roles and challenges a number of clear implications seem evident. The following section presents these implications for the Wexford and Trundell Sheds and consider broader implications for extant Sheds the communities in which they sit, yet-to-emerge Sheds and the wider policy and practice context. Implications for social work practice are then considered before this section closes with a brief summary and the direction for recommendations related to these implications that will be presented in chapter seven.

6.10.1 WEXFORD AND TRUNDELL SHEDS: SHARED IMPLICATIONS

Given the many roles played by the Wexford and Trundell sheds for their constituents and communities shared implications may be understood as comprising two elements: protecting and enhancing Shed culture.

Regarding protecting Shed culture, the warm, informal and non-hierarchical social culture of the Sheds was described as the key role that enabled all proceeding roles in terms of mental wellbeing via structure, production learning mentoring and community contribution.

As noted by the research participants protecting and retaining this cultural milieu is therefore vital to Wexford and Trundell ongoing function. Implied responsibility for this falls to both leaders and participants in terms of conscious, intentional engagement in the values and behaviours that both support and express the Shed cultural milieu. For leaders, this has two necessary expressions: modelling and managing Shed culture. Firstly, there are several sets of interrelated interpersonal behaviours that characterize healthy Sheds that require consistent modelling. These include welcoming and ongoing friendliness, respectfulness, the willingness to share knowledge and resources, openness to diversity and responsivity to internal and external community needs all of which support the wellbeing of others. As identified earlier, personal congruency with organizational values facilitates the task of management/leadership and influences the organizations operating culture (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Secondly, from this

foundation, as stewards or guardians of culture, Shed leaders may reinforce the non-hierarchical, informal but safe and organized milieu of the Shed through their interpersonal style. This style focusses on the outcome of sharing responsibility and decision-making power. Such a style is operationalized through authentic consultation, a degree of consensus decision making, transparency regarding organizational process and mutual accountability for outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). An example of this is consulting members regarding a community project request and working through the practical implications of that request to jointly decide whether to accept the project (Roger et al., 2016; Sunderland, 2013). A further example is instigating a comprehensive health and safety policy and protocol that supports the safety and wellbeing of members working with potentially dangerous equipment. This example clearly depicts Shed leaders and members accepting shared responsibility for protecting the Shed cultural milieu and practically caring for each other's health and wellbeing (Ang et al., 2017).

Such shared responsibility with implications for Shed members and leaders also relates to enhancing the Shed culture in terms of its primary social role and those roles that flow from this. Implications pertaining to enhancement may be considered two ways: choosing attitudes of deliberate care and fostering ideas for further development.

Regarding deliberate care Shed participants may actively engage in maintaining the positive culture of the Shed through being interested in the wellbeing needs of others. This interest is expressed through verbal inquiry and responsivity to specific needs identified as the key ingredients to developing a caring community that attracts new members (Foster et al., 2018; Golding, 2015; Taylor et al., 2018).

Relating to implications for further development these can be organized within three interrelated domains: Shed activity, membership and money. Firstly, as noted, Wexford and Trundell offered a variety of activities and associated learning opportunities including those related explicitly to health and wellbeing (Golding, 2015; Wilson & Cordier, 2014). Many of these have developed out of the interests and advocacy of individuals or small groups of members with the Sheds. These developments increase the reach of the Shed internally and externally. Internally, members are exposed to more social learning opportunities and the proven benefits of these in terms of

cognitive and physical function and generativity (Adams-Price, Nadorff, Morse, Davis, & Stearns, 2018; Haslam et al., 2017; Netz et al., 2005). Externally, Shed's may be seen as offering more to the wider community in terms of types of projects and attracting new membership. This second domain of further development was exemplified in Wexford's plan to develop an electronic component to their Shed. Given the aging membership of both Sheds similar thoughts to longevity need to be considered and enacted now to ensure that the Shed's survive past their current cohort of members (Ang et al., 2017). Lastly, shared responsibility regarding money or financial sustainability is a key implication. As both Shed's identified, maintaining a stable financial base is a key challenge which cannot rest with Shed leadership alone. Each member needs to give due consideration regarding their support of fundraising efforts whether through making items to sell, such as Trundell's coffins, or contributing labour to paid project work like Wexford's partnerships with the District Council (Roger et al., 2016; Southcombe et al., 2015a).

6.10.1.1 WEXFORD SHED IMPLICATIONS

Aside from the above shared implications there were several implications specific to the Wexford Men's Shed. These implications are comprised of two categories: maintaining current practice and addressing specific issues.

A number of aspects of current practice have proved highly effective in shaping the internal culture and external engagement of the Wexford Shed and should be acknowledged and retained. They include an effective leadership framework and the Shed's proactive presence within the Wexford community (Roger et al., 2016; Southcombe et al., 2015b). The Wexford leadership framework consists of a Trust board and board chairperson who jointly oversee the strategic direction of the Shed whilst functioning as members of the wider Shed community. The board chairperson coordinates the Shed on a session by session basis and, along with other members, interfaces with external groups and organisations regarding community project work and collaborative events. Trust board members collectively support different aspects of the Shed culture according to their personal skills and strengths. Some take an active interest in pastoral care of members whilst others act as mentors within areas of specialty. This framework seems to enable the Shed to function sustainably without unduly stressing individual members.

The Wexford Shed is visible within the Wexford community by virtue of the community project work it completes and the collaboration within a strong local community network. As part of this network the Shed co-produces several large community events across the year in partnership with a number of other organisations. Both mechanisms are fruitful in outworking and promoting the mission of the Shed.

Relating to implications of specific issues the Shed itself identified two categories: ensuring longevity by changing public perceptions to facilitate recruitment of younger members; maintaining and updating equipment.

As noted above members were concerned to ensure the longevity of the Shed beyond its current cohort. They perceived that there was a public perception of Sheds as places that retired men went to engage in woodwork. Therefore, they wished to change this perception via offering and promoting a variety of activities including electronics that may be of interest to younger people. Promotional avenues included local print and social media and static displays and demonstrations at local events. They sought to resource capacity to incorporate new members through offering more sessions during weekdays and evenings.

Given these plans for expansion of capacity there were implications for the current facility and equipment. Regarding the building and its immediate environs, the Shed had plans for some internal re-modification to include detritus-free workshop space for electronics. The size of the current building and its location on public land present additional challenges to these plans (Aiken et al., 2016). Similarly, the cost for maintaining, updating, insuring and powering key pieces of equipment within the workshop have financial implications that the Shed are struggling to address.

6.10.1.2 TRUNDELL SHED IMPLICATIONS

Similarly, to Wexford, and aside from the shared implications, the Trundell Shed faced a number of specific implications regarding maintaining current practice and addressing key issues. Regarding maintaining current practice, the Shed's capacity to provide a protected environment in which members may recover from injury and illness was one of Trundell's many strengths. This environment had been created informally by the goodwill of individual members to support their

fellow Sheddies and the development of processes that supported safe outcomes. Research participants identified the need to further develop these processes in a manner that was sustainable for Shed and cognizant of the need to ensure health and safety (Ang et al., 2017; Stergiou-Kita et al., 2017). Responsiveness to the community was a further characteristic that members valued and wished to see maintained. The Shed has retained a focus on fundraising which has enabled them to make temporary additions to workspace.

In relation to maintaining these distinctives and addressing further specific issues a key implication for Trundell was enhancing their current leadership framework to spread responsibility across a number of key members. Such an approach might enable further consideration to be given to the identified issues of concern listed in the section. These included securing further facilities; developing more comprehensive pastoral care processes; defining a health and safety code of practice; promotion/recruitment of new members. For example, pertaining to facilities, the current lease arrangement on Karen's property is reliant, as she has stated, on her continued good health and ownership of her farmlet as she enters her ninth decade. Even should this continue, the facility has no expansion room to accommodate additional members. Each of these issues has implications for the culture, productivity and longevity of the Shed in the Trundell community and would benefit from a coordinated strategic approach to supplement the excellent efforts of the current leadership.

6.10.2 WIDER IMPLICATIONS – A FOUR-FACTOR FRAMEWORK

As the literature review, research findings and subsequent discussion has indicated, Men's Sheds are a potent vehicle for addressing the multifaceted wellbeing needs of participants and acting as hubs of service and community development. This potential is the primary substantive wider implication from this study. Given this there is a clear invitation for four interrelated stakeholder bodies to mine this developmental potential. These bodies are existing Sheds, their communities of locale, communities considering developing new Sheds and governance, health, social welfare, community development and education organisations both statutory and non-statutory at local, district and national levels.

As the four stakeholder bodies respond to this overall implication and seek to resource further Shed development, all face at least four implications highlighted in this study. These four implications form a four-factor framework, as described below, of key principles on which to base sustainable Shed development:

The primary purpose of the Shed is supporting men's mental and physical wellbeing within a community context and this may be manifested differently or similarly through a shared social culture dependent on the context of each Shed; Shed culture is located with and an expression of an informal hierarchical structural milieu mediated by reciprocally respectful relationships; Shed activities are formulated in response to member and community needs and capacities within a locally networked community development framework; As voluntary organisations most Sheds face the challenge of developing a sustainable organizational structure in regards management, membership and finance.

Cognizance of these four factors will arguably provide a level of shared understanding among the four bodies of what Sheds are, what they aren't and what they may be. Such shared understanding is vital to create a collaborative platform on which to base ongoing sustainable Shed development nationwide that enables Sheds to remain true to their guiding vision. Examples of how each stakeholder body may apply the four-factor framework follow below and will inform detailed recommendations in Chapter Seven.

Extant Sheds are positioned to influence the growth of the movement around the country and are already doing so at a local, regional and national level. This does not only apply to the voluntary regional representatives and national representatives of MSNZ but also to local Sheds who are the primary face of the movement within any given community. This implies some responsibility for individual Sheds to consider how their localized practice may influence the perception of Sheds within their local area and further afield. In order to organize the influence process, establishing a clear benchmark of developmental considerations like the four-factor framework is implied. Grounded in the developmental experience of local Sheds and supported by international research literature, such a framework could help inform promotion of Sheds locally, regionally nationally. Having such considerations as a frame of reference could arguably

help guard against the danger of the Men's Shed concept being diluted and its potency as a forum to promote individual and community wellbeing diminished. With this in mind applications of the framework will be presented among recommendations in Chapter Seven.

Regarding communities of locale and constituent groups, understanding the primary purpose and structural/cultural milieu of their local Shed may inform realistic expectations of what the Shed may provide to, and need from, their community. This may result in appropriately targeted requests for assistance from, and offers of support to, their local Shed that assist mutual sustainable development goals.

Similarly, those communities or organisations considering development of Sheds can allow the four considerations to shape their developmental process. For instance, understanding of the cultural and social milieu that supports favourable Shed outcomes could inform how emerging Sheds are structured and influence ideal position descriptions for leadership.

Understanding the range of benefits to Shed members and communities may influence health professionals, funders and policy makers who may consider the place of Shed's within their health, education and welfare remits. For example, occupational therapists within a district health board, that understand the capacity of Shed's to assist those in recovery, may co-develop a sustainable supported referral protocol with specific Sheds. Local charitable funders may look favourably at Sheds when they are aware of the hubs of service Shed's represent within their community. At a policy level, health officials tasked with the development and delivery of public health services may choose to recognize Sheds as legitimate providers within their policy frameworks and operational budgets.

As can be seen there are multiple implications for stakeholders who wish to consider their role in releasing the developmental potential of Sheds. The next section focusses on how such implications may influence the practice of two interrelated professions that share many of the aims of Men's Sheds.

6.10.2.1 SOCIAL WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The individual and collective wellbeing and empowerment foci of Sheds as described in this study are consistent with the values and principles of the social work and community development

professions. Given this it is important to consider the implications of Shed practice to professionals working in both spheres.

An inter-systemic approach to practice is a core component of social work. Such an approach is broadly informed by a number of theories and models pertaining to human development and health (Lundy, 2008). These are inclusive of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the biopsychosocial model (Engel, 1977) and cultural models of health such as Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994). This inter-systemic approach suggests a number of frameworks for understanding how social workers may interface with Sheds. For instance, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) work conceptualized the interaction of multiple systems social, environmental and biological that influence human development and function. Using this framework, a social worker could contemporaneously find themselves working at multiple levels alongside Men's Shed. At a micro-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) they may engage with their local Shed as a referral destination or be supporting an individual Sheddies physical or mental health through direct intervention or referral. At a meso-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) a social worker may act to support development of a local Shed through assistance with networking in social service circles. Lastly at a macro-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) a social worker could be part of a professional collective advocating for development and adoption of a Men's Health policy that includes Sheds as legitimate hubs of wellbeing.

Applying the Whare Tapa Whā model could see a social worker engaging in multiple interactions. These may include, at an individual level, supporting a Māori Sheddie seeking to locate local options for traditional Māori medicine. Within a systemic context this may consist of brokering a working relationship between the Shed and the local marae regarding skill and facility sharing. Such brokerage would support the hinengaro, tinana and wairua of both parties as they share not only skills but cultural knowledges that are enhancing of wellbeing (Durie, 1994).

Similarly, a community development professional informed by theory is concerned with fostering networks of activity between people of a particular locale to improve the collective wellbeing of those persons (Ife, 2013; Robinson Jr & Green, 2011). As noted earlier, with empowerment of the collective community as a focus, there are powerful synergies between Sheds and community

development goals (Roger et al., 2016). Those tasked with community development responsibilities could view Sheds as sites of various collaborative initiatives. These might include brokering community projects between Sheds and other community groups, assisting Shed's access to funding, incorporating Sheds in neighbourhood planning and community events (Minkler, 2012). Both social work and community development are well placed for developing reciprocal relationships with the Shed movement. These will be detailed further as recommendations are addressed in the next chapter.

6.11 CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand the role of rural Men's Sheds in the lives of their members and the life of their local rural community. This discussion has demonstrated the key role of Sheds is providing context for social connection where men and, in some cases women, through working together and talking together experience life enhancing companionship facilitating overall wellbeing. This key role resources all other roles that Sheds play in the lives of their members and community regarding mental connection and community connection. Mental connection via Sheds is constituted through temporal structure/routine when in or nearing retirement; a focus on production of artefacts; learning and mentoring in an intergenerational and/or recovery context. Community connection occurred via Sheds service to the community through projects and being embodiments of localized community development. This was especially important given the challenges rural centres face in terms of resourcing. Individual and collective wellbeing outcomes emanating from Sheds are well supported by existing Shed research and intersect with several established theories or models of wellbeing.

Further challenges identified included sustainability of membership and finance with management/leadership being key to support development going forward. Implications were identified for both Wexford and Trundell Sheds regarding maintenance of well-developed current practice and possible extensions to practice. Wider implications for the support of Shed development nationally were presented in regard to four bodies. These included established Sheds, their communities of locale, communities considering developing new Sheds and governance, health, social welfare, community development and education organisations both

statutory and non-statutory at local, district and national levels. A framework comprised of specific implications for these bodies to consider was presented followed by the implications of the study for social work and community development professionals. In the next and final chapter specific recommendations relating to the aforementioned implications will be presented in detail following a summary of the elements of the research project and researcher reflections.

7 CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how rural Men's Sheds might enhance the lives of their members and contribute to the life of their local rural community and to review the developmental challenges such Sheds experienced. This chapter begins with a brief review of the research objectives and the methodology used in this study. The key themes located within the findings are then presented accompanied by implications of those themes and subsequent recommendations for the relevant stakeholder groups. Specific recommendations for further research follow and the chapter concludes with reference to limitations of this research project, the authors personal reflection on the research journey and a closing summary.

7.1.1 REVIEW OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As stated earlier, my investigation centred on how Men's Sheds in rural areas may enhance men's wellbeing and how Men's Sheds as organisations contribute to the life of their rural communities.

In relation to this aim there were three objectives. Firstly, I wished to elicit the roles that rural Men's Sheds played in the life of their participants and the broader life of their local rural communities. Secondly, I wished to understand the challenges Sheds faced in their ongoing development. Lastly, I wished to apply this knowledge to constructing a set of recommendations regarding sustainable development for the Shed's studied, Shed's nationally, the community and policy context the social work and community development professions.

7.1.2 REVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

A traditional generic qualitative approach (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) to gathering and analysing data was employed for this study. This utilized semi-structured interviews with two key informants from within Shed leadership (Bryman, 2012) and two focus groups (Liamputtong, 2011) comprised of members at each Shed. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the data and yielded several themes in relation to each of the research objectives. Such methodological approaches value both inductive and deductive

strategies for knowledge generation acknowledging the presence and importance of multiple subjectivities within the research endeavour including that of the relationship between researcher and participant (O’Leary, 2014). Given this, the methodological approach was highly appropriate considering the intention of yielding thick descriptions of participant experience, congruent to the research setting that would later be offered back to the Sheds in the form of recommendations (Bryman, 2012).

7.1.3 SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of key informant interviews and focus groups yielded a series of interconnected themes in relation to the research objectives. These themes, associated implications and subsequent recommendations are summarized below.

7.1.3.1 ROLES OF THE SHED IN THE LIVES OF MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY

Analysis of the findings regarding the roles of the Shed in the lives of their participants and the life of their local rural community yielded five major themes.

In relation to Sheds and their members, the first theme noted Shed’s primary role in providing a context for social connection between men. This context facilitated a raft of wellbeing benefits and was founded in working together on projects and through further conversations within and without the immediate Shed environs. Social connections were the foundation for the second and third themes: mental connection and community connection. Mental connection and associated physical and mental health benefits were constituted of three interrelated sub themes: providing weekly structure/routine and social connectedness as participants approached or entered retirement; a focus on production of artefacts; opportunities for learning and mentoring within an intergenerational and/or recovery context. Community connection related to the Shed’s role of connecting men with their wider community through service projects which brought them into contact with other community groups and individuals.

Regarding the community contribution of Sheds, analysis of the findings yielded two themes related to community capacity building: Sheds as hubs of voluntary service and as expressions of localized community development. Voluntary service was provided in two ways: though making or repairing articles for individuals and a variety of organisations including schools, sports clubs,

aged care facilities and conservation groups; contributing to wider community events such as fairs and local promotions. Sheds emerged as organizational entities from within their communities through a process of localized community development.

Given the multifaceted roles Sheds have in the lives of their membership and communities as demonstrated within these findings there are several layers of interrelated implications for stakeholder groups pertaining to the significance of Sheds.

Firstly, Shed members have cause to deepen their understanding of what their membership means or might mean regarding what they receive and contribute to their Sheds. Similarly, leaders should experience a deeper appreciation of their contribution and responsibility within their leadership roles in respect to social, mental and community connection. Thirdly communities with extant Sheds in their midst need to give attention how they consciously and reciprocally engage with Sheds as community resources. Communities considering developing their own Shed may be inspired with the range of possibilities that Sheds could offer their local context whilst having realistic expectations of Sheds as vehicles for wellbeing. Similar consideration should be accorded by organizational stakeholders with investment in the physical and mental wellbeing, learning, mentoring and community development and capacity building outcomes of Sheds. Lastly, social work and community development professionals should take particular interest regarding the joint aims and goals of their profession and the Sheds in their midst.

7.1.3.2 CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

The process of identifying challenges for Shed development yielded three substantive themes. They were management/leadership; membership; money/financial sustainability. The first theme was comprised of three elements: philosophical fidelity; facilitation of pastoral care processes; enabling high health and safety standards. Regarding membership, ensuring longevity of the Shed was expressed via two subthemes: active promotion of the Shed in the wider community; recruitment of younger members. Relating to money or financial sustainability, there were three subthemes: affordable subscription; adequate facilities; plant maintenance.

These developmental challenges have substantive implications for Shed members and leaders regarding how Shed values and associated practices are maintained and how consideration is given to issues of fiscal sustainability. Issues of sustainability and respect for the purpose and identity of Sheds have implications for how communities, possible stakeholder organizations and professionals may interact with Sheds regarding mutual expectations and support.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the identified implications the following section presents recommendations for multiple stakeholder groups with investment in Sheds. These groups include: the Wexford and Trundell Sheds; the Aotearoa New Zealand Men's Shed Movement; the communities in which functioning Sheds are located; communities considering Shed development; Local and regional government; Health, Education and Welfare organizations both statutory and non-statutory; the national policy context practice context. Recommendations for social work and community development practitioners are considered separately.

7.2.1 WEXFORD AND TRUNDELL MEN'S SHEDS

I wish to acknowledge the warm engagement and openness of participants from both Sheds in this research process. The following general and Shed-specific recommendations are heavily influenced by the input of Trundell and Wexford leaders and members and reflect their organizational priorities.

Given the findings presented above it is vital that deliberate attention be given to maintaining each aspect of the Shed culture regarding social, mental and community connections. This starts with the social milieu and is followed by the mental connections facilitated by productive routine, learning and mentoring and the community connection that facilitates service and wider community engagement. Such attention needs to be, systematic, ongoing and integrated into future Shed planning and practice.

Therefore, it is recommended that Shed leadership engage members in a structured, user-friendly annual review process that incorporates each of the following elements: Shed social culture; Pastoral care processes; Leadership; Community connectivity; programming; Health and

safety; Finances: Venue/Plant/Insurance/Consumables/Catering; Promotion and Recruitment. This review process, which should take place within a team context, could be used to inform annual strategic planning processes.

To support this recommendation a thirty-six-page guide to assist in Shed's developing their review process that have been developed from this research is included in Appendix Four. This guide titled "In Situ: Building up Our Shed and Our Community" focusses on tools and processes for reviewing the Shed culture, leadership, and the Sheds connection to the community. In this regard a specially developed comprehensive membership survey together with adapted surveys regarding leadership and community connectivity are contained in the guide. Tables supporting monitoring of pastoral care, product and event output are also included. Links to the Australian, Irish and Scottish Men's Shed Associations who have well-developed and comprehensive resources pertaining to the remaining elements are also incorporated together with contact links for the excellent Shed development support offered by MenzShed New Zealand.

In regard the guide an important consideration must be noted. Each Shed sit in a unique context within its developmental journey and is subject to differing and shifting conditions regarding resourcing and capacity. This heterogeneity is a key facet of Sheds as community development organisations emerging from communities as a response to local needs (Aimers & Walker, 2011). Therefore, such tools as listed above should not be considered prescriptive or as an attempt to homogenize Sheds. Such action would, in the view of this researcher, confound the essential nature of the Shed movement and decrease its potency. This view is supported by the work of Ahl, Hedegaard and Golding (2017) in their analysis of the initial introduction of Shed's to Denmark as part of a government driven initiative. Ahl et al. (2017) found that participants needed the freedom to adapt the offered model to their own needs and resisted attempts to have a generic model imposed on them. With these important considerations in mind the documents are presented as working drafts that Sheds may or may not choose to adapt or adopt according to their purposes and means. As working drafts, the documents themselves should be subject to review, challenge and change as the Shed Movement develops.

In terms of specific recommendations this research supports the following self-identified goals for Wexford and Trundell Sheds:

7.2.2 WEXFORD MEN'S SHED

- To pursue plans regarding promotion and recruitment of younger members through the development of specialties and consider increasing the number of sessions available in response to need.
- To consider applying the guide described above to support the process of review that they have discussed.

7.2.3 TRUNDELL MEN'S SHED

- To pursue plans for scoping a new facility and consider formalizing a team leadership structure to address issues of sustainability. This may be comprised of delegating responsibility to individuals with identified skill sets under portfolios such as pastoral care, health and safety, fundraising and venue development. These portfolios could be coordinated by a nominated individual.
- To consider applying the guide described above to support the process of review that they have discussed.

7.2.4 AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND MEN'S SHED MOVEMENT

The Men's Shed movement across Aotearoa New Zealand is both vibrant and diverse. The following recommendations are made to individual Sheds and the New Zealand Men's Shed Association for the purpose of promoting integrated and sustainable Shed development. As such they address protection of Shed culture and the development of a broader contextual understanding of how Shed's may situate themselves within their own communities and societal context.

Support should be given for the national development of an annual progress review process that could be a resource to local Sheds, like that suggested from this research. Such development could be informed by international Shed best practice literature published by Shed Peak Bodies such as AMSA, IMSA, SMSA and Shed research literature. Links to these are to these are located in Appendix Five.

Consideration should be given to strengthening alliances with Peak Bodies representing men's health and wellbeing including policy makers, advocacy and health promotion organisations and men's health research groups. Links to these are to these are contained in Appendix Five.

It should be noted that the remainder of the recommendations that follow situate Sheds in developing partnerships with wider stakeholders and as such imply a responsibility to both partners within these relationships. Partnership implies joint responsibility for outcomes and therefore it may be useful for Sheds and prospective partners to engage regarding both parties' concepts of wellbeing and how each may contribute to this within a wider community framework. In this regard a useful starting point may be the model of collective wellbeing postulated by Roy et al. (2018). This model situates the individual within the community context and considers processes for addressing environmental factors to increase collective wellbeing. Please note this model is not suggested as all-sufficient as it is largely mono-cultural but, as a starting point, may help parties conceptualize their roles and intersection points within the community wellbeing enterprise.

7.2.5 COMMUNITIES WITH EXTANT SHEDS/LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT/HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS

In order for communities as represented by statutory and non-statutory organizations to take an integrated and sustainable approach to working with the Shed's in their midst it is recommended that they consider the following approach. Firstly, establish a meaningful interorganizational relationship that facilitates dialogue regarding potential alignment of organizational priorities, mutual compatibilities, organizational boundaries and options for reciprocal support. Such options may include understanding how could the resources of each organization including skill set, knowledges, facilities and networks could benefit the other. Secondly explore collaborative possibilities regarding specific projects and events in which resources could be shared and working alliances strengthened. Thirdly, should these first two steps facilitate a positive working relationship, both organisations should incorporate their interrelation into their annual organizational plan so that the relationship is a kept alive through regular review.

Local, and regional government should consider using the Shed register developed by the MSNZ to engage in a mapping exercise of Sheds within their territory. This exercise could inform deliberate engagement efforts around shared strategic priorities which may include community service projects and events and disaster management plans. The potential of such relationships is emblemized by the mutually beneficial partnership between Wexford Shed and their District Council.

The processes described above represent a mutual capacity building approach to wider sustainable community development that is in line with international best-practice standards under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN, n.d.).

7.2.6 COMMUNITIES CONSIDERING SHED DEVELOPMENT

In a similar vein, to facilitate sustainable development of emergent Sheds it is recommended that interested communities take the following steps. Firstly, conduct an initial meeting with interested parties to ascertain what outcomes stakeholders may anticipate from developing a local Shed. Collate the findings from this meeting and present back to the interest group. Once this group has coalesced, engage with the local regional representative of the MSNZ for the district in which your community is located. This person will have access to knowledge and resources regarding Shed development steps including engaging further stakeholders, forming a steering community and creating a Shed action plan. For regional contacts and exemplars of Shed development processes please see the MSNZ location link in Appendix Five. The MSNZ site contains links to other Men's Shed peak bodies internationally such as the Scottish Men's Shed Association who provide access to similar resources for Shed development.

7.2.7 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

As noted within the literature review men's health is an area of national priority that deserves strategic attention. This study has posited that Shed's represent an important resource to bolster men's wellbeing. Given this it is recommended that policy makers engage with the Shed movement nationally to explore how Sheds may be represented within policy frameworks and strategies. There are two focal areas that are particularly pertinent to this process. The first falls under the New Zealand Healthy Aging Strategy and related workstreams that sit under the New

Zealand Health Strategy (MOH, n.d.) which provides the overarching framework for the New Zealand Health System. One manifestation of this strategy is the National Science Challenge - Ageing Well (AWCNSC, n.d.). This body notes that its vision is to “add life to years for all older New Zealanders” through “mitigating mental, cognitive, and physical disability... support(ing) health, wellbeing and independence for all New Zealanders as they age” (AWCNSC, n.d.). Within this there is recognition given to “the resourcefulness of older people and their on-going social, economic, and cultural contributions to society”. Inter-systemically the Ageing Well strategy hopes to promote “mutual respect, support, and reciprocity amongst people of different ages” (AWCNSC, n.d.).

At the time of writing the National Science Challenge (NSC) is sponsoring a national conference in November 2019 under the Ageing Well banner that will address themes of social connectedness and the impact of this on health and wellbeing (Ageing Well Challenge NSC, n.d.). Similar attention will be accorded these issues in a collaboration between Age Concern New Zealand (ACNZ) and the New Zealand Association of Gerontology (NZAG) in their “Vision for Ageing in Aotearoa” conference scheduled for April 2020 (ACNZ, n.d.). Given that Sheds are presented as a means of reducing social isolation (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.) Sheds deserve representation and attention within these types of forums as both sources of information and intervention regarding ageing well (Doolan, Mehta, Waters, & Baxter, 2019). Shed presentations at these fora could raise the profile of Sheds and establish ongoing access pathways. In this regard links to the NSC and ACNZ are included in Appendix Five.

The second focal area of pertinence to Sheds is the development of a National Male Health Policy. As noted previously, National Male Health strategies have been developed in Australia and Ireland and Sheds have been incorporated under those strategic frameworks enabling sustainable support for Shed development (AMSA, n.d.; Carragher, 2017; IMSA, n.d.). The Centre for Men’s Health at the University of Otago is one organization that is currently attempting to bridge policy, research, practice and community engagement to promote such policy development (CMH, n.d.). Therefore, it is recommended that the CMH and representatives of the Shed movement engage regarding mutual support and development. This could include participation in research initiatives and joint policy submissions to central government. The 2017-

2020 Strategic Plan compiled by the Irish Men's Shed Association (IMSA, n.d.) situated Sheds within Irish Male Health policy and should be considered a useful template to inform development in Aotearoa New Zealand. The relevant links are located within Appendix Five. Such collaborative connections could be readily facilitated by Social Work and Community Development practitioners who will be considered next.

7.2.8 SOCIAL WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As noted earlier Social Work and Community Development are professionally well-positioned to support and benefit from Sheds as referral destinations, sites of co-work and as contributors to community development.

On this basis it is recommended that Social Work and Community Development professionals, with support from their organisations, investigate how the purpose and goals of Sheds may intersect with their professional frame of reference. Such workers should make deliberate efforts to engage with and understand the context of the individual Sheds within their geographic and practice domains with a view to developing mutually supportive collaborative relationships. To facilitate this links to the MSNZ national register are included in Appendix Five as are connections to the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers and the Aotearoa Community Development Association.

The notion of carefully exploring and codifying meaningful collaboration is vital to professionals and Sheds for developing sustainable relationships informed by realistic mutual expectations. In this way professionals may view Shed leaders as colleagues within a wider community of practice.

7.2.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It has been previously noted that, whilst still in an early stage, research into Sheds is developing internationally (Kelly et al., 2019). As studies, such as this one, add to the body of knowledge, further knowledge deficits emerge around specific facets of Shed function and utility. Several recommendations deployed by other researchers are detailed below followed by adjuncts to this study which could extend knowledge of the Shed/community interface.

Following the direction of Men's Shed research, it is recommended that a two-tier approach to strengthening Shed wellbeing research be taken internationally and locally. Firstly, given the

apparent relationship between the areas of production, learning, mentoring and community development and wellbeing amongst Sheddies, researchers with specialty in these areas could coordinate efforts within and across their specialties to inform wider Shed research. This would arguably have at least two benefits. Firstly, specialty interests could be developed collaboratively within and across countries interested in Shed development. Secondly such collaboration could then support the development of longitudinal studies utilizing standardized pre and post-test wellbeing measures to be applied to a larger cohort of similar rural Sheds. The purpose of this is to robustly measure wellbeing outcomes and their relativity to different aspects of Shed functions within a larger sample size to strengthen the veracity and generalizability of the findings.

It would be highly valuable if further studies based in Aotearoa New Zealand considered in-depth, the socio-cultural, bi-cultural and multi-cultural implications and applications of the Shed concept. If Sheds are to remain reflexive responses to community needs such considerations will have significant implications for Shed development going forward. This would include investigating the influence of gender and ethnic diversity within the Shed movement and how culturally diverse theories and measures of wellbeing reflective of Aotearoa New Zealand society could be applied to Shed research. Specifically, in this regard it is recommended that further Shed research into the intersection of individual and community wellbeing be conducted in partnership with, and informed by, a kaupapa Māori research organization. Within this process there should be careful consideration given to how an existing Māori model of health and wellbeing such as Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) could be applied to Sheds.

In regard to extending this study there are three specific recommendations. Firstly, it would be useful to consider specific research regarding two topics that emerged from the Noteworthy Minor Findings (NMF) identified in Chapter Five. The first pertained to improved relationships with spouses. This topic has important implications for collective wellbeing of family members of Sheddies and aside from the work of Hedegaard and Ahl (2019) has received no explicit attention internationally. The second NMF related to being a woman in a Men's Shed which has important consequences for how Sheds may choose to engage in their self-definition as organisational

entities. Whilst this topic has been alluded to by Krašovec (2017) and Foley (2018) it could be timely to focus directly on the issues this topic may raise as Sheds continue to develop.

Thirdly, it would be useful to use a community development lens to frame similar studies of rural Sheds that would include investigation of communities' perceptions of their local Sheds. Such research could focus on Sheds roles, potentials and barriers from a community perspective by engaging communities with extant Sheds directly to explore such perceptions. This may provide further insight into how Sheds and their local communities can work collaboratively in given socio-cultural contexts. This is a specific area of Shed research which has received very little direct attention internationally. Collaboration of research initiatives within this specialty area could make a significant contribution to the wider Shed literature.

7.3 LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the small sample size arguably limits the generalizability of findings across rural Men's Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand. Secondly the investigation of wellbeing lacked internationally standardized wellbeing measures to enable cross comparison between similar studies (Wilson & Cordier, 2014). In relation to this the wellbeing theory employed was derived from largely western perspectives on the nature and measurement of wellbeing. Thirdly, the study was conducted by a single student researcher with commensurate limitations for outside input into study design, interviewing or cross-checking codes during the analysis phase. However, despite these limitations the study followed a tested and replicable process regarding data collection and analysis (Barusch, et. al., 2011) which was comparable to similar qualitative research regarding Men's Sheds internationally. Furthermore, the researcher was supported by regular supervisory consultation by reputable academic supervisors (O' Leary, 2014) and a structured process for reflexivity that was supported by monthly professional supervision (Cumming-Potvin, 2013).

7.4 PERSONAL REFLECTION ON RESEARCH JOURNEY

As noted in Chapter One my interest in this research project spanned seven years. This started with my involvement in Sheds as a community development worker and Shed coordinator till 2016 and continued as I began a Master of Social Work degree translated my interest into a researchable topic. In consultation with my supervisors I literally stepped back from the local Shed movement for 18 months so that I would be able to re-enter the space as a researcher. This was wholly necessary albeit challenging, given my interest in the movement. From the outset of reengaging with former Shed colleagues I encountered their generosity expressed through enthusiastic support for the project. This was expressed as they structured opportunities for me to introduce the project to members, provided venues for meetings and followed up with members regarding returning transcripts. Their enthusiasm and commitment for the purpose and work of the Shed was both inspiring and infectious. In this regard, like many practitioner/researchers, I sought supervisory support to check my processes and maintain my perspective as a researcher when my social work and community development instincts manifested. This was bolstered by returning repeatedly to the literature which served to reinforce my professional conviction that my personal views were not misplaced but reflected wider, more objective considerations. Commensurately it has been, to borrow a participant's phrase, "a bit of a buzz" to juxtapose Shed research from countries as diverse as Ireland, Denmark, and Australia and observe an alignment of findings and themes. To then situate this material alongside physical, mental and social wellbeing outcomes identified in wide-ranging clinical and community development literature has strengthened my conviction as to the veracity of Sheds as hubs of wellbeing.

Aside from content of study the iterative process of writing up the research, whilst testing my emotional and intellectual endurance, ultimately offered a new range of personal and professional learning opportunities. Not only did I learn how to write more effectively, my capacity to synthesize, summarize and critique academic and practice literature developed across the course of the project. In addition, my capability to understand the systemic context of individual and community level issues has been enhanced. Both these facets have greatly assisted

my current public health work in suicide prevention and postvention. None of the aforementioned would have occurred without the team of people who have supported this journey. These have included the researchers who have gone before me, the Sheddies, my supervisors, fellow students, my work colleagues at Pegasus Health and interested friends. Most especially this has included my wife and two adult children whose patience and encouragement has made this thesis possible. As Sheds provide the context for nurturing relationships so these people have nurtured me to the point where final conclusions can be drawn.

7.5 CLOSING SUMMARY - WORKING WELL TOGETHER

At this juncture it is useful to reflect on the learning obtained through the research process. As the findings of this research and a growing body of international evidence suggests, rural Men's Sheds represent hubs of wellbeing for their participants that strongly enhance the social connectedness of men with significant life-enhancing benefits to their mental health and potentially to their physical health. This happens through the warm supportive relationships formed between Sheddies in the context of productive work that uses and further develops their creativity, cognitive and physical skills and interests in the service of others. The ethic and focus of meaningful and quantifiable community service, positions Sheds to be hubs of wellbeing for the wider rural communities in which they sit. There are structural, organizational and fiscal challenges that Sheds encounter in creating a sustainable platform for ongoing development which they cannot address in isolation. Sheds, their local communities and wider stakeholders that share the goals of individual and community wellbeing need to intentionally develop their interrelationship to see Sheds develop to their full potential. Social work and community development practitioners have much to offer in support of this wider process.

Positive reciprocal relationships are the generator of health and wellbeing in and around Men's Sheds. Moving forward, such relationships within Sheds and with the community and systems around them offer exciting possibilities to see men and their wider communities working well together.

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9 APPENDIX ONE - SELIGMAN'S WELL-BEING THEORY

Seligman's (2011) theory relates the pursuit of Well-Being relative to five elements: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These are abbreviated into the acronym PERMA and are briefly detailed below.

Positive emotion

The pursuit of such emotion in relation to the present moment, past events and future possibilities is at the heart of this construct. This involves regulating positive and negative emotion to promote and enhance the intensity and duration of the former whilst and decreasing the experience and potency of the latter through learning established emotional regulation skills. One aspect of this is fostering, through active and supported reflection, positive emotions regarding past events that allow for difficult experiences to be integrated into life narratives. The focus of this is leading to experiences of "satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, pride, and serenity" (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 335). Positive emotions relating to the future are fostered through similar processes and include "hope and optimism, faith, trust, and confidence" (Jayawickreme et al., 2012). On the basis of his earlier work and that of others relating to positive psychology Seligman (1991, 2002a) suggests that such emotions particularly hope, and optimism can be learned and have been found to act as bolsters against depression.

Engagement

This is referred to as a psychological state in which people describe high levels of focus on, and absorption in, their activities in the present moment. In this state a person has: "clear goals and is intrinsically interested in the task at hand; the task presents challenges that meet the skill level of the individual; the task provides direct and immediate feedback to the individual; the individual retains a sense of personal control over the activity; and action and awareness become merged, such that the individual becomes completely immersed in what he or she is doing" (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 335).

Relationships

This aspect of the theory notes that given our social nature as a species, positive relationships are foundational to life and are most often intrinsically correlated with “emotional or meaning or accomplishment benefits” (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 335).

Meaning

Meaning is attained through “using one’s signature strengths (characteristic activities at which people are especially “good” or “strong” on) and talents to belong to and serve something that one believes is bigger than the self” (Jayawickreme et al., 2012, p. 335).

Accomplishment

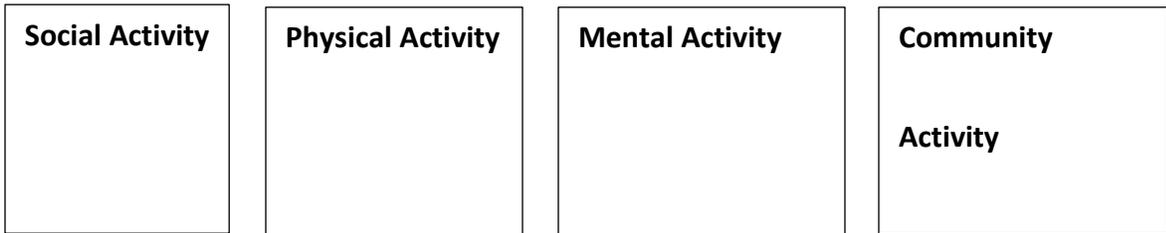
Accomplishment is often defined as attaining a degree of achievement, success, proficiency or mastery at high levels within given domains of importance to an individual. Such accomplishment can be measured either by externally mediated standards such as in sport or professional achievement or through an individual progressing towards a desired outcome or reaching predetermined goals (Jayawickreme et al., 2012).

10 APPENDIX TWO - INITIAL THEMATIC MAP

Initial Thematic Map

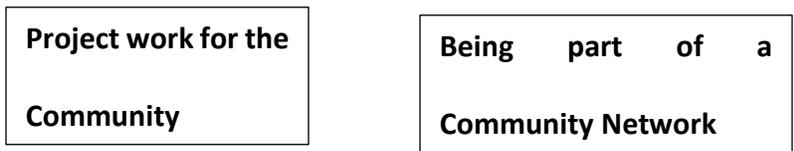
Roles of Sheds in the Lives of Members

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Role of Sheds in the Life of the Local Community

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓



Going Forward

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓



11 APPENDIX THREE - FINAL THEMATIC MAP

Final Thematic Map

Roles of Sheds in the Lives of Members



Role of Sheds in the Life of the Local Community



Going Forward



12 APPENDIX FOUR - IN SITU:

BUILDING UP OUR SHED AND OUR COMMUNITY



Source: Author

A Toolbox of Local and International Men's Shed Resources

Developed from: Working Well Together, a Shed-based

Research Project in Aotearoa New Zealand

John Robinson

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A) Greetings

Kia ora koutou, greetings to you all!

It is my pleasure to present this document to you as established or soon-to-be Sheddies. My hope is that you will find this material interesting and useful to your group and that it adds to the developmental discussions that circulate in and around Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand. As noted, this is not the last word on Sheds, I welcome feedback from you regarding the utility of this work and hope that you may read it in conjunction with the full thesis.

Ngā manaakitanga, with best wishes,

John Robinson

B) Introduction

The purpose of this document is to enable Shed's to review the main aspects of their work for the purpose of maintaining their missional focus and supporting ongoing strategic planning. The document begins by providing the research background to the development of the resources that are contained herein and states clear limitations as to how they may be used. The next two sections offer specially developed resources and links to international resources and are presented within the context of learning from the research project Working Well Together which is explained presently.

As this resource document concludes I re-affirm that these learnings are offered not as a prescriptive and fool proof guide but as stimulus for Shed's developing a process that fits their focus and resource base.

The aim is to enable each Shed to be the most effective and sustainable it can be in the lives of the members and its community to see them working well together.

C) Origins of the Resources

These resources were developed as an application of the recommendations of the unpublished Master of Social Work Thesis, Working Well Together, submitted by myself in December 2019. John had previously worked as a community development worker coordinating a Men's Shed in Linwood, Christchurch, between 2012 and 2016 during the initial recovery from the Canterbury Earthquakes.

As coordinator, working alongside Shed members liaising with community organisations and other Sheds, I began to formulate initial ideas about the potential relationship between individual and community wellbeing.

The research project, Working Well Together, was an extension of this interest and involved qualitative research with two rural Men's Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was designed to investigate how rural Men's Sheds enhance the lives of their members and contribute to the life of their local rural community and to review the developmental challenges such Sheds experienced.

With data gathering completed in 2018 and the write-up in 2019 the following paragraph summarises the findings of Working Well Together:

“The findings of this research and a growing body of international evidence suggests Rural Men’s Sheds represent hubs of wellbeing for their participants that benefit their physical, mental and social health. This happens through the warm supportive relationships formed between Sheddies in the context of productive work that uses and further develops their creativity, cognitive and physical skills and interests in the service of others. The ethic and focus of meaningful and quantifiable community service, positions Sheds to be hubs of wellbeing for the wider rural communities in which they sit. There are structural, organizational and fiscal challenges that Sheds encounter in creating a sustainable platform for ongoing development which they cannot address in isolation. Sheds, their local communities and wider stakeholders that share the goals of individual and community wellbeing need to intentionally develop their interrelationship to see Sheds develop to their full potential.” (Robinson, 2019, p 146).

A key recommendation based on these findings was that Sheds seek to conduct a review of the key components, displayed below, that constitute their organization and its vision and mission as Men’s Sheds. The purpose of the review is to provide a process or framework that may be of use in guiding ongoing development.

D) Key Components of Sheds

- Shed Social Culture
- Pastoral Care Processes

- Leadership

- Community Connectivity

- Programming

- Health and Safety

- Finances

- Promotion

- Recruitment

The resources presented in two sections of this document seek to support the review process. **Section One** contains supporting documents regarding reviewing the first four key components of Sheds: Shed Social Culture, Pastoral Care Processes, Leadership and Community Connectivity. **Section Two** provides links to supporting documentation regarding the five remaining components: Programming, Health and Safety, Finances, Promotion, and Recruitment, developed by the Australian and Scottish Men's Shed Associations who have well-developed and comprehensive resources available. It should be noted that there may be a cost to accessing resources from the association.

I wish to warmly acknowledge the substantive input of the leadership and members of those Sheds who participated in the research into these resources alongside the work of individual Sheds and Men's Shed Associations globally.

The material presented herein is based on three main sources: the findings of the aforementioned qualitative research project; sample templates available online; resources from international Men's Sheds websites.

E) Limitations of the Resources

As noted in Working Well Together:

“In regard these documents, an important consideration must be noted. Each Shed sits in a unique context within its developmental journey and is subject to differing and shifting conditions regarding resourcing and capacity. This heterogeneity is a key facet of Sheds as community development organisations emerging from communities as a response to local needs (Aimers & Walker, 2011). Therefore, such tools as listed above should not be considered prescriptive or as an attempt to homogenize Sheds. Such action would, in the view of this researcher, confound the essential nature of the Shed movement and decrease its potency. This view is supported by the work of Ahl, Hedegaard and Golding (2017) in their analysis of the initial introduction of Shed's to Denmark as part of a government driven initiative. Ahl et al. (2017) found that participants needed the freedom to adapt the offered model to their own needs and

resisted attempts to have a generic model imposed on them. With these important considerations in mind, the documents presented in In Situ are offered as working drafts that Sheds may or may not choose to adapt or adopt according to their purposes and means. As working drafts, the documents themselves should be subject to review, challenge and change as the Shed Movement develops.” (Robinson, 2019, p 137).

Please note that the all the survey tools and data collection processes listed below have **not been tested and evaluated** and therefore should be considered as **guides only**.

NB Conducting a review is a somewhat complex process that can seem daunting, overly officious and/or a waste of time. The current best thinking (Ang et al., 2017; Southcombe et al., 2015b) suggests, however, that these processes when coordinated and administered by a team can make a significant difference to a Shed achieving its mission effectively and sustainably.

F) Introduction to Section One

This section provides resources for the following organizational elements of Sheds: shed social culture, pastoral care, the role of Leadership, community connectivity. Each element is introduced and supported using excerpts from the discussion of Working Well Together.

1) Shed Social Culture

“The Shed’s role in providing the context for life-enhancing social connections between men through working together and talking together was the primary theme yielded from the findings of Working Well Together. That such connections support all other health and well-being outcomes emanating from Sheds is arguably the central and most important theme of Men's Shed literature (Golding, 2015; Kelly et al., 2019; Wilson & Cordier, 2015).” (Robinson, 2019, p 92)

On this basis, supporting the Shed Social Culture is arguably the “heart” of maintaining the mission of the Shed. Given this, presented below, is a simple survey tool that may help those on the Shed leadership team take the pulse of the Shed to assess the functional state of this “heart”. For further assistance with developing surveys please see Survey Monkey, whose basic programme is available free <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/non-profit-surveys/>

Handy Hint:

Administering, collating and writing up the results of such a survey can be a complex and time-consuming exercise therefore it is suggested that this task be undertaken by a team of three people between whom the following tasks are shared:

- Adapting the survey to the needs and flavour of your Shed
- Promoting, distributing and following up the survey with members to ensure that people know the purpose and context for the survey, how to fill it out and when and how to submit it. (Like any project this will take longer than you think...)
- Collating the results into simple categories relevant to the purpose of each section that can be easily understood and presented
- Disseminating the results of the survey in a manner that builds relational connections in the Shed e.g. over food, in the context of an AGM, linking the results to the Sheds strategic plan in a simple, easy to measure manner
- Evaluating the usefulness of the survey tool and the process you used to deploy it

A team approach can share the burden and see people operate in areas of individual interest and strength such as building enthusiasm for the idea, or collating data, turning data into actionable points.

Men's Shed Survey

The _____ Men's Shed Survey 2020

Dear Member,

As part of the _____ Men's Shed we value your opinion on the current state and future aspirations of the Shed as we want this place to be the most effective and sustainable it can be in the lives of the members and in our community.

Whilst we appreciate the informal conversations about members experience and ideas for development that happen here day to day, we are trying to find a systematic way of pulling that information together. Hence the following survey which has four sections:

- A) Inclusion and Safety – We want to know how our Shed culture feels for our members
- B) Reasons for Attending – We want to understand what motivates people to attend so that we can reflect those elements in the way we run the Shed
- C) Member Contribution – We want to encourage members to bring their qualities skills and connections to Shed Life
- D) Development Opportunities - We want members to influence the direction in which the Shed moves in its programmes, work and service to the community.

A) Inclusion and Safety

Please highlight or circle the word that best describes your experience and feel free to provide an example in the text box below.

I feel welcomed at the Shed:

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| Always | Mostly | Sometimes | Occasionally | Never |
|--------|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|

Detail:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

I feel included and accepted by others:

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| Always | Mostly | Sometimes | Occasionally | Never |
|--------|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|

Detail:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

I feel my opinions are valued:

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Always | Mostly | Sometimes | Occasionally | Never |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|

Detail:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

I feel physically safe at the Shed:

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Always | Mostly | Sometimes | Occasionally | Never |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|

Detail:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

B) Reason for Participation

Please highlight or circle which of the following factors influence your decision to participate in the Shed:

I come to the Shed to:

Meet Others

Have a Routine

Learn New Skills

Contribute to Others

Contribute to the community

Other:

C) Member Contribution

The Shed is a great place to be because of the individual contribution of each of its members. Please detail what you see as your contribution under the following headings:

My contribution to the Shed includes:

Personal Qualities: e.g. welcoming and supportive person

Detail:

Skills: e.g. woodwork, former accountant

Detail:

Community Connections: Member of Community Board, life member of rugby club

Detail:

Other:

D) Development Opportunities

We want to gather your perspective on how the shed could develop further. Please detail the opportunities you identify under the following headings:

I would like to see the Shed offer more:

Learning Opportunities

Detail:

Mentoring Opportunities

Detail:

Community Service Opportunities

Detail:

Other: type of activity or service

Detail:

I could help the Shed develop further by:

Summary:

Please complete the following sentences:

The best thing this Shed does is...

What we need to improve the Shed is...

The most important challenge the Shed faces right now is...

Thanks, so much for taking the time to complete this survey. The leadership team will collate the results as part of our Annual Progress Review and present them at our Annual General meeting on_____.

2) Pastoral Care Processes

Working Well Together noted that:

“Given that social relationships were acknowledged by all participants as the foundation of the Shed movement it seems important to attend to the mechanism by which a healthy and supportive milieu can be proactively fostered. Following Ang et al. (2017) and Cavanagh et al. (2013) research participants referred to the challenge of creating enough structure to fulfil pastoral care function so that care might be perceived as genuine and supportive.... Pastoral care during sessions included greeting and fare welling members, facilitating social connections between men, provision of food, attention to health and safety and the use of humour (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Foster et al, 2018). Between sessions such care was expressed by leaders or members following up on men who had missed sessions or who were known to be ill (Southcombe, et al., 2015b). In wider literature Morrison & Greenhaw (2018) suggested that such pastoral care processes and competencies constituted a key aspect of leadership in voluntary organisations that enabled people to feel valued and connected to the group. Interestingly the capacity to listen well and respond to individual and group need was also found to enhance individuals’ sense of social connectedness (Southcombe et al., 2015b). The above elements suggest that pastoral care in Sheds is a multifaceted and intentional process that requires careful consideration, emotionally congruent implementation and regular evaluation.” (Robinson, 2019, p 118,119).

As noted above it is important to quantify and sustainably deliver appropriate levels of pastoral care during and between sessions within a team leadership context. The following table provides a simple mechanism of tracking who is doing what in relation to specific instances of member need between sessions. Please note this table quantifies what is being done, not how it is delivered. The above excerpt from Working Well Together captures some of the essential spirit of pastoral care which may be considered as an attitude of genuine human care expressed through a series of intentional and organized behaviours.

Pastoral Care Process Register

| Member Initials | Issue | Follow-up Process | Personnel Responsible | Review Date Outcome |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| BT | Recovery from injury to leg | Call and visit, discuss any support needed and refer to appropriate professional if needed | Dave and Reg | 24/05/2020 BT recovering well and planning to return to Shed in June |
| | | | | |

3) The Role of Leadership

In Working Well Together:

“The importance of the role of leaders in managing Sheds was given significant attention by participants.... The multi-Shed study of Southcombe et al. (2015b) identified three leadership qualities associated with effective Shed outcomes “envisioning, empathy and empowerment” (p983). These qualities effectively relate to the three areas of managing/leading Sheds participants identified. These areas were: maintaining fidelity to the guiding philosophies (Hayes & Williamson, 2007; Southcombe et al., 2015b); strengthening pastoral care processes (Ang et al., 2017; Stirling et al., 2011); supporting health and safety (Ang et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2013). (Robinson, 2019, p 115)

Given the emphasis accorded the leadership task in Sheds it seems important to establish measures for leader effectiveness. Attached below is a sample survey developed in the United Kingdom and aimed at Third Sector organisations regarding participant perceptions of management/leadership. Whilst it does not address Sheds specifically it could be adapted and reformatted to include this focus.

Likert scale questionnaire

Attitude questions adapted for third sector (UK) organisations from Likert's research, indicating important determinants of organisational effectiveness.

| | Question | Strongly disagree | | | Neither | | Strongly agree | |
|----|--|-------------------|---|---|---------|---|----------------|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | Overall I am satisfied working in this organisation | | | | | | | |
| 2 | People in senior management respect my personal rights | | | | | | | |
| 3 | I am often expected to do things that are not reasonable | | | | | | | |
| 4 | I have confidence in the judgement of senior management | | | | | | | |
| 5 | There is a friendly feeling between management and staff | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Management usually keeps us informed about things we want to know | | | | | | | |
| 8 | This is a good place for people trying to get ahead in their career | | | | | | | |
| 9 | This is a good place for training and personal development | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Management is not very interested in the feelings of staff | | | | | | | |
| 11 | I know exactly what is expected of me in my job | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Staff frequently do not know what they are supposed to do | | | | | | | |
| 13 | This organisation is a better place to work than other organisations in this field | | | | | | | |
| 14 | The jobs here are well organised | | | | | | | |

Adapted

from:

<https://www.template.net/business/word-templates/likert-scale-template/>

A team approach to leadership with one person playing a coordinating role seems to be a useful and sustainable model which is gaining currency at a variety of volunteer run Sheds. With this in mind it is recommended that those interested in Shed leadership survey leadership material offered by AMSA and IMSA alongside the work of the following three authors the basis for discussion on leadership in Sheds:

- Ang, S. H., Cavanagh, J., Southcombe, A., Bartram, T., Marjoribanks, T., & McNeil, N. (2017). Human resource management, social connectedness and health and well-being of older and retired men: The role of Men's Sheds.
- Cavanagh, J., McNeil, N., & Bartram, T. (2013). The Australian Men's Sheds movement: human resource management in a voluntary organisation.
- Southcombe, A., Cavanagh, J., & Bartram, T. (2015b). Retired men and Men's Sheds in Australia.

The references section of this document contains links to these articles.

4) Community Connectivity

“Community connection was considered the nexus point at which the role of the Shed in the lives of participants intersected with the role of the Shed in the community... as sites for collectively building community capacity (Aimers & Walker, 2011; Ife 2013; Liberato et al., 2011; Minkler, 2012). Firstly, participants considered Sheds to be hubs of voluntary service that had reciprocal benefits for Sheddies and a variety of community groups and individuals (Ayres et al., 2018; Foster et al., 2018; Roger et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). The International Men’s Shed Organisation notes that, “Objectives of Men’s Sheds include advancing the health and well-being of the participating men and creating opportunities for the men to contribute to their local communities” (IMSO, n.d.). In their 2016 study of Sheds in Australia and Canada Roger et al., suggested that Men’s Sheds met community development criteria as they enhanced the capacity and resource base of groups, communities and neighbourhoods.”

(Robinson, 2019, p 104).

Working Well Together suggested that community connectivity can only be established and maintained through an intentional bi-directional process i.e. Sheds and external community organisations must move towards each other to establish mutually beneficial relationships.

The following four resources support intentional community connectivity:

- **Community Register**
- **Event Register**
- **Project Register**
- **Sample Feedback Survey**

- 1) A community register can be used to identify key organizations in your community with which to liaise regarding project work, fundraising, pastoral care for members and promotion recruitment.

Community Register: Mapping the Key Organizations in your Town

Handy Hint:

Is there a community directory available in your town? These documents are often collated and maintained by local councils or social service organisations and can be a great source of seeing who is out there. You can then determine whose needs, goals and resources might intersect with the focus of your Shed and plan to engage with them according to your own priorities and timeframes. If you wish you can collate them in a simple table as listed below:

| Organizational Types: | Name: | Contact Details: Email/Phone/Key Person | Organizational Purpose: | Possible connection to Shed: |
|--|--------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Community Groups | | | | |
| Sports | | | | |
| Schools | | | | |
| Service Clubs | | | | |
| Special Interest Groups | | | | |
| Funding Bodies | | | | |
| Local Government | | | | |
| Referral Groups: Health/ Social Services/ Welfare | | | | |
| Key Businesses | | | | |
| Media | | | | |

- 2) An event register enables you to track the state of your engagement with community networks, collaborative and in-house events. This register also supports and quantifies

your programming which is useful for reporting and planning processes when taken in concert with your Member Survey.

Event Register – Monitoring Events in which your Shed Participates

| Type of Event | Date | Description | Location | Personnel attending | Outcome |
|------------------------------|------|-------------|----------|---------------------|---------|
| Collaborative Community | | | | | |
| Training: H&S Skills/Project | | | | | |
| Fundraiser | | | | | |
| Networking | | | | | |
| Guest Speaker | | | | | |
| Promotion Recruitment | | | | | |

- 3) A project register can assist you to monitor what the Shed is doing for which groups involving whom within the membership. Not only does this help with day to day management it helps audit the groups you are or are not connecting with and provides a cue to engage those groups you do assist in feedback processes.

Project Register – Monitoring your Community Outputs

| Name of Group Served | Purpose of Group | Number of group Members benefitting | Brief Project Description | Project Start Date | Project End Date | Shed Members Involved | Other Parties involved |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| E.g. Portobello Community Preschool | Low cost Early childhood education | 38 children 6 staff | Made mud kitchen | 28/09/19 | 28/10/19 | Bill, Tim, Ted, Simon | Bluestone ITM Portobello Lions |
| | | | | | | | |

- 4) A simple feedback survey can be completed by groups you serve either with Shed produce or in collaborative relationships.

Post-project Survey

The process of collecting feedback on your community projects from the recipient groups and any collaborating organisations or businesses has multiple benefits:

- It signals that the Shed sees itself as part of the wider whole and strengthens your connections with the groups you serve and the wider network
- It can help in measuring how the Shed is perceived in the local community
- It provides narrative evidence to support funding applications
- When disseminated amongst members it can their connection to their local community and thereby benefits their wellbeing

Whilst some people baulk at the thought of sending out surveys it can help to think of them as conversation starters that can lead to mutual growth and development. Most people can take 5 minutes to respond to a survey and return it via email. A sample feedback survey is included below.

Handy Hint:

Collate all of your feedback surveys, letters of thanks etc. in one file so that you can cross compare them when doing your review and utilize them when applying for funding.

Men's Shed Feedback Survey

To:

From:

Greetings to you!

We recently worked together on the project.

As a fellow organization in our community the Men's Shed wants to continually improve its ability to work alongside community stakeholders like you. We need your feedback to do this and would value a few minutes of your time to complete this survey.

If you wish to talk to me directly, don't hesitate to call me at _____. Otherwise please email the completed survey to_____.

Directions: Please rate your level of agreement

with these statements: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 10 = Strongly Agree.

1. We delivered on what we promised. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. We were accessible when you contacted us. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. We listened. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. You are willing to recommend the _____ Shed to others. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. You would contact us again if you needed further assistance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. If you were in charge of the _____, what's one thing you'd change?

7. What did the _____ Men's Shed do well?

Thank you!

Coordinator

_____ Men's Shed

Adapted from: <https://www.template.net/business/survey-templates/client-satisfaction-survey/>

G) Introduction to Section Two

This section provides resources for the following organizational elements of Sheds: programming, health and safety, finances, promotion and recruitment. Each element is introduced and supported using the discussion of findings from Working Well Together. Supporting documentation to assist with review of these elements is available through the Australian Men's Shed Association and the Scottish Men's Shed Association with links to these organisations being supplied below. As noted, these organisations may charge a fee for access to some documentation and publications.

Australian Men's Shed Association <https://mensshed.org/>

Scottish Men's Shed Association <https://scottishmsa.org.uk/>

The Irish Men's Shed Association has generously made their excellent Handbook available for free download. It is very comprehensive, user-friendly and written in an accessible style and represents an invaluable aid to established Sheds and those communities that are looking for step-by-step guidance. IMSA has also made available their national strategic plan 2017-2020 which details their approach to Shed development across Ireland in the context of Ireland's Male Health Policy. Given oft-drawn comparisons between Ireland and Aotearoa New Zealand aspects of this document and the approach that IMSA has taken in development of it may inform similar discussion here. Both resources described above are available through the following link:

<http://menssheds.ie/downloads/>

NB MenzShed New Zealand has established a regional structure for supporting the development of Sheds. Regional coordinators can be contacted via MSNZ and are an invaluable resource of local, regional and national knowledge. From a developmental perspective it is highly recommended that existing Sheds and those in the planning stage forge ongoing links with MSNZ so that they can contribute to and benefit from collective knowledge and support.

<http://menzshed.org.nz/>

<http://menzshed.org.nz/about-us/support-john-bush/>

1) Programming

Working Well Together suggested that:

“Mental connection afforded by participation in the Sheds was constituted of several elements that contributed to overall mental wellbeing and a decrease in the incidence of poor mental health. These outcomes are strongly supported in reviews of the Men’s Shed literature (Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Kelly et al., 2019; Milligan et al., 2013). These elements included: temporal structure/routine when in or nearing retirement; a focus on production of artefacts; learning and mentoring in an intergenerational and/or recovery context.” (Robinson, 2019, p 95)

The multiple benefits associated with the mental connections afforded by Shed membership were facilitated through discrete specific elements of the Sheds approach to programming activities. With this in mind deliberate consideration needs to be given the scope of activities any Shed may decide to undertake. Please refer to the AMSA and SMSA links noted above for supporting documents.

2) Health and Safety

In Working Well Together it was noted that:

“The importance of the maintenance of health and safety standards within Sheds is recognized internationally (Ang et al., 2017; Cavanagh et al., 2013; Misan & Hopkins, 2017)... Sheds are potentially physically dangerous workspaces that require careful coordination (Southcombe, et al., 2015b). The consequences of poor health and safety standards can be disastrous for individuals and organisations which face increasing levels of liability in the event of accidental injury or death (AMSA, n.d.; IMSA, n.d; Stergiou-Kita et al., 2017). Cavanagh et al (2013) noted that when coordinators took due responsibility for organizing training and compliance with health and safety standards this was correlated to increased member satisfaction and volunteer retention.” (Robinson, 2019, p 119)

Alongside the information available through AMSA and SMSA an excellent user-friendly and comprehensive overview of Health and Safety is available through the Westhill Men’s Shed in Scotland and the Irish Men’s Shed Association. Both of these resources are available to download free of charge and contain specific information regarding safe practice with a variety of hand and

machine tools that may be found in Sheds. Please note, like all international resources these will have a cultural and legislative context pertinent to their countries of origin and should be adapted to Aotearoa New Zealand conditions with caution and in consultation with local H & S specialists.

<https://westhillmensshed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Westhill-Mens-Shed-WORKSHOP-OPERATIONS-MANUAL-advice-for-other-sheds.pdf>

3) Finances

Working Well Together acknowledged that:

“Achieving sustainable funding is a challenge experienced across the Men’s Shed movement in this country and overseas... This included insurance, leasing and building maintenance, repairing and replacing equipment and in some cases purchase of consumables such as lumber and fixings. With Sheds prioritizing accessibility to a wide range of men and their community’s subscriptions are kept low (Milligan et al., 2015) leaving expenses to be accounted for elsewhere. Some Shed’s in Australia and the United Kingdom are supported by large health or welfare organisations who manage funding from contracts, grants and bequests (AMSA, n.d.; Milligan et al., 2015; Southcombe et al., 2015b). However, most Sheds are required to engage in the funding process through events, sale of Shed produce and grant applications to funding bodies (AMSA, n.d.; IMSA, n.d.; MSNZ, n.d.; Southcombe et al., 2015b; Waling & Fildes, 2017).

These processes are necessarily time and labour intensive and can be discouraging for Sheds who feel they have to fight for their survival (Cavanagh et al., 2013; Misan & Hopkins, 2017). However, as noted by AMSA (n.d.), fundraising events and processes can be used as an opportunity to build esprit de corps as most often they represent another form of collective activity which is the essence of the work of the Shed. The key appears to be how these efforts are conceptualized, planned, delivered and evaluated.” (Robinson, 2019, p 121,122)

Given the drain on energy that managing finances and fundraising can have on Sheds it is important to take advantage of established wisdom from the international movement via the links supplied above. However, it is most important to develop awareness of your local funding context which can vary widely. Community development staff at your local council will be key to understanding and navigating this context as will the regional Shed advisers noted above.

4) Promotion and Recruitment

Working Well Together identified the challenge of:

“...Ensuring the longevity of the Shed beyond their current generational cohort. With Sheds historically targeting mainly older men (Wilson & Cordier, 2013; Milligan et al., 2013) there is a wider concern particularly among volunteer-led Sheds that attention be given to promotion and recruitment of new members. Therefore, strategies that enable effective, targeted promotion supported by easy-to-access recruitment processes seem indicated. This is supported by Ang et al (2017). Together with Cavanagh et al (2013) they suggested that Sheds who defined their vision and created an operating framework, supported by policies with delegated responsibilities for different functions were more likely to achieve member recruitment and retention (Ang et al., 2017).” (Robinson, 2019, p 120)

As the Shed movement continues to develop and new applications for dissemination of information emerge new strategies that support the process of promotion and active recruitment will become available. However, given the goal is ensuring longevity of the movement, active consideration needs to be given to this issue now and should encompass development of younger leaders, lest our current leadership cohort “age-out”. With this in mind readers are advised to not only engage with extant material available via the websites noted above but also to engage their fellow Sheddies in this aspect of the development discussion.

H) Summary

This document has outlined the key elements of Shed’s as organizational entities and has provided some points of reference to reviewing those elements to support the Shed’s purpose for members and their community. This information has been drawn from three sources: firstly, from the research project Working Well Together an investigation of the role of two rural men’s Sheds in the lives of their members and communities and the challenges those Sheds encountered. This local information has been situated within international research literature regarding Men’s Sheds and supporting fields of knowledge. Lastly the resource base of the international Men’s Shed community has been tapped to provide links to the practice experience of Sheds globally. Men’s Sheds are an exciting, grass roots movement that contributes at many

levels to individual and community wellbeing in this country and overseas – The resources presented above are not fixed in stone but are malleable according to the context of each Shed. As such it is hoped that they stimulate further discussion and engagement of Sheddies and their communities in their joint objective of working well together.

Again, fellow Sheddies, Ngā manaakitanga, with best wishes,

John Robinson, December 2019



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13 APPENDIX FIVE - RESOURCE AND CONTACT LINKS

Resource and Contact Links:

Men's Shed Peak Bodies

New Zealand Men's Shed Association <http://menzshed.org.nz/>

<http://menzshed.org.nz/about-us/support-john-bush/>

Locating Sheds in Aotearoa New Zealand <http://menzshed.org.nz/our-location/>

International Men's Shed Organisation <https://menshed.com/>

Australian Men's Shed Association <https://mensshed.org/>

Scottish Men's Shed Association <https://scottishmsa.org.uk/>

These last two sites provide access to comprehensive resources although access to certain documents require membership fees to be paid to the relevant association.

Health Policy

Healthy Ageing Strategy

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/life-stages/health-older-people/healthy-ageing-strategy-update>

National Science Challenge

<https://www.ageingwellchallenge.co.nz/about-us/vision-and-mission/>

Ageing Well Together Conference

<https://www.ageingwellchallenge.co.nz/register-now-ageing-well-national-conference/>

Ministry of Social Development – Social Isolation

<http://superseniors.msd.govt.nz/health-wellbeing/preventing-social-isolation/index.html>

Age Concern – Social Isolation

https://www.ageconcern.org.nz/ACNZ_Public/Loneliness_and_Social_Isolation_Research.aspx

Vision for Ageing in Aotearoa Conference

<https://www.ageconcern.org.nz/Conference2020>

Men's Health Peak Bodies

Men's Health Trust

<http://menshealthnz.org.nz/about-the-trust/>

Centre for Men's Health

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/mens-health/about/index.html>

Social Work and Community Development

Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers

<https://anzasw.nz/>

Aotearoa Community Development Association

<https://www.aotearoacommunitydevelopmentassociation.com/about-us>

14 APPENDIX SIX - METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICS APPLICATION

DOCUMENTS

14.1 WORKING WELL TOGETHER - KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



Working Well Together - Key Informant Interview Schedule

Introduction:

As you know I am interested in the broader question:

What is the role of rural Men's Sheds in the lives of their members and the life of their local rural community?

I would like to start with some questions about your involvement with the Shed and how the shed has developed within the community then we will move on to your views of the role the Shed in the lives of its members. The second section of the interview will consider the role of the Shed in the community, what is the current status of relationships with the community and in section three how this could be further developed.

1.0 Section One: Role of the Shed in members lives

1.1. Engagement Questions

What is your role in the Shed?

How did you become involved in Men's Shed's?

1.2 What role does the Shed have in the lives of its members?

What do you personally get out being involved in the Shed?

[Prompt: socially, physical mental wellbeing, sense of contribution, practicing old skills learning new ones]

What do you see men getting out of being members of the Shed?

[Prompt: socially, physical mental wellbeing, sense of contribution, practicing old skills learning new ones]

What have men said to you that they value about the Shed?

What sort of feedback, if any, have you had from spouses, other relatives or friends of members about the role the Shed plays in the life of their man?

[Prompt: socially, physical mental wellbeing, sense of contribution, practicing old skills learning new ones]

1.3 Distinctives of rural Men's Sheds

What would you identify as similarities/differences between what a Shed might mean to men in a rural context versus a suburban location?

What are the similarities/differences that a Shed might have with another community organisation in terms of its role in men's lives?

[Prompt: fulfils similar function, key distinctions]

2.0 Section Two: Role of the Shed in the life of the local community.

Having discussed the role of the Shed in the lives of its members I would like us to consider the role of the Shed here in...we'll start with Shed development with the projects you have been involved in...

2.1 Shed Start-Up Process

Who and what influenced the Shed starting up?

[Prompt: key individual, clearly defined community need]

Outside of the core group how did members of the wider community respond to initial ideas about starting a Shed?

[Prompt: Who got on board from the amongst the local community to lend a hand? Who wasn't there?]

Were there significant blocks from the community?

[Prompt: funding issues, direct opposition, lack of interest or venue? How were these blocks addressed?]

What sort of support did you get from outside the immediate community?

[Prompt: other Sheds, district council, funders]

Were there any other key steps in Shed development?

2.2 Developing a Role and Reputation

How did the Shed become recognized in the community?

[Prompt: projects, services]

What sort of projects/services do you take on?

[Prompt: who decides, on what basis? How many community projects/services has your shed been involved in?]

If you were to take me on a tour of projects your Men's Shed have completed in your community where would you start? Take me through that project:

Who were the main people in getting this project happening?

What were their roles?

Tell me about the sort of working relationship that developed between the men and the people benefiting from the project?

[Prompt: Successes, difficulties, how these were addressed and by whom]

2.3 Working with other groups

Tell me about a time when you engaged in a joint project with another community organization where both groups shared the work? Give examples

What sort of groups do you most frequently work with?

[Prompt: Why? Who decides?]

Are there other groups you are aware of doing similar work/playing a similar role in the community?

[Prompt: What do they do? How is what they do similar/different to the Shed?]

In what ways do you relate with these groups?

[Prompt: Partnerships, networking?]

2.4 Community Views and Feedback

We have discussed the kind of work and working relationships that the Shed engages in in the wider community. We are now focusing in on your views as to how the community might see the role of the Shed...

How does the Shed define what constitutes the local community?

[Prompt: Geographic area, specific organisations, funding partners]

By what means does the Shed have contact with the local community?

[Prompt: Open days, community events, networking meetings]

How might the wider community view the role of the Shed?

[Prompt; direct/indirect benefits, disadvantages]

What specific feedback, positive and/or critical, have you had from individuals and organisations in the community about the Men's Shed?

[Prompt: What forms has this feedback taken? Letters of commendation, acknowledgement in public meetings, comments in passing, media articles....]

How has this feedback effected Shed members?

How might members view the role of the Shed in the life of the wider community?

I really appreciate this conversation and the time you have made time for it. This last set of questions draws the themes of men and the community together. You have listed a number of aspects to the role the Shed plays in the life of the men e.g.and have given examples of how the Shed operates in the wider community e.g.

What connection, if any, currently exists between what the men get out of the Shed and the role of the Shed in this community?

If the Shed wasn't here what effect would this have on the community?

3.0 Going Forward

How might the Shed's connections with the community be strengthened going forward?

What difference could you see your Shed making to the local community in the future?

What are the challenges to achieving this?

What or who are the resources you need to meet those challenges?

Which groups or representatives of groups do you want to build stronger relationships with?

If you were advising some blokes in another town about starting a Shed what would you say to them are the key principles for starting and maintaining your engagement with the local community?

Lastly Is there anything else that you would like to add which you have not said? Or any general comments that you have about Men's sheds and what they mean for member and the community?

Thanks, so much for your time and effort as we have reviewed the development of the Shed and its rich meaning for its members and the wider community. I will transcribe the audio notes from this interview and add the supplementary notes I have taken and will return them to you within the next two weeks for checking. Once I have received the approved notes back from you and the other Shed leader interview, I will collate the themes which have emerged, and this information will be used to stimulate discussion with the focus group.

14.2 WORKING WELL TOGETHER - FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS



Working Well Together - Focus Group Questions

What is the role of rural Men's Sheds in the lives of their members and the life of their local rural community?

1.0 Section One: Role of the Shed in members lives

1.1 What role does the Shed have in the lives of its members?

How long have you been involved in the Shed?

What is your role at the Shed?

What roles does the Shed play for members?

[Prompt: socially, physical/mental wellbeing, sense of contribution, practicing old skills learning new ones, help /advice with personal projects]

What overall difference do those things make in a typical man's life?

What difference has it made for you personally?

1.2 Distinctives of rural Men's Sheds

What would you identify as similarities/differences between what a Shed might mean to men in a rural context versus a suburban location?

What makes the local Shed different or similar to other group activities men may be involved in?

[Prompt: sport, music, Lions Club, a cultural group]

2.0 Section Two: Role of the Shed in the life of the local community.

Thanks for being willing to share something of your role in the Shed and the Shed's role in your lives. I would like to build on that now by looking at Shed as an organization within the wider community here in

2.1 Developing a Role and Reputation

How did the Shed get started?

[Prompt: key individual, clearly defined community need]

How has the Shed engaged with the local community?

What community projects/services have you been involved in?

[Prompt: who decides, on what basis? How many community projects/services has your shed been involved in?]

Which projects/services have you felt most proud of? Why?

In what ways does the Shed benefit the wider community?

2.2 Community Views and Feedback

How do you think your Shed is viewed by the wider community?

What feedback have you had from members of the wider community about the role of Men's Shed locally?

2.3 Working with other groups

Tell me about a time when you engaged in a joint project with another community organization where both groups shared the work? Give examples

Which community group have you most enjoyed working with? Why?

What relationship, if any, exists between the role the Shed plays in the lives of the blokes and the role of the Shed in this community?

3.0 Going Forward

What difference could you see your Shed making to the local community in the future?

What are the challenges to achieving this?

If you were advising some blokes in another town about starting a Shed what would you say to them are the key principles for starting and maintaining your engagement with the local community?

Lastly Is there anything else that you would like to add which you have not said? Or any general comments that you have about Men's sheds and what they mean for member and the community?

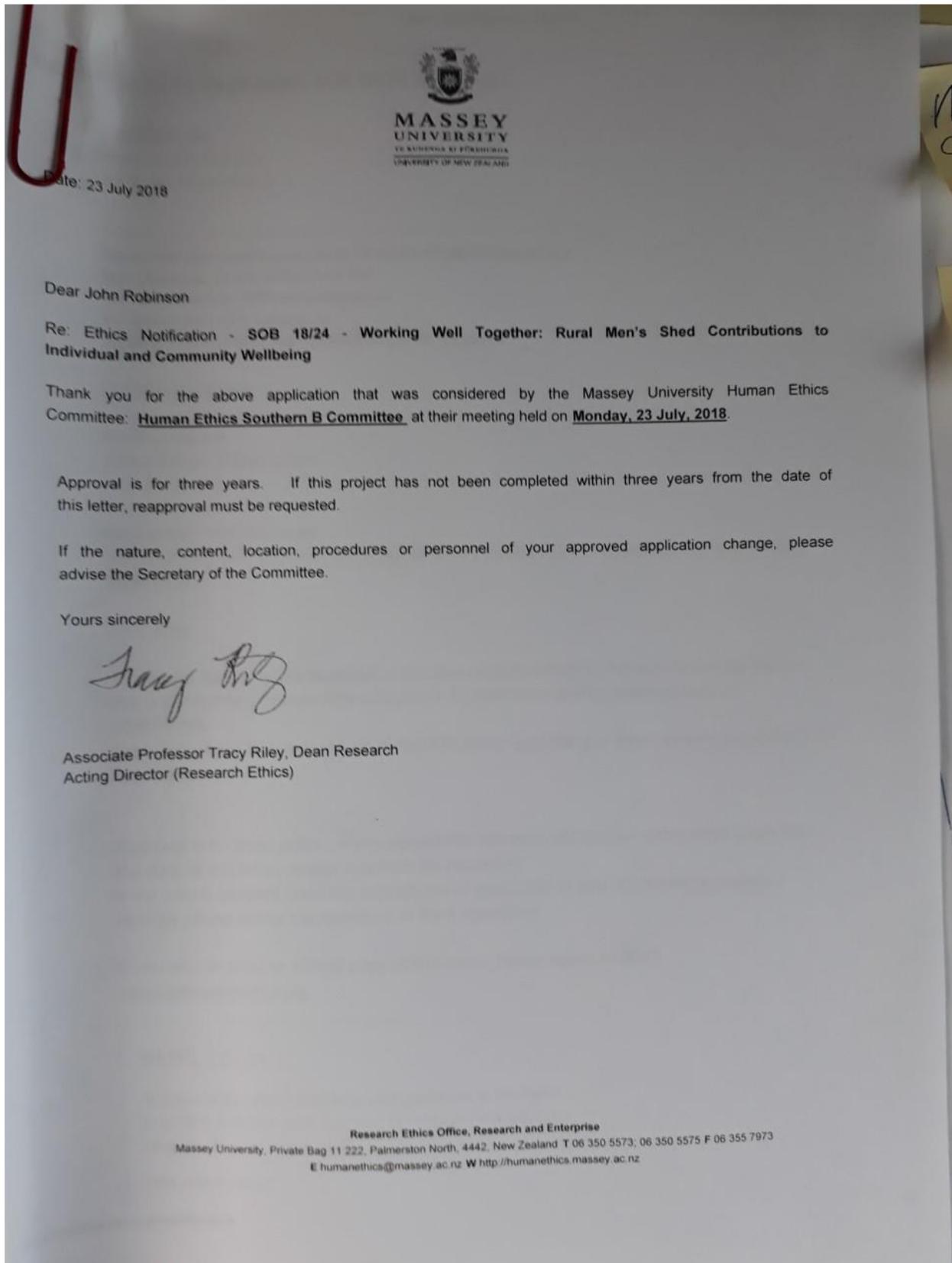
Summary...

Acknowledgement

Thanks so much for your time and effort as we have reviewed the development of the Shed and its rich meaning for its members and the wider community. I will transcribe the audio

notes from this group and add the supplementary notes I have taken and will return them to you within the next two weeks for checking. Once I have received the approved notes back from you all I will collate the themes which have emerged from this discussion and the other Shed taking part. When all the data is together, I can start organizing the information in preparation for writing up the research.

14.3 MUHEC APPROVAL



14.4 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – INFORMATION SHEET KEY INFORMANTS



Working Well Together - Rural Men's Shed Contributions to Individual and Community Wellbeing

INFORMATION SHEET FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Greetings,

My name is John Robinson. I am a registered social worker with a 32-year history of working with individuals, groups and communities across Aotearoa/New Zealand. As a former Men's Shed coordinator, I have a strong interest in developing further understanding of how Sheds affect their membership and the wider community the Shed is part of. In accordance with this interest this research project is a component of my postgraduate degree at Massey University.

Project Description

The project focusses on answering the following question:

What is the role of rural Men's Sheds in the lives of their members and the life of their local rural community?

This study seeks to discover and describe the means by which rural Men's Sheds, their members and their local communities construct effective, mutually beneficial working relationships as well as considering how those relationships could be improved. The purpose of this study is twofold: to contribute to the developing pool of knowledge regarding Men's Sheds in Aotearoa/New Zealand and to produce a thesis that satisfies the requirement for the research component of the Master of Social Work degree at Massey University.

Information will be sought using individual interviews with Shed leaders/coordinators and focus groups with Shed members in two rural Men's Sheds. It is envisaged that, for each Shed, two Shed leaders will participate in individual interviews. Interview questions will centre on the role Men's Shed plays in the lives of its members and how those members perceive the role of the Shed in relationship to their wider local community. Themes arising from these interviews will be collated to stimulate focus group discussions with up to six members at each Shed.

Participant Recruitment

The two Sheds under study have been approached via the Regional Shed network coordinator and leaders of both Sheds have agreed that the researcher may approach members of the leadership team directly. The criteria to participate in the interviews are: Involvement in a leadership role in the Shed for at least two years; having a clear understanding of how the Shed was initially established and a knowledge of the Shed's engagement with the wider community.

Participant Involvement

You are warmly invited to participate in this research project. Should you agree, it is anticipated that the research will require approximately three-four hours and thirty minutes of your time: Approximately one-two hours and thirty minutes for the interview and to read and sign the consent form and confidentiality agreement; One hour to read and make changes to the edited summary of the focus group; One hour for the information evening during which research findings will be presented. Attendance at this event is optional.

In acknowledgement of your time and any travel expense incurred in attending interviews you will receive a \$20 fuel card.

Project Procedures

If you agree to take part in the research, your written consent will be obtained, and a signed confidentiality agreement completed prior to the commencement of the interview which will be arranged at a time and venue convenient to participants.

All participants will be advised that they have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview and to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of the interview. The researcher will keep notes during the interview to supplement audio-recording of the meeting and will take digital photographs of any diagrams used by participants to illustrate points. Following transcription of the interview by the researcher, the transcript will be sent to you for checking to verify that your input into the discussion has been accurately noted.

The two Sheds and project participants will be allocated pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. Confidentiality will be further maintained by omission of any potentially identifying information from the thesis. Interview data will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and electronic data will be password protected. Upon completion of the study the data will be destroyed unless the return of the material is requested by individual participants.

The information collected will be used for the production of the Master of Social Work Thesis and any academic publications that arise from it and for the purposes of conference presentations and/or journal articles.

At the end of the project a summary of the findings (including reference to how the results of this study will be used) will be sent to you and you will be invited to attend an information evening in which the findings of the research will be shared with participants.

Participant's Rights

Please note that *you are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:*

- *decline to answer any particular question*
- *withdraw from the study at any time up until you have returned your approved transcript*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview*

Support Processes

It is anticipated that minimal discomfort may arise for participants. However, should this occur the researcher, an experienced, trained social worker will: stop the meeting, ascertain the level of discomfort experienced and assist the participant if necessary, to identify and engage with relevant supports such as personal counselling, etc...

Thank you for considering participation in the individual interviews. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact myself or my supervisors.

Project Contacts

My Supervisors for this research are:

Associate Professor Kieran O'Donoghue
School of Social Work
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North

Dr. Michael Dale
School of Social Work
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North

Email: K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz

M.P.Dale@massey.ac.nz

Phone: [+64 6 9516517](tel:+6469516517)

[+64 6 3569099](tel:+6463569099) ext. 83522

If you have any questions regarding the research, please contact myself or my supervisors.

John Robinson

Email: [REDACTED]

- *This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 18/24 If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison (Acting Chair), Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz*

14.5 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – INFORMATION SHEET FOCUS GROUPS



Working Well Together - Rural Men's Shed Contributions to Individual and Community Wellbeing

INFORMATION SHEET for Focus Groups

Greetings,

My name is John Robinson. I am a registered social worker with a 32-year history of working with individuals, groups and communities across Aotearoa/New Zealand. As a former Men's Shed coordinator, I have a strong interest in developing further understanding of how Sheds affect their membership and the wider community the Shed is part of. In accordance with this interest this research project is a component of my postgraduate degree at Massey University.

Project Description

The project focusses on answering the following question:

What is the role of rural Men's Sheds in the lives of their members and the life of their local rural community?

This study seeks to discover and describe the means by which rural Men's Sheds, their members and their local communities construct effective, mutually beneficial working relationships as well as considering how those relationships could be improved. The purpose of this study is twofold: to contribute to the developing pool of knowledge regarding Men's Sheds in Aotearoa/New Zealand and to produce a thesis that satisfies the requirement for the research component of the Master of Social Work degree at Massey University.

Participant Recruitment

Information will be sought from Shed members in two rural Men's Sheds. These Sheds have been approached via the Regional Shed network coordinator and the leaders of both Sheds have approved the project. The criteria to participate as focus group members includes regular

attendance at the local Sheds for at least twelve months; involvement in several Shed projects that provided service to their local community.

Focus group participants will be recruited by promotion of the research project by Shed leaders. This will occur via distribution of this information sheet by email, display at the Shed venue and by word of mouth. Additionally, the researcher will give a brief presentation regarding the project at a nominated time during Shed operating hours. Interested members may approach the researcher directly at this meeting or via email. The researcher will coordinate a suitable time and venue convenient for participants for the focus group to take place.

Participant Involvement

You are warmly invited to participate in this research project. Focus group questions will centre on the role Men's Shed plays in the lives of its members and how those members perceive the role of Shed in their wider local community. At the beginning of the focus group participants will be presented with the preliminary findings from earlier individual interviews with local Shed leaders in relation to this central interest.

It is anticipated that the research will require approximately three-four hours and thirty minutes of your time: Approximately one to one-two hours and thirty minutes for the focus group and to read and sign the consent form and confidentiality agreement; One hour to read and make changes to the edited summary of the focus group; One hour for the information evening during which research findings will be presented. Attendance at this event is optional.

In acknowledgement of your time and any travel expenses incurred in attending meetings you will receive a \$20 fuel card.

Project Procedures

If you agree to take part in the research, your written consent will be obtained, and a signed confidentiality agreement completed prior to the commencement of the focus group. Participants will be advised that they have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the focus group meeting and to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of the focus group meeting. The researcher will keep notes during the meeting to supplement audio-recording of the discussion and will take digital photographs of any diagrams used by participants to illustrate points. Following transcription of the meeting recording by the researcher an edited summary of the focus group notes will be sent to participants for checking that their input into the discussion has been accurately represented.

The two Sheds and project participants will be allocated pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality which will be further maintained by omission of any potentially identifying information from the thesis. Interview data will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and electronic data will be password protected. Upon completion of the study the data will be destroyed unless the return of the material is requested by individual participants.

The information collected will be used for the production of the Master of Social Work Thesis and any academic publications that arise from it and for the purposes of conference presentations and/or journal articles.

At the end of the project a summary of the findings (including reference to how the results of this study will be used) will be sent to you and all participants with an invitation to attend an information evening where findings of the research will be presented.

Participant's Rights

Please note that you are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- *decline to answer any particular question*
- *withdraw from the study at any time up until you have returned your approved edited summary*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview*

Support Processes

It is unlikely that you will experience adverse consequences such as discomfort or harm as a result of participation. However, there is a small potential risk that focus group participants may experience discomfort because of possible differences of perspectives and views amongst group members. Should this occur the researcher, an experienced, trained social worker will: stop the meeting, ascertain the level of discomfort experienced and assist the participant if necessary, to identify and engage with relevant supports such as personal counselling.

Thank you for considering participation in the focus groups. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact myself or my supervisors.

Project Contacts

My supervisors for this research are:

Associate Professor Kieran O'Donoghue
School of Social Work
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North

Dr. Michael Dale
School of Social Work
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North

Email: K.B.ODonoghue@massey.ac.nz

M.P.Dale@massey.ac.nz

Phone: [+64 6 9516517](tel:+6469516517)

[+64 6 3569099](tel:+6463569099) ext. 83522

John Robinson

Email: 

- *This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 18/24. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison (Acting Chair), Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.*

14.6 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – CONSENT FORM KEY INFORMANTS



Working Well Together - Rural Men's Shed Contributions to Individual and Community Wellbeing

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

14.7 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – CONSENT FORM FOCUS GROUPS



Working Well Together - Rural Men's Shed Contributions to Individual and Community Wellbeing

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.

I understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and the names of all people in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Note: There are limits on confidentiality as there are no formal sanctions on other group participants from disclosing your involvement, identity or what you say to others in the focus group. There are risks in taking part in focus group research and taking part assumes that you are willing to assume those risks.

I agree to participate in the focus group under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

14.8 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – RELEASE OF INDIVIDUAL TRANSCRIPTS



Working Well Together - Rural Men's Shed Contributions to Individual and Community Wellbeing

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

14.9 WORKING WELL TOGETHER – RELEASE OF FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES



Working Well Together - Rural Men's Shed Contributions to Individual and Community Wellbeing

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the edited summary of the focus group in which I participated.

I agree that the edited summary and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

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