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# **The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree Master of  
Occupational Therapy at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand

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4 September 2013

**DECLARATION OF THESIS BEING OWN WORK**

**Otago Polytechnic**

**Declaration concerning Thesis presented for the degree of  
Master of Occupational Therapy**

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Solemnly and sincerely declare, in relation to the thesis entitled:

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Men's Shed movement originated in Australia as a way of addressing older men's health issues through engagement in meaningful activity. Sheds are embedded in a culture of 'mateship' where members work shoulder to shoulder on constructive work projects for the benefit of the wider local community, their Shed, and themselves. Research on Men's Sheds indicates a number of benefits related to health, wellbeing, education, and vocational training. Most research to date has been based in an Australia context with minimal study conducted in New Zealand where there are now over thirty five active sheds. Although all Men's Sheds share a focus on collective constructive work each individual Shed has a unique identity.

The aim of this study was to understand and interpret the culture of one New Zealand Men's Shed community as viewed through an occupational lens. The Taieri Blokes Shed, situated in Otago New Zealand, was the chosen community for this research. An ethnographic methodology was used where I was a participant observer over a six month period, after which qualitative theme checking interviews were conducted with six chosen Shed members. Cultural records and secondary sources were also used to inform findings.

The findings revealed that meaningful constructive work is the foundation for attracting membership and providing benefits to individuals. Work needs to serve a purpose, be of benefit to the wider community, the individual member, and the Shed. Supporting occupational roles and the construction of place are requirements to enable constructive work and community. Identified benefits of membership include social inclusion and social contribution alongside structured work roles and social activities. Members value self-governance and the ability to exert control in the Shed community. Sheds need to sustain relationships with local communities and understand involvement in a national Men's Shed context. Researchers and funders need to acknowledge, understand, and value the real work that is done in Men's Sheds. Benefits or proposed interventions are dependent on the maintenance of true work and control remaining with Shed communities.

Implications and guidelines for the Taieri Blokes Shed, the Men's Shed movement, and occupational therapy are outlined. Limitations of this study and suggested future research are offered.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **STUDY INTRODUCTION**

This study presents an understanding of the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed viewed through an occupational lens. The Taieri Blokes Shed is a community Men's Shed located in Mosgiel, Otago, New Zealand. Community Sheds are places where men, normally post-retirement age, work together on constructive work projects that are of benefit to themselves and their wider community. The majority of research on the Men's Shed movement has been conducted in an Australian context and has focused on the vocational, educational, health and well-being outcomes that result from Shed membership. Research in a New Zealand context is limited.

For my study I used an ethnographic methodology to participate in and record the occupational and cultural practices of the Taieri Blokes Shed. I was a participant observer at the Taieri Shed for six months and following this I interviewed selected Shed members to evaluate the meaning and purpose attributed to occupations in the setting and the perceived benefits of membership. Factors that sustain and grow the Shed community as well as the current and future challenges facing the Shed have also been addressed in this research.

Although I used an ethnographic methodology, this is not a traditional anthropologic study. The research is underpinned by key philosophies and concepts from the fields of occupational therapy and occupational science. This research both documents and evaluates the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed, in turn making wider inference to the Men's Shed movement. I provide an analysis of the Shed community from an insider (emic) and outsider (etic) perspective, where the etic view is formed by an occupational focus.

Prior to conducting this research I had an understanding of the Taieri Blokes Shed based on meeting Shed members and following the Shed's development in local media. From this information the Taieri Blokes Shed appeared to be an active and connected community.

The main focus of the Shed was on constructive work utilising trades skills. Projects were undertaken for the benefit of individual members and the wider community.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a community Shed where work is done with others. There is a clear ethos of 'working shoulder to shoulder'. In reviewing Shed, and Men's Shed, literature, mateship was a recurring cultural definition associated with Men's Sheds similar to the Taieri Blokes Shed. I have chosen to reference the culture of mateship in this study.

This chapter identifies the origins and aims of this research, and acknowledges the philosophical underpinnings of this study. An overview of the Men's Shed movement and the Taieri Blokes Shed is presented to orientate the reader to the context of the research. At the conclusion of this chapter an outline of the structure of this thesis is provided.

## **GENESIS AND PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH**

In setting the scene for this study I will firstly explain the genesis and purpose of this research. There are several reasons I conducted this study. The first is a strong belief in the link between meaningful occupation, health and wellbeing. As a qualified occupational therapist I have found my own personal beliefs and values align with those of my chosen profession, where the perception of good health goes beyond a medical model of health, where health and wellbeing require more than the absence of disease or disability. I believe in the interconnectedness between wellbeing and the ability to engage in occupations which hold meaning and purpose for individuals and communities.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a community which provides occupation with meaning and purpose, centred on constructive work, for those who take up active membership. It is a growing community that appeals to the occupational needs and wants of a population of predominantly retired males in and around the Mosgiel community. My understanding of the growth and apparent strength of this community prompted me to question why this community was emergent? Why is it effective? What is required to support the key occupation of constructive work? What are the wellbeing benefits derived from membership of the Taieri Blokes Shed?

This initial concern led me to conduct a literature review of the Men's Shed movement. In reviewing the literature on the Shed movement I made links with concepts of occupational science and the core philosophies of occupational therapy. These examinations led to a greater theoretical understanding of the movement and the benefits found in a culture of mateship and meaningful constructive work. I wanted to test my theoretical knowledge and gain an understanding of the benefits from the perspective of Shed members. I believed an in-depth study from this perspective was missing in the current literature, particularly in a New Zealand context. I believed more detail was required from the participants' perspective. Having established a relationship with members of the Taieri Blokes Shed, a Shed which was in my local area, it seemed an appropriate place to base my study.

In conducting this study I was conscious of my own history and occupational identity. I have a strong interest in working with my hands particularly on home renovation and woodwork tasks. I have had no formal trade training but I get a great deal of satisfaction from learning and applying knowledge to constructive projects and maintenance tasks. I come from a family where we 'make and do'. My grandfathers were tradesmen, my father was a constructive artist, my mother and grandmothers are skilled sewers and knitters. Having a chance to 'do' research and build understanding while working in a constructive environment held significant appeal. An ethnographic methodology, which enabled participant observation, complements this approach to research.

## **AIMS OF RESEARCH**

The primary aim of this study was to understand the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed as viewed through an occupational lens. In understanding the culture and occupational structure of the community, subsequent understandings have been gained about the benefits to the wellbeing of individual members. Wider implications have been made to the Men's Shed movement and in relation to future implications for the Taieri Blokes Shed. This research investigated the following questions:

- Which occupations are attributed meaning and purpose at the Taieri Blokes Shed?
- How are occupations structured within the Taieri Blokes Shed?
- How is the culture of mateship evident in the occupational roles, routines and relationships of the Taieri Blokes Shed?
- What benefits to their wellbeing do individuals derive from active occupational engagement at the Taieri Blokes Shed?
- How is the Shed movement perceived in the wider Otago community? Are the activities of the Taieri Blokes Shed of mutual benefit to the membership and the wider community?
- What are the implications for the future sustainability of the Taieri Blokes Shed community?
- What inferences can be made from this research to the wider Men's Shed movement?

The development of these questions was based on my prior knowledge of the Taieri Blokes Shed, review of Men's Shed literature and knowledge, and review of occupational therapy and occupational science materials. Given the age demographic of the Shed membership, literature on wellbeing in ageing was also reviewed.

## **PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THIS RESEARCH**

I am a trained occupational therapist and I ascribe to the philosophy that health and wellness are interconnected with engagement in meaningful activity (Hammell, 2009). I believe that humans are occupational beings as much as they are social and spiritual beings.

Occupational science and occupational therapy conceptualise the term occupation in the same way. Zemke and Clark (1996) describe occupation as “chunks of daily activity that can be named in the lexicon of a culture” (p.9). The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists describes the centrality of occupation to human life as all the ways in which we occupy ourselves individually and as societies. Our everyday lives proceed through a myriad of occupations, embedded in time, place and culture (Canadian Association of Occupational

Therapists, 1994/1996/1997). Occupation constitutes all of the daily activities of human beings, the ordinary familiar things people do every day (American Occupational Therapy Association, 1995). Occupations provide order, routine, meaning and purpose to people's lives (Christiansen, 1999; Yerxa, Clark, Frank, Jackson, Parham, Pierce, and Zemke, 1989).

Further occupational engagement shapes personal development and provides individuals with a sense of uniqueness by enabling them to express their identity, their beliefs and their preferences through their occupational performance (Yerxa, 1998; Kielhofner, 1997; Christiansen, 1999). We are what we do (Wilcock, 1991). It is not only what we do that is important but also how, where, why and with whom we do it.

Occupational therapy uses occupation as a means in therapy with engagement in meaningful occupation being the goal of intervention (Grey, 1998; Rebeiro, 1998). Occupational therapists are not unique in realising the importance of meaningful occupation to human health and wellbeing. Through human history there have been numerous persons, religions, philosophies and social movements that have acknowledged and promoted meaningful occupation (Wilcock, 2002a/ 2002b).

Occupational science has its origins in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and conceptual roots in occupational therapy. It is concerned with the study of humans as occupational beings. However, the ordered study of occupation was first mooted as an objective of the National Society of Occupational Therapist in 1917 (American Occupational Therapy Association, 1967). Occupational science is an academic discipline. One of its intentions is to understand, inform, build and justify occupational therapy reasoning (Yerxa et al., 1989). Occupational science is based on scientific and philosophical understanding (Wilcock, 2003), and herein lies the difference between it and occupational therapy which is an applied profession. As an informing agent of the occupational therapy profession, occupational science highlights adaption while doing, with the underlying premise that action facilitates change, personal development and consequential wellbeing (Molineux and Whiteford, 1999). While an occupational scientist seeks to understand and describe occupation, occupational therapists take action to enable occupation.

Hocking and Wright-St Clair (2011), cite Wilcock (1993), and Yerxa (1998), to note three prominent concerns of occupational science in revealing the complexity of human occupation. Firstly, humans are viewed as occupational beings, secondly there is a relationship between occupation and health, and thirdly there are contextual factors including weather, culture, religion, economy, space and resources, alongside numerous other factors that shape what, where, why and how people engage in occupation.

In seeking to understand these factors through research, occupational science has the potential to enhance existing practice and expand occupational therapy practice into health promotion and public health (Hocking and Wright St-Clair, 2011). My review of key concepts and literature, in the next chapter, will go into more detail about the occupational concepts that are relevant to this research.

## **HOW THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS HAVE ORIENTATED THE RESEARCH APPROACH**

Previous research on the Men's Shed movement indicates health and wellbeing benefits for individuals who are involved. The Men's Shed movement provides purposeful and meaningful occupation centred on constructive work. This research examines the occupational structure of the Taieri Blokes Shed, how this structure enables individuals to identify with the community, realise meaning, exert control and, in turn, receive benefits. Meaning comes from engagement in, and support of, constructive work as well as the community and social connection enabled by work. Active participation means having control and making choices. Occupational choice allows individuals to exert control over their actions, their bodies, and who they relate to (Townsend, 1997).

My research not only documents the doing of, which is important, but also where occupations are done, who they are done alongside; how the occupations of the Taieri Blokes Shed are viewed from outside the community; and importantly, what is required to sustain meaningful occupation. Taking an occupational perspective assumes that meaningful occupation is central to the success of Men's Sheds and the source from which all other benefits flow.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE MEN'S SHED MOVEMENT AND THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

The Men's Shed movement has grown rapidly over the past ten years. The movement has its origins in Australia with more recent adoption throughout New Zealand, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. The Taieri Blokes Shed has its roots in the Australian Men's Shed movement. Shed members are overwhelmingly male and over retirement age.

As opposed to Sheds owned by individuals, Men's Sheds are collectives focused on project work that benefits their local area. Sheds often have close association with other community services such as sports groups, health providers and religious groups. In Australia and, more recently, New Zealand, the movement has established national associations which provide advice and support to individual community Sheds as well as organising conferences, promoting the movement and liaising with researchers.

The Shed movement has received recognition and support at state and federal governance levels in Australia. The majority of published academic studies on the movement focus on the quantified health, educational and vocational benefits resulting from Shed membership while recognising meaningful occupation and the link to wellbeing. Barry Golding, along with colleagues at Ballarat University, has been a leading researcher of the Shed movement.

The Taieri Blokes Shed's origins date back to 2007. Phil Bradshaw of the Royal New Zealand Navy had experienced the Men's Shed movement in Australia and saw the value in developing a Shed, or a series of community Sheds, in the Dunedin region. He consulted with the community and with local organisations to see if there was support and a willingness to develop Shed/s in the area. Through Bradshaw's initiative a steering committee was developed and a series of public meetings held to discuss membership and support for the movement.

Early support for a Shed initiative came from Age Concern and from The Royal New Zealand Navy with grants support from the Lotteries Commission, the Dunedin City Council, and the Dunedin Returned Servicemen's Association. Commercial support and organisational assistance was offered by Mitre 10 Mosgiel and Mitre 10 Mega (hardware stores) alongside

the Mosgiel Probus Club (a fellowship group for retired persons). Most importantly, a team of volunteers who recognised the potential worth of the project came on board and gave impetus to developing the idea. Notable among the original volunteers was Bob Biggart who remains heavily involved in the promotion, organisation and support of the movement in the Otago area.

The Taieri Aero Club offered the use of premises at the Aerodrome in Mosgiel in the latter half of 2007. Since this time, membership of the Taieri Blokes Shed has grown and these spaces have been developed into workshops and meeting rooms which meet the requirements of constructive work as well as social and governance activities. As of early 2013 the Shed has an active membership of over forty members who undertake a balance of community project work, Shed development and maintenance as well as individual project work. The social history section in Findings Chapter provides a detailed timeline of the Shed's development.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH CONTEXT**

The following sections provide background details of the research context. These are particulars about the geographic area in which the Shed is located, the Mosgiel community and surrounds. Approximate demographic information is supplied on the age, ethnicity, and employment background of the membership.

## GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT: THE MOSGIEL COMMUNITY



*Figure 1 - Image: Mosgiel as pictured from Saddle Hill*

Mosgiel is located approximately fifteen kilometres to the south west of Dunedin’s city centre. It falls under the governance of the Dunedin City Council under the New Zealand Local Government Act (1989). Mosgiel has a population of approximately 10,000 persons. Information in this section has been drawn from the Dunedin City Council website (<http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/>) as well as from the Wikipedia entry on Mosgiel (“Mosgiel”, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. I have also used the most recent collective history of Mosgiel: W. R. Kirk, *Pulse of the Plain* (1985).

The Mosgiel Township takes its name from Mossgiel in Ayrshire, the former farm of the poet Robert Burns. Mosgiel is geographically separated from the centre of Dunedin by the Three Mile Hill and Scroggs Hill. Saddle Hill is a prominent landmark visible from large portions of Mosgiel. The township is linked to the Dunedin city centre by the Dunedin Southern Motorway. Mosgiel is located on the Taieri Plains and celebrates this location with the motto, ‘Pearl of the Plains’. The Silver Stream, a tributary of the Taieri River, runs through the north end of the town. The low-lying nature of the area makes it prone to flooding following heavy rains. Farmland surrounds the main township with a mixture of dairy and sheep farming. A

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<sup>1</sup> Information was retrieved from these sites on June 12th 2012, and may have been subject to change or update since.

number of the Dunedin area's major processing, manufacturing and research companies are located on the outskirts of the township, notably Invermay (agricultural research), and, until recently, the white-ware manufacturer, Fisher and Paykel.

With New Zealand's increasingly ageing population, Mosgiel has seen an expansion of retirement villages and rest homes as well as an increase in the number of retired people taking up residence in the township and in recent subdivisions. Mosgiel provides services for the surrounding rural community and is a popular place of settlement for retired farmers who have sold off farms or bequeathed them to family. Dunedin's International Airport is located to the south of the township at Momona (established 1962). This superseded the original Taieri Aerodrome located just to the north of Mosgiel (established in the late 1920s). The Taieri Aerodrome is still actively used, predominantly by members of the Taieri Aero Club. It is also the location of the Taieri Blokes Shed.

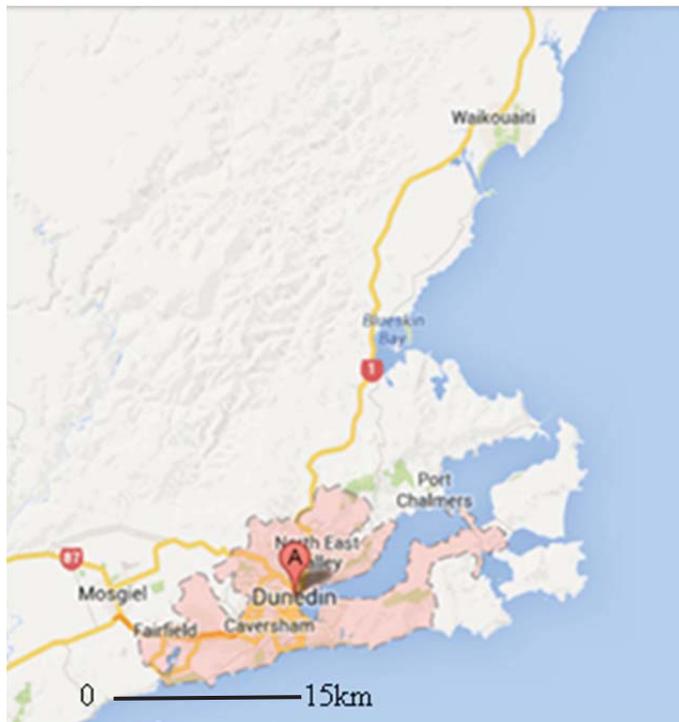


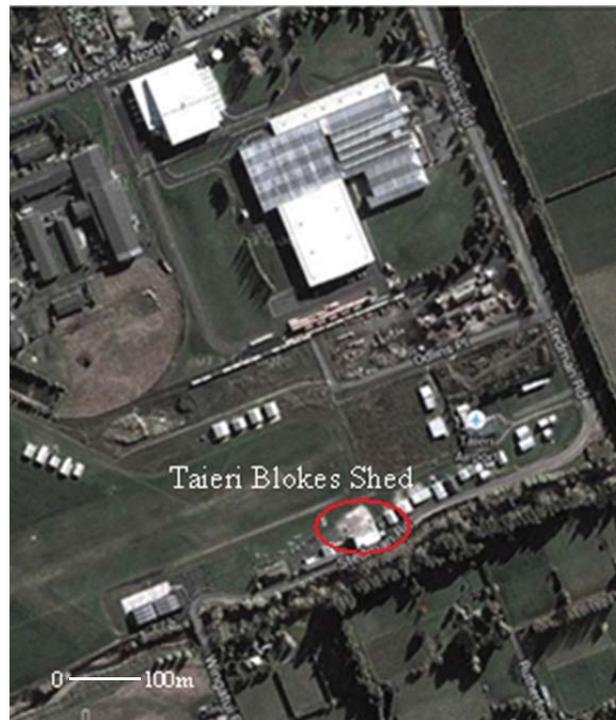
Figure 2 - Map: Mosgiel viewed in location to Dunedin City Centre (Google Maps, 2013).



Figure 3 - Map: Mosgiel Township indicating Taieri Aerodrome (Google Maps, 2013).

## GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT: THE TAIERI AERODROME

The aerodrome consists of a single grass runway and a mixture of hangars and utility buildings. The original hangar dates back to the 1920's and its architecture is indicative of the Art Deco period. To the south of the main hangar are older utility buildings and premises of the Taieri Aero Club. These older buildings are in various states of disrepair and, although still used, show clear signs of deferred maintenance. To the north of the main hangar are a number of modern sheds and hangars, many being owned by members of the Aero club. The following photos and descriptions are intended to provide an indication of the physical orientation of the Shed to the surrounding landscape.



*Figure 4 - Image: Aerial photographic view of the Taieri Aerodrome.*

*Blokes Shed indicated in red (Google Maps, 2013)*



*Figure 5 - Image: Main hangar as viewed from the west*



*Figure 6 - Image: View from in front of the main hangar looking west*



*Figure 7 - Image: Outside the hangar - small plane*

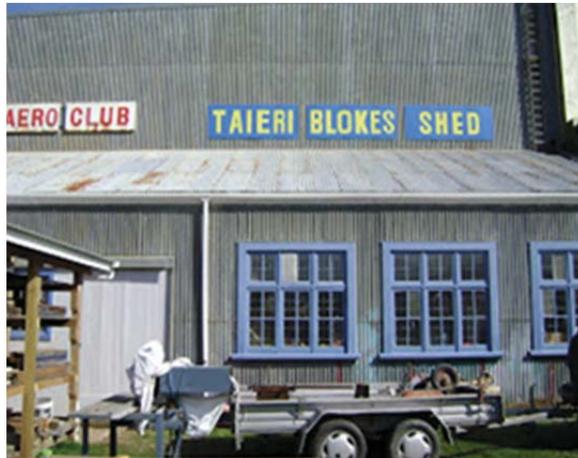


*Figure 8 - Image: Inside the main hangar*

## THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED OCCUPIED SPACES

The Taieri Blokes Shed occupies areas at either end of the main hangar. Photos of the renovation and use of spaces are included in the Shed's social history (Findings Chapter). The following photos and descriptions provide an overview of the spaces used.

At the southern end of the hangar the Shed has its smoko room, kitchen, toilet and storage space. The Shed's workshops are located at the northern end and include a woodworking shop and a metalwork shop (both contained within the original building). In addition to these there is a renovated shipping container that is set up for metal welding and fabrication. Attached to this container is a roofed 'lean to', constructed by the members for wood-storage. The Shed also maintains a grassed area of approximately 150 square metres surrounding the container.



*Figure 9 - Image: Workshop areas: External view from north end*



*Figure 10 - Image: Entrance to the smoko room*



*Figure 11 - Image: Smoko room interior*



*Figure 12 - Image: Woodworking shop interior taken from main door*



*Figure 13 - Image: Woodworking shop taken from metalwork shop*



*Figure 14 - Image: Bench area of the metalwork shop*



*Figure 15 - Image: Inside the container (metalwork and welding)*



*Figure 16 – Image: Woodshed connected to welding container*

## THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED: MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

The average age of Shed members seems to be around 75 years. This is an estimate based on the Shed committee's knowledge of the membership. No personal details on age were collected in this study as the focus was on the community and its attributes rather than on an analysis of demographics.

Approximately half of the members have trade-based employment backgrounds with a number of other members having home and community construction and maintenance histories. Many are retired or semi-retired farmers. Living and occupational experiences outside of the Shed community, vary. Some live with wives and partners while others live by themselves. For some members, Shed attendance constitutes a significant part of their weekly activities while others have busy weekly schedules which include membership of other community groups, exercise and sports clubs as well as on-going work, family and voluntary commitments.

The members of the Shed are, in general, mobile and independent. The vast majority still drive. Many have health issues which are common to the age demographic. Some members have assessed hearing impairments and industrial hearing loss from a trade's employment history is familiar.

## SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW OF THESIS STRUCTURE

The aim of this study is to understand the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed as viewed through an occupational lens. Qualitative data has been collected that describes the meaning and purpose attributed to Shed membership and participation in the occupations of the community. This includes recognition of the benefits in wellbeing to individuals. Data have been interpreted in line with the stated philosophical underpinnings of occupational therapy and occupational science. The ultimate purpose of this research is to investigate the worth of this particular community and to provide recommendations that have application to the wider Men's Shed movement.

Chapter Two summarises the key concepts and literature that have informed this study. Literature, academic and popular, has been reviewed on the culture and values of mateship, the nature of constructive work, Men's Shed research, and the implications for health and wellbeing for New Zealand's ageing population. A review of the concepts of occupational therapy and occupational science materials relative to the analysis of findings in this research, is presented.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used in this study and the structuring of the research including ethical considerations and the processes for data analysis.

Chapter Four presents findings from the study. This chapter draws on participant interviews, cultural records, secondary sources and my own observations in order to capture the meaning and purpose attributed to membership. It is intended to provide a rich insight into the stories of the members. A social history giving a background to the Shed's development, structure and culture is presented as a timeline which was constructed from the Shed's records and cross-checked with member interviews. The cultural practices of the community are outlined and the members' recognition of benefit stated. Potential future implications for the Taieri Blokes Shed are acknowledged.

The Discussion Chapter draws together my interpretations of the findings, addressing the purpose and aims of this research. The findings of this study are interpreted in line with my stated focus on occupation. Reference is made to the culture of mateship, previous Men's Shed research, the nature of constructive work, and the factors that contribute to wellbeing in ageing. I have examined the meaning of membership to the individuals who make up the Taieri Blokes Shed and the future implications for this community. In understanding this community, recommendations are made for the wider Men's Shed movement.

The Conclusion states what this research has achieved while also acknowledging the limitations of the study, future research directions and my learning.

## **REVIEW OF KEY CONCEPTS AND LITERATURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a review of key concepts and of the literature that has informed this research. It considers the research findings in relation to the stated aims and wider application of the Men's Shed movement.

The Men's Shed movement has been strongly associated with the concept of mateship. A critique of mateship is offered relative to past and present New Zealand society, the Men's Shed movement and constructive work. Attributes of mateship are often linked to the values that describe a good bloke.

Constructive work is the occupational focus of the Taieri Blokes Shed. The occupational nature and worth of constructive work is reviewed relative to New Zealand culture, national identity and Shed literature. The intention here is to describe the wider culture in which the Men's Shed movement has found appeal, and has subsequently grown.

After presenting material that informs Shed culture, Men's Shed literature will be reviewed, both academic and popular. This review will outline the findings, context and scope of prior research while in turn justifying the positioning of this study.

I will present key concepts from occupational science and occupational therapy literature that pertain to this study. The intention here is to orientate the reader to the philosophical underpinnings of this research, introducing theories that will be deliberated in the finding and discussion chapters. The explanation and review of some concepts will be broadened to look at material relevant to, but outside, the domains of occupational therapy or occupational science.

Given the demographic of the Taieri Blokes Shed membership, the aims of this study, and the findings from previous Men's Shed research, literature on wellbeing in ageing will also be reviewed.

## **MATESHIP**

The Men's Shed movement is tied to a 'culture of mateship', a culture which has had limited academic investigation. Mateship is derived from the term 'mate' meaning 'friend'. Mateship is a term familiar to both Australian and New Zealand cultures and is an integral part of the history of both countries and their sense of national identity (Phillips, 1987; Phillips and Hearn, 2008). Mateship is an historically masculine term (although it has become more gender inclusive in contemporary times).

Commonly ascribed values of mateship include loyalty to ones mates, team work (including reciprocity and equality), dedication to a common task or duty, compassion, honesty and physical and moral courage (Phillips, 1987; Page, 2002). For the purposes of this study, mateship is viewed as an inclusive term, a term that relates to a shared situation - in this case the Taieri Blokes Shed. Other inclusive associations of mateship are found in sports teams, employment, and in times of hardship like war, pioneering settlement or economic depression.

Mateship has its origins in Australian colonial times where reliance on other males was essential not only to the survival, but also the prospering, of settler communities. The harsh environment in which convicts and new settlers found themselves meant that men and women relied closely on each other for all sorts of help. In Australia, a 'Mate' is more than just a friend. It is a term that implies a sense of shared experience, mutual respect and unconditional assistance ("Mateship", 2007). Parallels can be drawn between the pioneering societies of Australia and the experiences of both Māori and European settlers in New Zealand.

Māori brought knowledge, skills and food sources with them from Polynesia but had to adapt to a different environment, relying on each other for their initial survival and subsequent mastery of their surrounds. European pioneers came with their own ideas of replicating aspects of their previous lives. They worked to 'break in the land' in order to realise their ambitions for farming and a productive society. Again, as with early Māori settlement, there was a reliance on each other as they were far from the cultural and supply links of their 'home lands'.

It should be noted that many early European settlers, notably sealers and whalers, adapted to life in their new land by forming bonds with Māori, the tangata whenua, who held vital knowledge and tools to not only survive but also to prosper in a new land. Early relations between Māori and European settlers were formed on trade and mutual benefit (“Māori-Pakeha relations”, 2013).

With the development of organised European settlement the early pioneers’ ability to adapt was often linked to the character traits of those who chose to leave their home countries. Many settlers were versatile in their skills and experienced in travelling for work. Phillips and Hearn (2008) argue that these characteristics are claimed as part of our national character: “...versatility, a jack-of-all-trades ‘number 8 fencing wire’ attitude, a willingness to go on the road - have as much to do with the background of New Zealand’s immigrants as of the unspecialised conditions in nineteenth-century New Zealand” (p.191).

As European settlement of New Zealand developed, male interdependence was brought to the fore in experiences of work and warfare. Colonial mateship was founded initially on the needs of work situations when developing a new land to fit their purposes (Phillips, 1987). Males significantly outnumbered females in early European settlement of both New Zealand and Australia, and few people had families to turn to. In both countries bonds of interdependence, teamwork, courage and common duty developed through shared association. In warfare these attributes were evident in the actions of the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). John Mulgan, in writing about meeting New Zealand soldiers in North Africa in 1942, ascribed the following virtues: “Everything that was good from that small, remote country had gone into them – sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical men. And they marched into history” (1947, p.15). New Zealand soldiers had an egalitarian disregard for rank. Officers were expected to lead from the front and be ‘one of the boys’ (“A man’s country”, 2013).

The significant events in New Zealand’s history not only served to cement bonds between New Zealand males, they established characteristics (or some would argue a mythology), through which others viewed them and they measured themselves. For some New Zealanders these early experiences of settlement and war helped form our national identity, our shared

understanding of what distinguished our country from others. As New Zealand developed, the profile and dominance of early All Black rugby teams such as the 1905 ‘Originals’ and the 1924 ‘Invincibles’ likewise added to these male attributes, linking identity to the sports field. According to the England Evening Post (1905) the phenomenal success of the 1905 New Zealand rugby team encouraged British observers to suggest ‘a great historical and ethnological fact’ to the effect that, in the colony the transplanted Britisher was made better. New Zealand’s bracing climate, her outdoor life and lack of cities made men stronger and larger (“A man’s country”, 2013). In both warfare and sport New Zealand has icons who personify what it means to be a good bloke and practise mateship. Sir Charles Upham (Second World War) and Corporal Willie Apiata (Afghanistan) are historical and current-day examples of soldiers whose deeds are revered for all that is good about looking after your comrades in arms. On the rugby field Sir Colin Meads and Richie McCaw are past and present examples.

Bonds of mateship were also evident in pioneering industries and collective unions. The seafarers, flax mill workers, miners, whalers, sealers and deer hunters are all examples of collectives who bonded under adverse conditions. The trade union movement in New Zealand had its origins in many of these organisations (“Ordinary blokes and extraordinary shelias”, 2013; “Seafarers”, 2013).

Barry Crump wrote about what it meant to be ‘a good keen man’ in his 1960 book of the same title. It was an extremely popular account and a best-seller in New Zealand. Part of the appeal was its ability to sum up cherished national stereotypes of masculinity (“Post-war New Zealanders”, 2013).

The values of mateship have been critiqued and questioned in relation to the narrowing perspective which comes with this gender-based inter-reliance and culture. James Page examines the values of mateship from an Australian societal perspective. He suggests that mateship may be a questionable character virtue, and one which facilitates and perpetuates war and conflict. He queries the male-orientated nature of mateship and those who are excluded:

Mateship may be an inclusive concept, in that certain persons are defined as being members of a group. However mateship also has quite exclusionary characteristics, in that the group-sentiment which mateship serves to support only assists in defining others as outside that scope of the group (p.195).

In reference to Page's criticism of exclusive mateship it is acknowledged that mateship requires conformity to set norms of behaviour. This can lead to persons of genuine merit being unfairly criticised because of their achievement - commonly known as 'the tall poppy syndrome' - or rejected because of an individual approach to life that is different from the norm. ("Political values and the 'Kiwi' way of life", 2013).

The values of mateship are not static and have developed in New Zealand society as changes have occurred. Mateship does not operate according to economic, political, race or religious guide-lines but is reliant on egalitarianism. An acceptance and promotion of equality is key to what it means to be a good mate. In New Zealand's culture this fits easily with a rejection of inherent class structures. Keith Sinclair commented on 1960s New Zealand that, while not classless, "it must be more nearly classless, however, than any other society in the world. Some people are richer than others, but wealth carries no greater prestige and no prerogative of leadership" (1969, p.276). Mateship is based on equality and as a cultural norm rejects those who give themselves airs and graces, are unjustly rewarded, or appear to separate themselves from everyday life. One of the most important codes of mateship is the disregard for class background (Phillips 1987, p.30). Mateship places value upon those who practise humility.

Values of mateship are still evident in contemporary New Zealand and Australian society. They are now not so much a matter of pioneering survival or perseverance in battle but respect is evinced through mutual assistance with home renovation projects, community organisations and sports clubs. Here, a mate is someone who can contribute practical skills to a shared problem, often through unpaid work on the domestic scene.

Mateship draws on the inter-reliance of men working for a common cause beyond just their own need, a cause that requires practicality and application to task. A mate who is willing to do things for others and is of practical use is often referred to as ‘a good bloke’.

#### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A ‘GOOD BLOKE’

Mateship is often associated with being ‘a bloke’, the simplest definition for which is ‘a man’ (“Kiwis”, 2013). This study is interested in the attributes that define not just a bloke, but a ‘good bloke’, inasmuch as the commonly ascribed attributes of a good bloke are associated with mateship. A good bloke is someone who is practical, able to solve problems, to make, fix and mend.

*He is generous to others, easy going and sociable. A good bloke is grounded in the everyday* (Walsh, 1985; Phillips, 1987; Hopkins and Riley, 1998).

Although there are multiple theories about the origin of the term, it has gained prominence through use in literature, art, media and the public domain. In describing ‘The Bloke’ in a 2000 *Time* magazine article, Luscombe states: “The bloke is a certain kind of Australian or New Zealand male ... not a voluble beast. His speech patterns are best described as infrequent but colourful .... He is pragmatic rather than classy... he does not whinge”. In his essay, “Australia Observed” (1985), Richard Walsh notes that to be referred to as a ‘good bloke’ is the ultimate accolade, meaning someone who is gregarious, hospitable, generous, warm hearted, and with a good sense of humour.

In recent times the term ‘bloke’ has moved on from being exclusively male. The term ‘blokey’ was added to the Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary in 1997. It is a variation on the noun ‘bloke’ and means ‘exclusively male’ (Simonds, 1997).

In the introduction to *Blokes in Sheds* (1998), Hopkins describes what it means to be a bloke:

Blokes are creative, generous, energetic and passionate. Blokes care. Maybe not about the things therapists and counsellors and relationship gurus think they should, but get them out in the shed and it's a different story. The only things Blokes bottle up out there are assorted nails and screws that 'may come in handy one day'. Give a Bloke a Shed and all his life-enhancing qualities come hurtling to the fore (p.8).

Being a bloke suggests a person who does not waste words, someone who gets on with the practical aspects of making and doing. As Hopkins implies, the practical characteristics of blokes may be at odds with consumerism where products are likely to be disposed of rather than fixed. At heart a 'good bloke' is loyal to his mates and provides for his family and others (Phillips, 1987).

## **THE NATURE OF WORK: CRAFTSMANSHIP AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORK**

### THE HUMAN OCCUPATION OR CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

The following section looks at the appeal and worth of constructive work to humans. It acknowledges that we humans are occupational beings and it is through constructive work that we learn to manipulate, test, reflect on and master the environments we live in. Over many ages, engagement in constructive work has enabled us to glean information about the world and thus to maintain our place in it. We have developed cunning and guile in the way we look at our surroundings and adapt them to our needs and wants. Many academics have argued that it is through a human's works that a sense of human reality is gained.

The man who works recognises his own products in the World that has actually been transformed by his work: he recognises himself in it, he sees in it his own human reality, in it he discovers and reveals to others the object reality of his humanity, of the originally abstract and purely subjective idea he has of himself (Kojève, 1989, p.27).

We as human beings can see the possibilities in situations and devise alternate strategies. Problem solving has become our forte. We have knowledge and processes which can be directed to the achievement of desired ends. Work is distinct from employment.

Numerous academics and philosophers have ruminated over the value and worth of work to humans. Various definitions and taxonomies of work have been put forward. For the purposes of this research, 'work' relates to the production of durable artifacts that have utility, and where the worker experiences agency, competency and the social currency that is afforded to the creator. In studying the constructive occupations of the Taieri Blokes Shed I have focused on skilled work, work that requires competence of both hand and mind. This focus fits with T. F. Green's (1968) definition of work as the active production of enduring objects where work requires self-investment, skill, craft and personal judgment. Work is purposeful and meaningful and distinct from labour. Some would call means and ends work craftwork or craftsmanship.

A number of scholars and social movements have adopted a 'romantic' view of the craftsman. This was the case with the Art and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century where craftsmanship was viewed as the antidote to industrialisation and mass production (Spretnak, 1997). John Ruskin and William Morris were the key proponents of this movement. Craft work was seen as the medium for self-expression, personal freedom, creativity, and emotional release. It was in both the making and using of well-formed, handcrafted objects that a proposed transformation would take place. This movement was driven by an aesthetic that appealed to the upper classes of English and western societies, those who had time to consider the significance of handcraft and commission the associated works.

Jackson Lears (1981) expounded the value of crafts as an antidote to the diminished autonomy and fragmented sense of self experienced by the professional classes of this era. He encouraged them to 'work', as earlier defined, outside of their paid employment.

Osborne (1977) suggests that there are three conflicting ideas about craft:

1. There is no difference between technology and craftsmanship.
2. For the technological culture of today craftsmanship is simply an anachronism, a time-wasting hobby, in a society which has advanced beyond it.
3. There is a spiritual value to craftsmanship which can act as an antidote to the soulless standardisation imposed upon modern man by the technology of mass production.

A number of tradesmen may argue the reality is slightly less ideal or romantic. There is worth, meaning and purpose in craft and constructive work so it is easy to disagree with ideas one and two. However, the average trades person spends little time sentimentalizing their work as Osborne does in idea three, a position that resonates with the Arts and Crafts movement and the writings of William Morris (Morris, 1915). For the tradesman, constructive work is the reality of their everyday life. It exists in their present rather than viewed from afar and they do not, generally, subject it to philosophical evaluation.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the idealisation of creative work. Hocking's (2004) doctoral thesis provides an excellent examination of realism and romanticism related to work and the attachment to objects of work. My study is interested in the attribution of meaning to constructive work in a communal setting and in the subsequent requirements and benefits of that work.

In relation to constructive work, occupational therapy has an historic foundation based on a strong work ethic and on crafting with one's own hands. Woodcraft was introduced early in the profession as a means of therapy with due recognition of project outcomes and purpose for the individuals involved (Quiroga, 1995). Occupational therapy has links to the Arts and Crafts movement in that the craftsman has control and choice over decisions related to the production of a work, where production is based on workmanship of risk rather than workmanship of certainty or division of labor (Pye, 1968). At various times in the

profession's history, craft has been used as a medium to provide diversion, vocational training, and remediation. In the early development of the profession, occupational therapy sought a planned attachment to material objects to avert the patient from their thoughts and despairs (Russell, 1938).

Throughout this thesis I have chosen to refer to work as 'constructive' work or 'trades' work as this is in keeping with the culture of the Shed. Traditional references to craft or craftsmanship are often reserved for finely wrought, bespoke objects. The objects of the Taieri Blokes Shed are designed to function and endure in the everyday world. Their work is for use rather than display. However, an examination of craft and work literature has informed this study in relation to the requirements of constructive work and to its subsequent rewards. What follows is a summary of key writing on the nature of work - or of 'craft work' as it is often referred to.

R. G. Collingwood, English philosopher and historian, begins his explanation of the meaning of craft by linking it with the Latin meaning of the word *ars* and the Greek *technic* : "... the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action" (Collingwood, 1958, p.15). Collingwood believes the chief characteristics of craft are a distinction between means and end and a distinction between planning and execution. Both means and ends are clearly conceived but distinct from one another. Craft involves the application of skills in planned processes to realize a point where the object is of use. In planning, the result to be obtained is preconceived or thought out before being arrived at. Good workmanship requires skill and the ability to control production, both of which bond the worker to the task. This fits with what Pye (1968), describes as 'the workmanship of risk' wherein the result of every operation during production is determined by the workman, and where the outcome depends, wholly or largely, on his 'care, judgment and dexterity' (p.24). The ability to apply skill to a work task is dependent on prior experience. Through ethnographies of apprenticeships we understand that through learning skills we not only become competent in productions but also educated in the cultural values of a trade (Argenti, 2002; Dilley, 1999; Simpson, 2006). Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Herzfeld and Rebecca Prentice accentuate the tacit dimensions of this learning, that is, how social hierarchies, gender ideologies and other subtle structures become inculcated through the process of skill

acquisition and reproduced in the body of the skilled agent (Bourdieu, 1977; Herzfeld, 2004; Prentice, 2008; Prentice, 2012). When a workman is able to apply skill in conducting means and achieving a preconceived end a sense of competence is realised.

In his book, *Shop Class as Soulcraft* (2009), Matthew Crawford discusses the satisfaction to be found in investing the self in constructive work. He reflects on the focus of contemporary American education and societal views where emphasis is placed on acquiring systems knowledge as opposed to the skills of constructive work. Where students are taught - and taught to value - knowledge as opposed to construction. A clear political drive in 1990's New Zealand was on developing the 'knowledge economy', with less emphasis based on support of the trades. Whereas in past generations young men were told to 'get a trade under their belt', today a more common aspiration is a tertiary education followed by professional work. From 1988 apprentice numbers, across a number of trades, began to decline dramatically ("Apprenticeships and trade training", 2013).

The craftsman, or, in the case of the Shed, tradesman, is someone who invests themselves in their work and in the objects that result from their actions.

It is this investment that leads to 'attachment' to objects. That is not to say they cannot let the objects go, or that the bond is deeply held. The attachment is reflected in pride in a 'job well done', a problem solved, or a skill developed and enacted. The 'doing of' is essential to realising and retaining an identity as a Shed man.

People take pride in being accomplished at something specific, a skill that is based on experience. For many tradesmen and crafts people, the progression of skills and competence is measured in their progression from apprentice, to journeyman and so to master craftsman. In craftsmanship this means dwelling on the task at hand long enough to get it right. Often this involves meditating on the task before taking action, or cognitive thought as well as physical actions. Mike Rose (2005) writes about this in his 'cognitive biographies' (biographical accounts) of several trades people: 'Our testaments to the physical work are so often focused on the values such work exhibits rather than the thought it requires. It is a subtle but pervasive omission' (p.xiii). Each trade and craft has its own cognitive challenges

that need to be overcome before application to task can take place and associated rewards received.

This attachment to object and process of construction is at odds with the consumer whose attachment may be more superficial, or who must invest in use of the object to realize meaning. Sociologist Richard Sennett discusses this in more definitive terms in his book *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (2007). He talks of the ‘consumers’ restless pursuit of the new through a continuous cycle of use and disposal of goods, while the ‘craftsman’ cherishes the goods he has produced and will not let them go lightly. A craftsman is viewed as more practical, more likely to fix, repair and mend, to make and to make do. He is more independent of, or less affected by, the world of advertising with its projected fantasies of the ‘ideal life’. There is an association here with the practical values bestowed on a ‘good bloke’.

Hannah Arendt (1958) writes that the durable objects produced by men ‘give rise to a familiarity of the world, its customs and habits of intercourse between men and things as well as between men and men’ (p.95). This familiarity with the world through constructive work is evident in the Men’s Shed movement, where the building of community is reliant on ‘making’ together in a culture of mateship.

Space is required to sustain a community focused on constructive work, space that not only allows for the main focus to be on production but also enough space to support of the secondary needs of the community. The construction, use and affordance of place is vital. Requirements and maintenance of place are discussed later in this chapter under the heading of Occupational Concepts. The following section looks at the shape and association to constructive work in New Zealand culture and identity.

## NEW ZEALAND’S CULTURE OF INVENTION AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

As alluded to in the ‘mateship’ section of this chapter, New Zealand, by its geographic positioning, is remote from the rest of the world but because we now have efficient and reliable technology and transport, our isolation is less evident.

We are part of the ‘global village’. However, for the majority of the time humans have inhabited New Zealand there has been a need to develop self-reliance since help was not readily at hand. New Zealanders have had to invent, design, manufacture, and construct those things we could not easily obtain. This self-reliance and inventiveness is embedded in our national character and helps explain the appreciation of constructive work and the Men’s Shed movement. It is important to acknowledge the foundations of our national character were formed before European settlement. The following section examines New Zealand’s history of constructive work.

Early Māori adapted to the land by experimentation, by testing the environment and what it held. Skills and techniques were developed in weaving, use of stone for tool making, and in the construction of fortified pa, domestic dwellings and transportation (notably waka). The proficiency of Māori constructive work in their buildings and objects, was greatly admired by early European visitors (“Inventions, patents and trademarks,” 2013). Māori were adept at transferring skills and knowledge to new tasks. In 1819 an English officer wrote of his admiration for the skills of a local Bay of Islands chief, Tetoro, who had manufactured a stock for his musket, ‘. . . with much ingenuity. The place for the barrel had been hollowed out by fire, and the elevation for the lock, though made with an old knife and wretched chisel, was singularly accurate’ (Cruise, 1974, p.130). It is easy to forget that Māori, the indigenous people, adapted to living in New Zealand over 800 years prior to European settlement.

. . . if we believe that ‘Kiwi ingenuity’ began with European settlement, we would be mistaken; all the elements of necessity were there for the Māori as well, and while the names of early Māori inventors have been lost in the mists of time, the fact is that early Māori circumstance was even more uncompromisingly harsh than that faced by the European settlers. The Māori had to improvise with as much energy and creativity as their European cousins and with fewer implements at their disposal (Riley, 1995, p.1).

Because of their circumstances, early European settlers were required to problem solve. They learned to ‘make do’ and what they couldn’t afford they fabricated. John Parker states that

‘Any colonial country by its very isolation has to become an efficient and creative recycler. The process of laterally thinking beyond intended use into the unthought-of possible has been clichéd as ‘Kiwi ingenuity’ (Riley, 1995, p.94). Riley (1995) describes the early settlers as ‘outliers’ in the society they had come from. These were people who had chosen to take a very risky journey into the unknown:

They brought their tools and their skills at improvising, something that is not always appreciated in Mother England, hidebound as it often was with traditional ways of doing things. Many of our immigrants were by nature eccentrics and black sheep, people at the fringe who found it easier to brave the rigors of a foreign and isolated land, than to live in poverty or a stifling work-place (p.3).

From the times of early Māori and European settlement, ingenuity has been part of the New Zealander’s cultural identity, how they see themselves.

New Zealand has had a number of notable inventors, such as Richard Pearce, Bill Hamilton, John Britten who are still celebrated, just as those who can ‘problem solve’ are admired today. As Bridges and Down wrote in *No 8 Wire* (2000), the best of Kiwi ingenuity, problem-solving, is different from invention for financial reward:

Kiwis revered ingenuity, the ‘No 8 wire mentality’ is at once a curse and a blessing. We New Zealanders like to see ourselves as the underdog, creating something out of nothing when the need arises, and this can lead to some great innovations. But inventiveness and improvisation can also lead to the idea that ‘good enough’ is good enough, when in fact if an invention is to be commercially successful it must be perfect” (p.7).

New Zealand’s inventors, makers and problem solvers have seldom been commercially orientated. They have been driven by the necessity of fixing something for themselves or others. There has often been a beneficent factor in their work, much of which has happened in farm and backyard Sheds and workshops. The New Zealand farming community, in particular, has a long history of problem solving out of necessity due to isolation. Farming

communities, and small New Zealand towns, have also led the way in working together for the benefit of everyone in a community. This banding together is reflective of mateship.

Riley (1995), ends the Forward to *Kiwi Ingenuity* by sharing an account he had received from a correspondent which he felt best epitomised the true spirit of kiwi ingenuity:

Many years ago, at a time when street lighting was being electrified in the Nelson area, a small hydro-electric generator was installed in the hills above a Nelson suburb, possibly Brightwater or Wakefield, to supply the new street lighting.

As it was only required to supply power during the hours of darkness a switching system was needed to turn the lights on and off. This being long before remote control systems had been thought of, the ingenious inventor incorporated a chicken run into the hydro generating site. The fowl house was equipped with a hinged perch with a switch under its far end. With the clock-like regularity of chooks the world over, they roost at twilight and their weight on the perch operated the switch and turned on the street lights! Just as reliably they came down from the perch at dawn to turn the lights off again! This suburb was the first place in the Southern Hemisphere to have electricity supplied to a public building in 1886 (p.8-9).

Hopkins links character traits of ingenuity, perseverance and teamwork to New Zealand's Shed culture:

What we have invented, or evolved – and is often confused with identity – is an attitude, to the world and each other, that is ours and ours alone. If anything summed it up, it would probably be Ed Hillary's line after climbing Mt Everest, 'We knocked the bugger off'. Laconic and tongue-in-cheek, it treats the extraordinary as common place and makes it a team effort as well. That kind of self-effacement is important here. We particularly dislike the growth hormone that can make some people too big

for their boots. And we particularly like self-reliance, ‘the willingness to give it a go’. Born of necessity it survives by choice. Being willing to give it a go is expected, it is part of how we want to see ourselves, it’s part of our attitude. Which is why Sheds, and what they represent, are important (Hopkins, 1998, p.10-11).

## **SHED LITERATURE**

The word ‘Shed’ is believed to be of either Germanic or Anglo-Saxon origin. The word ‘shade’ has the same origins with the common connection of darkness and shadowiness. Thomson (2008), writes about the gothic undertones of the Shed. When asked to define what a Shed is he describes it as a functional space, a place given over to a purpose, where things get made or repaired, built, or broken. So, on that basis, it can actually look like anything. The appearance doesn’t matter. Hopkins (1998) muses on sociologist Lionel Tiger’s (1971) suggestion that there is a link between today’s sports teams and hunting parties of cave men who feel

. . . compelled to shuffled down to the fissure at the back of the cave and design a spear that won’t bounce off the average mastodon’s flanks. One way or the other, whether his work was done in lieu of or après-foray, Shedus erectus now has countless heirs. The world’s potters have benefited much from his genetic legacy (p.9).

In a traditional sense a New Zealand domestic shed can be described as a standalone construction, normally situated in the backyard with a contribution to maintaining the home. In saying this, basement workshops are also common and fulfill the same purpose. Traditional tasks are orientated around woodwork, metalwork, painting, gardening and general repair of household objects. Backyard sheds are of a time period where there was a focus on fixing rather than replacing items and when it was possible to do so because there were no computerized parts or sealed units. Sheds were common on properties where section size allowed for not only a shed but also a vegetable garden. These properties were, typically, a

quarter of an acre in size. Over the latter part of the twentieth century, properties have become smaller so Sheds have reduced in size and become attached to garages and other parts of the house.

This has coincided with an increase in disposable income and an abundance of leisure time options as well as a society where the general application of trade skills has reduced due to the affordability, reliability, and disposable nature of consumer goods (“The shed”, 2013).

New Zealand sheds have traditionally been male domains, places where men have sovereignty and control. New Zealand historian, Jock Phillips (1987), noted that when faced with domestic restrictions ‘the man’s response was to cordon off from the domestic environment certain exclusive male territories’ (p.243), the shed being a key territory. They are places where DIY (do it yourself) skills can be practiced and passed on and, in so doing, demonstrate values of practicality, economy and innovation.

The most notable works describing domestic Shed culture have been published by Thompson (1998, Australia), Hopkins (1998, 1999, 2002, New Zealand) and Jones (2004, The United Kingdom). Each of these authors has recognised the existence of a Shed culture related to their country of origin. Evidence of attachment to a New Zealand Shed culture, if not necessarily its practice, can be found in the 60,000 plus copies of Hopkins *Blokes & Sheds* book that have been sold. These books record the experiences of a number of Shed men, focusing on their constructive projects and inventions as well as the affordances of their Shed places.

Sheds are primarily the domain of males. The accounts in these books focus on individuals or small groups of men working in isolation from the rest of the world. Sheds can be viewed as refuges from the outside world. Herein lies the major difference between domestic Sheds and community Sheds. With community Sheds there is reliance on others and reciprocity is expected. Many attenders of community Sheds have workshops at home but they have chosen to forego ownership of the space because of the social and communal benefits and have decided to mix and work alongside others with similar abilities.

In an article in the *New Zealand Listener* (2011), Bill Ralston is scathing in his differentiation between the domestic Shed and the community Shed.

These are not the backyard Sheds of old. Jim Hopkins once did a book and a TV series on blokes and their Sheds. These tend to be rusty shacks stuffed with tools, lethal machinery and bits of things in the process of being constructed, dismantled or rebuilt. They were places where men could retreat from their families, lose themselves in some task, sneak a drink and smoke an illicit cigarette while listening to the races on an old dusty radio they had fixed. These were wombs of solitude and introversion for blokes...Not so the new Men's Shed movement (p.11).

In summarising what a Shed is in the *Journal of Occupational Science* (2008), Thomson notes that he has often been asked to put his writings and 'ad hoc' research into a formula. His response was, 'If I had to do it, the result would be: SHED=PRACTICAL=PURPOSE=MEANING. A Shed is a practical place that provides a sense of life purpose and as a result provides a sense of life's meaning" (p.193). He describes Sheds, both individual and collective, as:

. . . practical spaces where people can be resourceful and inventive, share skills, contribute to their community, offer networking and provide support. They can also provide space for personal contemplation. While Sheds come in many forms, and are utilised in varied and novel ways by individuals and groups, the common element of the Shed as a place of meaning and creativity is posited (Thomson, 2008).

## **THE MEN'S SHED MOVEMENT**

The Men's Shed movement has evolved in the last decade and a half. According to the Australian Men's Shed Association website (<http://www.mensShed.org>) there are over 900 Sheds operating in Australia with over 100,000 members.

Australian Sheds have attracted over four million dollars in government support and are recognised as part of the health infrastructure. According to the Men's Sheds New Zealand website (<http://www.menssheds.org.nz>) there are over 35 Sheds active in New Zealand.

Men's Sheds developed with a focus on men's health and well-being. Although many Sheds share this focus each has developed an individual and unique identity and purpose. There are multiple organisations and agencies under whose auspices Sheds operate, as well as Sheds that are operated by groups of individuals from the same local community. A number of Men's Sheds have developed with the assistance of other organisations (fire brigade, sports clubs, veterans groups). Funding and resourcing for Sheds has come from both governmental and non-governmental agencies (Golding, Brown, Foley, Harvey, and Gleeson, 2007; Golding, 2009).

Activities within Men's Sheds are many and varied including woodwork, metal work, and furniture and car restoration. Many Sheds have a dual focus on community projects as well as members' individual and joint projects. Shed membership has enabled many members to be active and visible in their communities, to be seen as a community resource. Without the presence of Sheds many members would remain practically invisible in their communities.

Within Australia, membership across the individual Sheds is more often than not restricted to males. Male company and the sharing of male values are seen as important, often being overtly stated in the charter of Shed communities. However, as Golding (2009) observes, women play a vital role in many Sheds through advocacy, coordination, record keeping and clerical tasks as well as media representation. Although these roles are seen as important in terms of support and sustainability, they are peripheral to the main foci of Shed activity.

As noted in Hopkins' literature, the term 'bloke' has become closely associated with Sheds in New Zealand. However, although this concept of being a bloke has been adopted by some Sheds in New Zealand, in Otago the attributes of being a good bloke are valued without openly excluding females (McNeilly, 2009). This is not to say females attend these Sheds. In reviewing popular literature on New Zealand Sheds I found that although members are predominantly male, and the culture of many Sheds is masculine, it is rarely stated overtly that Sheds are a male-only domain.

Much of the available research on the Men's Shed movement comes from an Australian context. It should be noted that although New Zealand and Australia share a number of social, cultural, economic and demographic similarities they are far from identical. Barry Golding is the pre-eminent researcher of the Men's Shed Movement and its educational, vocational, wellbeing and health benefits (Golding, 2006; Golding, Foley and Brown, 2007; Golding, Brown, Foley, Harvey, and Gleeson, 2007; Golding, Kimberly, Foley and Brown, 2008; Golding 2008; Golding 2009). Golding and colleagues research has indicated that the Men's Shed environment improves mental health and wellbeing, with members of Sheds being far less susceptible to depression, suicide and social isolation than those in the equivalent age bracket who aren't involved with Sheds on a regular basis.

In a 2011 *New Zealand Listener* magazine article, *Sawdust and solutions*, Barry Golding is quoted on the interpretation of the benefits from involvement in Men's Sheds. He notes that interpretation depends on who is describing them: 'A sociologist will see it as a sociological phenomenon, an expert in informal learning, like me, will see it as informal men's learning, a suicide prevention officer as a program against depression, a gerontologist as a place for productive ageing' (Tolerton, 2011). As stated, my research views the Shed movement through an occupational lens as opposed to the learning focus of Golding and associates' research. In saying this, key messages from the Golding, et al 2007 report for the National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation program have relevance and inform the structure and reasoning behind this study. Their enquiry was funded by the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training, on behalf of the Australian Government. Researchers investigated community-run Men's Sheds with a particular focus on learning styles employed there, as well as on the experiences and motivations of Shed members. They found that Men's Sheds are particularly successful in engaging older men, men who are often facing issues of significant change in their lives such as ageing, health, retirement, isolation, unemployment, disability and separation. Men's Sheds provide mateship and a sense of belonging through informal activities and experiences with other men. As a result, Men's Sheds achieve positive health, happiness and wellbeing outcomes for men who participate. Australian researchers also found Men's Sheds are reliant on volunteers and many Shed communities struggle with initial set-up costs, health and safety requirements, and

procuring funding to assist with coordination and supervision of participants. Despite all these limitations, Men's Sheds have continued to grow in Australia although there is uncertainty around the future growth and sustainability of the movement. Because the future of Men's Sheds is partially dependent on government acceptance of their worth, subsequent funding population demographics are likely to have a significant effect on an increasing demand for, and proliferation of, Sheds (Golding, 2009).

More recent research has been conducted by Moylan, Blackburn, Leggart, Robinson, Cary and Hayes from La Trobe University Australia. Moylan et al (2011) used a similar qualitative methodology to this study, including six months of participant observation followed by semi-structured in-depth interviews. They concluded that the collaborative nature of the Men's Shed contributes to the health and wellbeing of participants as does the sense of purpose provided by the work and the structure it provides for participants. At the time of writing their research has yet to be published.

The Australian research emphasises the links between ongoing learning and wellbeing, particularly in environments outside vocational or traditional education settings. It highlights the importance of learning with and alongside others, a link that has been established in numerous international studies. Men's Sheds are seen as a way of enabling transition to retirement and of supporting men alongside their wives and partners to address issues of health and wellbeing. In the literature there are a number of smaller research studies, editorials and papers that focus on the physical, mental and emotional health benefits of the Shed movement (Ballinger, Tabolt, and Verrinder, 2009; Ormsby, Stanley, and Jaworski, 2010; Fildes, Fildes, Cass, Wallner, and Owen, 2010; Morgan, 2010).

Within the realm of occupational science, Martin and Wicks (2008), looked at the experiences of meaningful occupation of members of one particular Shed, The Berry Men's Shed. This was a short term participant observation study which described the benefits received by members who engaged in the activities of that Shed. Golding (2009), has found Australian Men's Sheds tend to thrive in post-industrial suburban areas, rural and regional areas (where farmers have moved to towns where ex-tradesmen are concentrated), areas hit by crisis and change, and areas where the proportion of men 'beyond paid work' is higher than average.

The spread of Men's Sheds in Australia has been helped by word of mouth, referral, information sharing (meetings and conferences), formal Shed networks, research dissemination, media (including popularised Shed literature), digital communications and, importantly, 'grey nomads' (those who visit other Sheds).

With the development of the Shed movement, central organisations have established an Australian base to offer support for continuing and emerging Sheds in both Australia and New Zealand. These organisations include The Australian Men's Shed Association (<http://www.mensShed.org/home/.aspx>, a non-profit organisation established in 2000, and MenSheds Australia Ltd (<http://www.menSheds.org.au/>). Both offer central communication and infrastructural support for Shed communities, helping facilitate projects that meet individual and community aspirations. Menzshed New Zealand (<http://mensSheds.org.nz/>) has grown over the last three years. All three of these organisations have an online presence.

The Australian Men's Shed Association website makes the following observations about what Sheds offer and who attends:

So what is so special about this new type of Men's Shed? Most men have learned from our culture that they don't talk about feelings and emotions. There has been little encouragement for men to take an interest in their own health and well-being. Unlike women, most men are reluctant to talk about their emotions and that means that they usually don't ask for help. Probably because of this many men are less healthy than women, they drink more, take more risks and they suffer more from isolation, loneliness and depression. Relationship breakdown, retrenchment or early retirement from a job, loss of children following divorce, physical or mental illness are just some of the problems that men find it hard to deal with on their own.

Good health is based on many factors including feeling good about yourself, being productive and valuable to your community, connecting to friends and maintaining an active body and an active mind. Becoming a member of a Men's Shed gives a man that safe and busy environment

where he can find many of these things in an atmosphere of old-fashioned mateship. And, importantly, there is no pressure. Men can just come and have a yarn and a cuppa if that is all they're looking for.

(Australian Men's Shed Association, 2012)

In Australia there is acceptance from various state and governmental agencies to provide funding for Men's Shed services. In New Zealand there is an awareness of the movement in the health and education sectors but no stated intention to provide funding despite its relevance. Argument for funding could be made in relation to the New Zealand Health Strategy (2000). Factors influencing wellbeing in ageing will be discussed later in this chapter.

As stated, research on Men's Sheds in a New Zealand context is limited. A 2010 report on the (Wairarapa), provides an insight into an effective New Zealand Men's Shed community, a community that offers a social service to the local area that is not to be found in traditional sports clubs, public bars and Returned Servicemen's Associations. This report was commissioned by the Wairarapa Rural Education Activities program as a condition of the Henley Men's Shed's funding which came from the Tertiary Education Commission (Styles, 2010). The report was based on a questionnaire which produced qualitative and quantitative data. The Shed was found to meet the needs of many who attended, and members identified strongly with the community. Effective governance was in place and members pointed out numerous health and wellbeing benefits arising from their involvement in the Shed. The biggest issue identified for this Shed was sourcing ongoing funding. Changing policy and government funding structure was seen as a key issue here. I found this to be highly informative study, albeit limited, and it has helped shape my research. One of the recommendations from the Henley Men's Shed study was that the New Zealand Men's Shed movement engages in more research. The study identified the cycle of research leading to policy development and this, in turn, leading to government support.

My research will help build and inform the knowledge base about the Men's Shed movement in New Zealand. As an occupational therapist my view of the Shed movement and

interpretation of findings will be embedded in the language and concepts of my profession and the associated domain of occupational science.

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE CONCEPTS**

In the introductory chapter I gave an overview of the philosophies that underpin occupational therapy and occupational science. The following review expands on concepts from these two areas that have relevance to this study and the interpretation of findings.

Through occupation, humans ‘do’, ‘be’, ‘become’, and ‘belong’. ‘Doing’ signifies engagement in purposeful, goal orientated activities which provide affirmation of competence and self-worth. ‘Being’ through occupation provides a point of reflection on who we are and what or who we value. Occupations that impart skill and knowledge while affirming an envisaged future self, enable ‘becoming’. Through occupation we connect, depend on - or provide for - others, allowing us to develop a sense of ‘belonging’ where we are valued and experience mutual support (Wilcock, 1998a; Wilcock, 1998b; Hammell, 2004; Rowels, 1991; Rebeiro, 2001).

Our collective occupations reflect our occupational identity. Occupational identity refers to how an individual sees the self in terms of various occupational roles, rights, obligations and expected behaviour patterns. Our sense of selfhood is an awareness of self and capabilities found through engagement in occupation in various environments, leading to acceptable identity through competence in performing occupations (Christiansen, 1999). Christiansen identifies four central propositions related to occupational identity: Identity is shaped by relationships with others. Identity is closely tied to our actions in relation to others. Identities provide cohesions, meaning and a self-narrative. Occupational identity is an essential element in promoting life-satisfaction. Keilhofner (2002), defines occupational identity as a composite sense of who one is and wishes to become as an occupational being generated from one’s history of occupational participation. Occupational identity is shaped by capacities and interests, roles and relationships, obligations and routines, and by environmental contexts and expectations. People’s volition, habits, and lived bodily experiences combine to create an

occupational identity that is a “means of self-definition and a blueprint for upcoming action” (p.119). Howie, Coulter and Feldman (2004) link the conceptualization of occupational identity with achieving occupational satisfaction. By engaging in occupations in the environment, humans can reflect on and evaluate their role as ‘active agents’ in their own lives. By realising meaningfulness and purpose through occupation one greatly improves one’s sense of self.

### MEANINGFUL AND PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY

Occupational therapy and occupational science highlight adaptation while doing, with the underlying premise that action facilitates change, personal development and consequential wellbeing (Molineux and Whiteford, 1999). Research on the Men’s Shed movement indicates there is a meeting of health and social needs through meaningful and purposeful Shed activity. Meaning comes through reattachment with tasks and projects related to Shed work, community participation, social connection, and through the development of new. The provision of occupational choice is important for members. Townsend (1997), talks of the importance of choice in our lives:

The everyday experience of power involves making choices and exerting control over our bodies, friends, and homes and so on. We reflect, weigh alternatives, set priorities, and express choice as an act of decision making. In other words, decision making is an occupation which enables us to exert control and power in everyday experiences (p.21).

This enabling allows us to develop a positive occupational identity. When we are restricted from engagement in meaningful occupation our ability to realize our true self is affected. Occupational scientists term this occupational deprivation:

. . . in which a person or group of people are unable to do what is necessary and meaningful in their lives due to external restrictions. It is a state in which the opportunity to perform those occupations that have social, cultural and personal relevance is rendered difficult if not

impossible. It is a reality for numerous people living around the globe today (Whiteford, 2000, p.200).

Our engagement in meaningful occupation is dependent on our interaction with other humans and the ability to access, utilise, and build places that afford occupation.

## OCCUPATION AND PLACE

Place is dependent on holding and taking possession which is contained in the definition of occupation. ‘Space is organised into places often thought of as bounded settings in which social relations and identity are constituted. A place is a “portion of geographic space.” (Johnson, Gregory, Pratt, and Watts, 2000, p 582). Individual and collective human occupation is central to our attaching meaning to places. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes ‘place’ as we get to know it better and endow it with value (Relph, 1976).

Places don’t just happen, they require action. The relationship between the environment and human occupation is twofold. The nature of the physical environment shapes the activities humans do. The specifics of what people grow, hunt, farm, eat and drink are shaped by the context in which our ancestors lived. The resources available locally have historically affected the tools that were developed, and the buildings constructed. Humans also transform the physical environment to fit purpose with their buildings, construction projects and their design and use of space:

When people engage in everyday pursuits that capture their time and attention, they do so in places. The places in which people find themselves strongly influence what they do and the meaning of their time spent there. In fact the contribution of place is an important and necessary element of occupation. This is because all occupational situations have three components: places, people (with their attributes, thoughts, feelings, and memories), and the occupations in which the people engage. Thus the link between person, place, and occupation is so strong that one cannot

consider occupations without considering they involve people in places (Hamilton, 2010, p.252).

As Hamilton notes there is an undeniable interaction between people, place and the occupations they choose or need to do. Meaning is tied to the work involved in constructing places, the labor to maintain place and what is done with whom, in place. Place influences the meaning and choice of people's occupational engagement. A person's ability to interact with place in everyday life can have both subtle and dynamic, positive and negative effects on their sense of wellbeing and health (Hasselkus, 2002).

The way we design places and the objects we position in place provide affordances. 'Affordance' is a term coined by psychologist James Gibson (1950) and later referenced by Donald Norman (1988) where an affordance is a property of an object, or a feature of the immediate environment, that indicates how to interface with that object or feature. The empty space within an open doorway, for instance, affords movement across that threshold. A couch affords the possibility of sitting down on it. Affordance is a quality of an object, or an environment, which allows an individual to perform an action. Efficient use of space is also dependent on the fit between the person, environment and task/s they undertake. Ergonomics aims to design appliances, technical systems and tasks in such a way as to improve human safety, health, comfort and performance (Dul and Weerdmeester, 1993).

The ambience of a place resides in its character and atmosphere. Humans might be in an environment that affords and enables ergonomic fit but it may not have the requirements of comfort, quiet, mood or inspiration that is needed to invite occupation ("Ambience", 2013). Ambience is a quality that supports our doing in place as individuals and in social collectives.

Places are socially constructed as much as they are manually constructed and maintained. Places are tied to individual or collective attributions of meaning or application to purpose. Meaning relates both to what has been done in place (history) what is done in place in its present form and what is envisioned for future occupation in place. Places have meaning because of the occupations we have engaged in individually or collectively. Places enable a sense of belonging, an anchor point, a refuge, a place where rules, norms and actions are known, a place where the individual can have control and input (Walton, 1990).

## OCCUPATION AND COMMUNITY

Positive experiences of shared occupation provide the right fit and lead to individuals being embedded in communities. The defining features of close knit social groups include respect, connectedness, belonging, reciprocity, mutual aid, care for each other and often altruism in that people are helping and protecting one another (Rubin, 1983). Stable community is dependent on maintaining focus on key occupations over time, where individuals have the chance to be heard in the groups and have experiences of shared satisfaction:

Human communities consist of groups of people who do things together and individually. People participate collectively through shared interests and activities (occupational pursuits) in work, sport, hobbies, volunteerism, home life, and civic involvement. Bonds that draw and keep people thinking about each other and occupied together may include shared beliefs, shared geography, shared interests, shared experiences, shared traditions, or shared kinship (Christiansen and Townsend, 2010, p.176).

Communities are based on diverse ways of doing derived from diverse ‘ways of knowing’ (Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986). The occupational nature of social groups is characterised by differences including gender and race. These differences influence ways people understand, and interpret what communities do and how they interact (Christiansen and Townsend, 2010).

Occupational therapists and occupational scientists understand that negotiation between individuals and their context is critical to social inclusion (Bryant, 2008). There is recognition that social inclusion promotes human doing, being, becoming and, particularly, belonging (Christiansen and Townsend, 2010, p. 204). There are benefits to ‘belonging’ (Bryant, Craik, and McKay, 2004), and particularly in this instance where belonging is framed as the interpersonal connection of people through shared engagement in occupation (Wilcock, 2007). This is an important component of Wilcock’s (2006), health hypothesis where belonging alongside doing, being, and becoming are the means to survival and health (p. 209). Wilcock’s hypothesis explains belonging as having acceptance and interpersonal connection.

Someone who is excluded from social participation is likely to experience social deprivation and in turn occupational deprivation (Bryant, 2008). Occupational deprivation is one of the main restrictions to the uptake of occupations beneficial to health (Wilcock, 1998a). Rebeiro (2001) proposes that 'belonging' allows the development of self-efficacy and assists in enabling the transition from ill health to health. She suggests that four conditions need to be in place for the environment to enable belonging: affirmation, choice and self-determination, provision of both private and community spaces, and physical and emotional safety within an environment.

Active and beneficial occupational contribution to community helps form social capital. Social capital has multiple definitions and interpretations. For this research, social capital refers to the application of experience and skill to facilitate individual or collective actions. It is where actions are guided by social norms, reciprocity, and networks of relationships (Colman, 1988). Social capital is the collective value that arises from social networks doing for each other (Putnam, 2006).

## OCCUPATIONAL TRANSITION

The concept of transition is widely recognised in health literature as well as texts and studies within the occupational therapy profession and the domain of occupational science. Transitions are in evidence across the human life span as a result of changes in the day to day activities of persons or communities where the change is often permanent and therefore has a lasting effect. Change can be manifested in loss of place, retirement from paid employment, change in health status and relationships with others. Transitions occur when a person's perceived reality is disrupted and they are either forced, or choose, to change. There is a need to adapt and construct a new reality (Kralik, Visentin, and van Loon, 2006; Rittman, Boylstein, Hinojosa; Hinojosa, and Haun, 2007).

The form transitions take is complex and multifaceted with it being common to have multiple elements to transitions. Retirement from a paid vocation often means a change in place of residence; in farming, for example, when the productive land and dwelling is passed on to be

farmed by another. This may mean moving away from not only the familiarities of home but also community and social connection.

Transitions often result in periods of turmoil and distress for the individual. They are time bound where a process of adaptation is required to find a new point of stability (Meleis, Sawyer, Im, Messias, and Schumacher, 2000). The process of adaptation requires awareness on the individual's behalf to the processes of change. Awareness and a willingness to take action are needed to engage in and influence the process of change. It is often after a person realises that their life is now different, and their actions are different, that they deliberately engage in the process of the transition (Clingerman, 2007; Kralik, et al., 2006; Meleis, et al., 2000).

Published research on the Men's Shed movement shows that many individuals have faced significant transition in their lives. This has often been related to retirement or loss of paid income. Shed membership provides an alternative set of occupations where purpose and meaning can be found. Townsend (1997) identifies the potential that occupation provides to transform the person and the community around them:

In defining occupation as a utilitarian, economic object, we have overlooked its transformative potential. Yet occupation is the active process of living: from the beginning to the end of life, our occupations are all the active process of looking after ourselves and others, enjoying life, and being socially and economically productive over the life span and in various contexts... the potential to transform ourselves and society, to overcome barriers and to pursue aims such as health and happiness as well as wealth, lies in occupation (pp.19-20).

Negotiation of any life turning point or transition is a complex process in the lives of individuals and those they associate with. There is inherent risk in maladaptation to transformation. Within the domain of occupational therapy and occupational science, attention has started to be paid to transition points in the lives of individuals or identified groups. 'Social transformation may occur as people engage in occupations such as building homes, organising schools, working with others to create equitable opportunities for all to

live, play rest, vote, and otherwise participate fully in community life' (Townsend, 1997. p.21).

Blair (2000) provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of the professional thinking around life transitions. She found that negotiating any turning point in life involves risk, yet the complexity of life's transitions has often been overlooked while more attention has been focused on life stages rather than on the transitions between them. She observes that the profession of occupational therapy has started to understand that life transition requires adaptation in terms of role changes, balance of valued occupations and occupational performance.

Occupational adaptation has been investigated in relation to experiences of disability and illness (Braveman & Helfrich, 2001; Jongdloed, 1994; Klinger, 2005; Stone, 2005; Vrkljan and Miller-Polgar, 2001), however, little research has been conducted on so called 'well' populations such as those who have joined Men's Sheds after retiring from paid employment. Wiseman and Whiteford (2009) note:

Periods of transition such as retirement seem to pose an opportunity to understand a potentially adaptive experience of a well population and in doing so learn more about the relationship between participation in occupations and occupational identity. Additionally, it may assist in the development of understandings of how occupational transitions which are not negotiated successfully can impact negatively on the well-being of specific populations (p.108).

In reporting on selected findings from life history studies of older men's retirement histories in rural Australia, Wiseman and Whiteford (2009) found retirement is often looked at as a simplistic process but when examined constitutes a carefully orchestrated transitional process with gradual changes to several aspects of occupational life including space, place and routine. They conclude that, 'Maintaining a link between pre and post-retirement life seemed to be an instrumental strategy throughout retirement. The men (who adapted best to retirement) maintained connections not only with meaningful places, but also with a whole way of life, including people, meaningful occupations and knowledge' (p.108). The significance of

connection to people, place and occupational connections supports Klinger's inclusion of preserving occupational participation in the evolving definition of occupational adaptation (Klinger, 2005).

Within the Men's Shed literature there is a general recognition of the centrality of meaningful work to productive involvement of individuals in Men's Sheds after transition from paid work (Golding, et al, 2007; Martin and Wicks, 2008). The structure of Sheds provides for what Blair (2000), describes as the primary consideration throughout transition, this being continued engagement in work-based occupations. The emphasis on continuity resonates with the suggestion that meaningful occupation can provide a link between the past and the present reality and, accordingly, protects a sense of selfhood during transition.

Golding et al (2007), and Ryff and Keyes (1995), both highlight the dilemma the western world faces in relation to increasing life expectancies coupled with improvements in health care and societal changes which have led to current and growing numbers of healthy and active persons in retirement. With this increase comes 'an increased interest in finding ways to promote meaningful activity in the lives of the older persons to help prevent the psychological and biological consequences of lonely or inactive lifestyles' (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Golding (2009), anticipates a growth in the Men's Shed movement to help meet these demands, with the recognition that societal, governmental and private funding and support are essential.

## **POPULATION AGEING IN NEW ZEALAND LITERATURE<sup>2</sup>**

It is an accepted reality that New Zealand, along with other developed and developing nations, will continue to experience a burgeoning older population that will skew future demographic distributions. A large increase is expected in the ageing population of New Zealand in the decade between 2021 and 2031 (see figure 16). This population is expected to be healthier

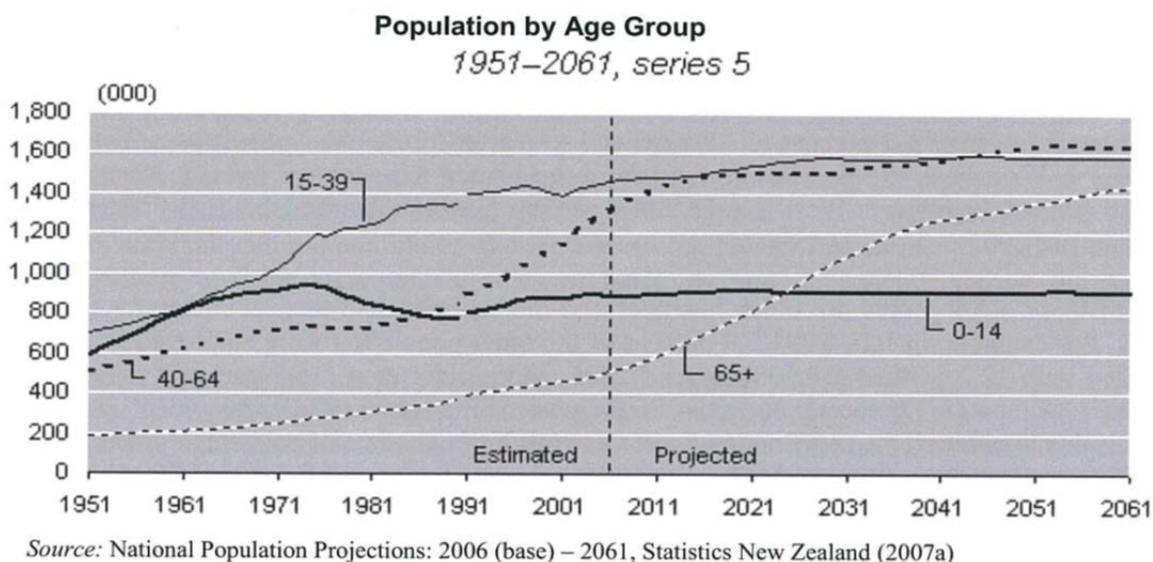
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<sup>2</sup> Please note the majority of this section is based on literature and statistical data derived from the 2006 census, or studies prior to 2006. Data would have been taken from the planned 2011 census but this was delayed because of the Christchurch Earthquake on the 22nd of February 2011.

and more active than past generations, and more diverse in their interests. This predicted increase in the aged demographic is a result of increased quality of medical knowledge and technology, government policy, and changing attitudes towards healthy living and participation in a wider scope of activities.

It is predicted that if fertility rates stay at or below replacement levels the long-term consequence would be a population age structure with more elderly adults than children, with 1 in 4 New Zealanders being over 64 years of age.

*Population by Age Group*



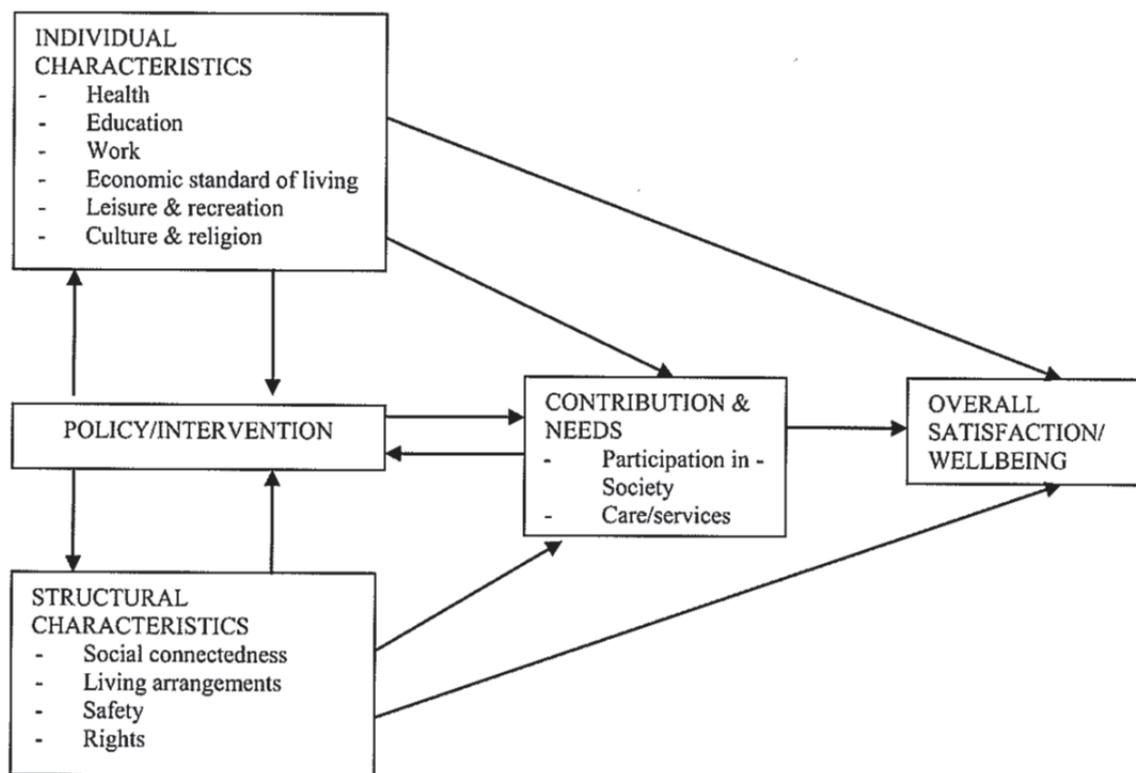
*Figure 17 - Predicted population by age group (Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007, p.1)*

Due to this demographic change a number of countries have developed national strategies for their ageing populations. Strategies assess the implications for social and economic planning (Racic, 1999). Economically, governments are concerned with the feasibility of funding a growing aged population and the increased cost of providing health services. At a regional and community level consideration is being given to issues of housing and accommodation, the provision of aged-care, transport, and community support services (e.g. meals on wheels).

Koopman-Boyden (1993) discussed the challenges faced by any ageing population with special reference to the value society places on older people and their ability to retain accustomed lifestyles as they age. They state that the ability to retain lifestyle is directly

related to health, income and inclusion in society. There is limited research on the implications for New Zealand's ageing population. Further research is required for the informed development of health strategies, funding, and service provision for an ageing population. This includes examination of life and health satisfaction, participation in meaningful occupation, as well as a greater understanding of preventative health measures and their impact on longer life expectancy and quality of life (Rawson, 1999). The *Enhancing Wellbeing and Ageing in Society* study (Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007), distinguishes a number of areas which require research and policy response. A number of these areas relate to the Men's Shed movement and the focus of this study. Identified research needs include how best to make the transition from work to retirement, the social isolation of older people, recognition of the social contributions made by older people, respect for autonomy and self-determination in ageing and quality versus quantity of life for older people (p.4). The ability to participate in society has a direct effect on the wellbeing of New Zealand's elderly population (Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007, p.3).

Just participation in society is linked to perceptions of worth and hence perceptions of utility. Utilitarianism, in its classical, Benthamite, form, is based upon the idea that a person's utility is a measure of the pleasure they experience through the satisfaction of their preferences. It is the basis of their welfare or wellbeing (Sen, 1999; Nuessbaum, 2005). The factors that influence wellbeing are presented in the framework below:



*Figure 18 - Conceptual Model of Enhanced Wellbeing in Ageing Society (Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007, p.19)*

Figure 18 considers the structural and individual characteristics of wellbeing as well as achievement through human agency and policy intervention.

The field of gerontology has long been interested in the links between social connectedness and the wellbeing of older adults. Social exclusion is a result of isolation from social participation that is not chosen. Social contacts are a source of support, contributing to older people's functioning and wellbeing. Social exclusion has detrimental impacts associated with poor mental health, depression and preventable death. Numerous research studies have shown how the number of social contacts declines with age (Lang and Carstensen, 1994). There is limited research within the New Zealand context that explores social connectedness and wellbeing. New Zealand research which does exist shows that older people see a direct link between social relationships and wellbeing. Social relationships include associations with

neighbours, friends, family and community (Dwyer, Grey and Renwick, 2000; Te Pumanawa Hauora, 1997).

The connection between leisure and wellbeing has been established over time in the Ministry of Social Development Social Reports (2001-2007), where leisure time has been defined as a time when people can do what they want to do, away from work and other commitments. Although a general connection has been made, there is no specific governmental report on older New Zealand Adults although it is known that leisure and recreation activities are affected by life transitions. In later years participation changes further because of declining physical and mental health (Ministry of Social Development, 2008, p86).

The Mosgiel longitudinal study found older people proclaim and practise their independence in the context of social networks which include family and friends (Keeling, 1999). This study found that friendship, reciprocity, and a sense of independence in place contributed to well-being in the area. It found that participants have positive views of ageing in Mosgiel due to its climate, flatness, size, location and proximity to town or country. Although the study was completed over ten years ago Mosgiel continues to attract and sustain a retirement population.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided an overview of the concepts and literature relevant to this study. The meaning and purpose of constructive work has been addressed including cultural links to New Zealand's national identity and history. The difference between the nature of domestic and community Men's Sheds has been defined, where Men's Sheds are centred on collective endeavour often associated with a culture of mateship.

Research suggests that health, wellbeing, vocational and educational benefits ensue from involvement in community Men's Sheds. These benefits have been captured in both qualitative and quantitative research. Popular media has also documented the benefits and experiences of specific community Sheds. The majority of studies and writings on the movement have been based in an Australian context. What is missing from the Men's Shed research is a New Zealand study that focuses on understanding the culture of a Men's Shed community.

In this research I have examined the community Shed movement as it exists in a New Zealand context specific to the Taieri Blokes Shed. I have looked at this community through an occupational lens and have presented relevant literature and concepts that underpin an occupational focus. I have drawn on the fields of occupational therapy and occupational science as well as additional sources relative to health, wellbeing and the link to meaningful occupation.

Given the age demographic of the study population, research has been reviewed on health, wellbeing and ageing. There is a lack of research in the New Zealand context that looks at 'well ageing' issues and this is a recognised policy concern for government at a national and local level, hence this research will add to the current body of knowledge.

In the next chapter I will describe and explore the methods used in this research.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the research methodology applied to this study which was conducted in line with qualitative research principles, using an ethnographic framework. Participant observation and qualitative interviewing were the main forms of data collection, supplemented by review of cultural records and secondary sources. It is important to state that data collected from ethnographical research utilising participation and observation data analysis is open to interpretation. This research presents both an emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspective in viewing the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed and addressing the research aims. My earlier undergraduate study of human geography has complemented these underpinnings particularly in interpreting the creation, use and maintenance of place.

The first part of the chapter reviews the important principles that underpin qualitative research and ethnographic research, and justifies the suitability of the selected methodologies. Common criticisms and limitations of selected methodologies are addressed as well as the ethical considerations made in this research.

The last part of the chapter gives a detailed explanation of how the research was conducted. The purpose of this explanation is to provide contextual knowledge to understand procedures used in data collection and analysis. There are appendices that supplement the information presented here.

### **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Qualitative research covers a broad range of approaches and methodologies. It is diverse and evolving where the approach to chosen research methodology is driven by the philosophical or ontological perspective of the researcher. Qualitative research is focused on understanding meaning and the lived experiences of those researched (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 ; Rubin and Rubin 2005; Schwandt, 2000; Snape and Spencer, 2003).

Qualitative researchers are interested in the knowing of truth or what is considered to be true in the studied community (epistemology).

Broadly speaking, although there are contested and evolving definitions of qualitative research, it can be recognised by the presence of general characteristics which constitute the aims of research. Listed below are the general characteristics of qualitative research as summarised by Marshall and Rossman (2011) adapted from Rossman and Rallis (2003).

- Research takes place in the natural world as opposed to a controlled environment
- Research uses multiple methods of inquiry and data collection that are interactive and humanistic
- Research focuses on context in which the inquiry is conducted
- Research process emergent rather than being tightly prefigured. Decisions about design and strategy are on-going rather than adherent to a blue print.
- Research is fundamentally interpretive

In adopting a qualitative approach the researcher considers and is guided by the following points.

- An aim to view social phenomena holistically
- Systematic reflection on who they (the researcher) are in the inquiry
- Sensitivity to their personal biography and the effect it has on the shape of their study
- Use of complex reasoning that is multifaceted and interactive

Much of the diversity in approaches to qualitative research is shaped by the researcher's philosophical or sociological perspective.

A qualitative approach to this study allowed me, as the researcher, to experience and describe active participation in the community and understand the meaning and purpose attributed to membership. I have recorded experiences from the perspective of members while acknowledging that my recordings were influenced by my understanding and background. This influence has been addressed through reflexivity, which demands acknowledgement of

the perspective through which I have viewed activities within the Taieri Blokes Shed and my relationships with participants:

Researchers ‘position themselves’ in a qualitative research study. This means that researchers convey (i.e., in a method section, in an introduction, or in other places in the study) their background (e.g. working experiences, cultural experiences, history), how it informs their interpretation of the information in the study, and what they have to gain from the study (Creswell, 2012. p. 47).

I followed the advice of Wolcott, 2010 (as cited in Creswell, 2012), who provides a more direct rationale of researchers responsibilities to those who access or utilise our research. ‘Our readers have the right to know about us. And they do not want to know whether we played in the high school band. They want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting, and what we personally stand to gain from our study (p.36). A researcher’s influence on the setting cannot simply be framed as a source of bias. It can provide, in itself, insight into the community. ‘How people respond to the presence of the researcher may be as informative as how they react to other situations’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.15).

One of my reasons for completing this thesis is to achieve a higher qualification in the form of the Masters in Occupational Therapy. I believe that an understanding of the Taieri Blokes Shed and wider Men’s Shed movement has perceived benefit (substantive contribution) to the knowledge base of both occupational therapy and occupational science. Findings from this research are intended to be shared within these fields through the production of journal articles and conference presentations. In addition to benefits to me and the occupational therapy profession it is intended that this work be of advantage to the studied community and the wider community Men’s Shed movement.

## **ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

Ethnography has strong associations with qualitative research methodologies. In saying this, some ethnographic studies also utilise quantitative methodologies to understand populations. This research uses qualitative methodologies.

Ethnographical research aims to represent the nature of people within social collectives and demands the researcher's immersion within a community of interest, which involves enactment of social roles and relationships, which places the self (researcher) at the heart of the enterprise (Coffey, 1999, p.23).

Ethnography has its origins in anthropology where, historically, its concern was the observation of persons, predominantly non-western, in their lived environment, which are often unfamiliar to the researcher. In recent decades ethnography has been adopted as an accepted methodology in of social science, human geography, health, communication studies and business studies. Although ethnography has its roots planted in anthropology, contemporary practitioners conduct ethnographies in organisations and communities of all kinds (Agar, 1996). Current ethnographies focus on settings and communities that are often familiar to the researcher. Studies are conducted across a number of cultures and socio-economic areas including focus on gender, age, ethnicity and other prominent or less prominent demographics. Although used in various disciplines, with a range of informing philosophies, ethnography remains an exploration of people in their daily environment.

Ethnographic study adheres to the methodological principle of naturalism where the participant observer carries out research in naturally occurring settings with the aim of minimising their effect on behaviours and proceedings (Brewer, 2000). This allows the potential for findings to be generalised to other similar settings based on the understanding of actions and behaviours. As a method of understanding, ethnography is not far removed from the approach humans use in everyday life to make sense of their surroundings. Ethnography is less structured or technically sophisticated than experimental approaches. It involves capturing what occurs then rather following through on a plan that is set up at the beginning of the research.

The defining method of ethnography is participant observation. As the name infers it demands considered observation alongside active participation in the lives and community of others, so “... we can learn the culture or subculture of the people we are studying. We can come to interpret the world in the same way as they do” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.7).

Participant observation is distinct from qualitative interviewing which is another significant ethnographic method. Qualitative interviewing is commonly conducted during or following periods of participant observation. Use of interviewing in ethnography is predominantly unstructured and explores the researcher’s key observations about the community. Justifications for the use of participant observation and qualitative interviewing in this study are now outlined.

Social and cultural phenomena are captured by the researcher through field notes, cultural artefacts and interviews. It is common to use multiple methods of data collection as a way of triangulating findings, identifying common phenomenon in data (Handwerker, 2001). Observations are commonly drawn from informal conversations and reflections on action or processes of occupations within the community. Observations are frequently cross-validated or triangulated through the gathering of additional data. Additional data sources include a community’s cultural records and secondary records written about a community. Data collection is not preconceived or systematic. Data is collected in as raw a form as possible (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Data analysis is focused on the interpretation of the meaning of human actions within the community. An ethnographic approach commonly collects and views data in two ways. An emic approach is an insider’s view and captures how people think within a community or culture (Kottak, 2006), how they perceive the world, categorise, imagine and explain events and proceedings. An etic approach recognises that members of a culture are so involved in what they are doing that they cannot be impartial in interpreting their culture. An etic approach shifts the viewpoint from the member of the culture to the researcher and what they consider to be important (Kottak, 2006). This study attends to both perceptions.

The analysis of data is subjective, linked to previous experience, beliefs and preconceptions. Awareness of this influence is acknowledged through the practice of reflexivity, where the researcher openly states any influences.

This research uses an ethnographic methodology but goes beyond pure description of the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed. I have used the understandings gained to make recommendations for the Taieri Shed and the wider Men's Shed movement.

### **METHODOLOGIES' APPLICATION TO STUDY**

Having broadly reviewed the methodological foundations of this research, the following sections will detail the methods used, why they were deemed appropriate and how they were structured. Critique of the chosen methods is also provided.

In reviewing Men's Shed research, a number of studies take a quantitative approach to the measurement of educational, vocational, health and wellbeing benefits derived from Shed membership. Popular media and research capture a range of reasons for people joining and staying connected to community Sheds.

Ethnography has been chosen as it best fits the aims of this research. Ethnographic methodologies allow understanding of culture and meaning from the viewpoint of an insider while also enabling an external analysis. My immersion in the activities of the Shed allowed me to participate in the routines, roles and practices of the community while building and developing relationships. My participation was key to being accepted by the members and capturing their views and actions.

There is no problem being addressed in this research, however I have set clear aims for this study. My interest is in understanding the entire culture-sharing group, "... to determine how the culture works rather than to either develop an in-depth understanding of a single case or explore an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration" (Creswell, 2012, p.97).

This research aligns with qualitative research approaches as it allows for the researcher's preliminary understandings and findings to be reviewed and discussed with participants.

In this research, understandings were informally discussed during participant observation and formally discussed via qualitative interviewing. My final analysis of data was influenced by the views and feedback of Shed members. This is essential to capturing the true views of the membership. Creswell argues that this also de-emphasises a power relationship, where the researcher may collaborate directly with participants (2012, p48).

The chosen methodologies in this research recognised the significance of cultural artefacts and community documentation in understanding the ethos of the Taieri Blokes Shed.

## **ETHICS**

The following section details the ethical principles familiar to ethnographic research and applied in this study. Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Otago Polytechnic Ethics Committee (*Appendix M*).

The ethics and politics of ethnography are not clearly separable. In studying human beings within the structure of a research relationship, questions are raised about the judgements we make on the communities or cultures being studied. Given observations and conclusions are dependent on the researcher's engagement in the community of study, there is potential for judgement based on the researcher's personal values, assumptions about the nature of reality, status of truth, as well as the ontological and epistemological foundations of their work (Murphy and Dingwall, 2007). In conducting ethnographic research, decisions need to be made as to what will count as ethical practise given the context of a particular study.

The two major ethical approaches to ethnographic research are consequentialist and deontological. These are not mutually exclusive approaches. A consequentialist approach is concerned with the research outcomes and whether participants have been harmed as the result of the research. Any harm is weighed against the collective benefits of the research. In contrast, deontological approaches focus on the rights of the participants. This includes rights to privacy and self-determination (Murphy and Dingwall, 2007). This in turn implies a duty to avoid treating participants as a means to an ends, rather than as ends in themselves (Kelman, 1982; Macklin, 1982). The aim of ethical research is to protect the rights of

participants in addition to leaving them unharmed by the experience (Beauchamp, Faden, Wallace, and Walters, 1982). Ethnographic research has a concern with balancing research outcomes with participants' rights.

In striking a balance between outcomes and rights the following principles have been developed by ethicists to guide practice.

This list of principles has been taken from Beauchamp et al, 1982 (pp.18-19).

- Non-maleficence: That research should avoid harming participants
- Beneficence: that researchers on human subjects should produce some positive and identifiable benefit rather than being carried out simply for its own sake
- Autonomy and self-determination: that values and decisions of research participants should be respected
- Justice: that people who are equal in relevant respects should be treated equally.

The first two principles are often associated with a consequentialist approach while the last two are tied to a deontological approach. In the following section I will address these four principles in line with my study of the Taieri Blokes Shed.

## NON-MALEFICENCE AND BENEFICENCE

These two principles are often combined in arguing the ethical appropriateness of research if benefits outweigh harm. In this research study the potential benefits of the outcomes of this study will outweigh any potential harm to participants. I believe this is the case for the following reasons

The population of the community is not an 'at risk' group. Participants all live independent lives and their attendance at the Shed is voluntary. The Shed is very clear in its aims and purpose. It is a community based on the values of mateship, reciprocity, beneficence (to the local community) and productivity. It has no agenda of actively treating or intervening in the lives of members. Members can choose their scale of commitment to the Taieri Blokes Shed being able to leave if they choose to do so.

This research is non-invasive in the sense that the research is not administering treatment, medications or surgical intervention. My presence as a participant observer is based on assimilating into the community and taking on what would be considered normal roles and involving myself in appropriate social interactions. I recognise that my presence in the community and associated interviewing of selected participants had the potential to affect the involvement of members. To address this, study information sheets were presented to the membership as well as being displayed in the setting. All Shed members were asked to provide written informed consent (informed consent) based on provided information. Full disclosure about the purpose of this study was made in initial approaches to the community and in all written and distributed material. There was no hidden agenda at play.

All quotes taken from interviews and used in this research have been attributed to individuals in line with informed consent. I shared interview transcripts with interviewees where quotes intended for use were highlighted. All individuals were reminded of their right to remove consent or have quotes unattributed.

The potential benefits of the research were discussed with representatives of the Shed prior to the study commencing. The representatives of the Shed and I understood that the research would focus on the culture of the community, the benefits to those who attend and the wider community. Potential benefits of the study to the Shed included recording and documenting their community (history and current form), which could become a resource to use in funding applications, and perhaps a platform of self-review from which they can grow and develop the community. Benefits beyond the community were discussed in relation to adding to the research on the wider Men's Shed movement with associated implications for recognition in funding and government policy (health and social development).

Findings from this research have been shared with the Taieri Blokes Shed. It is my intention to provide the Shed members with a bound copy of this thesis. I plan to have this copy hand bound as this represents the constructive nature of the culture.

## AUTONOMY AND SELF DETERMINATION (INCLUDING INFORMED CONSENT)

Autonomy and self-determination refer to the participants' rights in the research. For this research all members were offered the right to privacy. This included not having any observations of their interactions in the Shed community recorded in writing or in photographs. In signing the informed consent form, participants agreed to have their images used and interactions recorded and attributed. In saying this, any member had the option of withdrawing their consent up until the time this work was submitted. Participants were made aware of the submission date for this work. As stated above, any quotes used in the research were cross-checked for accuracy, and permission gained for inclusion of names. All photographs taken by the researcher and from the Shed records were checked against consent forms to see if agreement of individuals had been obtained. Disclosure of members' identity is in line with the view that this is not an 'at risk' community. This view was expressed by the membership when presenting the study and when discussing the research with individual members.

## JUSTICE

The principle of justice is concerned with the fair treatment of all participants. In this research I was aware that given the structure of the community and my participation, there was the potential to get to know and interact with members on a disproportionate basis. There were key members who were able to provide structural and historical information about the Shed and others who guided and worked alongside me in projects. My aim was to get to know as many members as possible in the Shed and to hear their opinions without ranking the views of one member over another.

It is recognised that there are difficulties in trying to capture the culture of the community and the perceptions of members in writing. There is potential for members to feel their perspective has not been heard and what they consider to be significant aspects of the community are not included. To address this I split my participant observation time at the Shed between the two weekly sessions attending on both a Wednesday and Saturday morning.

The intention here was to get to know and interact with as many members as possible. In addition to this I attended a number of social occasions to see the members in different contexts. The decision about who would be interviewed was made after the observation period with the aim of using my knowledge of the membership to reflect a range of knowledge, views and experiences as it existed in the community.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE SETTING**

Given that the Taieri Blokes Shed is a workshop setting containing a variety of tools and equipment, there is potential for physical harm. During my time as a participant I ensured I abided by correct practices and guides in operating tools and machinery in the setting. Having past experience in the use of a range of hand and power tools while working alongside others in workshop settings assisted my safe involvement.

### **TREATY OF WAITANGI AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MĀORI KNOWLEDGE**

This study was discussed with Dr Khyla Russell in relation to the structure of this study and the appropriateness of tools to those who may identify as Māori. Dr Russell expressed no immediate concerns about the structure of the research proposal.

On-going discussion was entered into with my supervisor throughout the study in relation to cultural perceptions and attitudes which arose in observing and collecting data in this setting. Any observations of discrimination, although not explicitly observed, would have been brought to supervision sessions and cultural supervision sought if deemed appropriate.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

Data (empirical material) were collected in this research by employing three key, or primary, methods: participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and analysis of cultural artefacts. Secondary data sources were examined to broaden my understanding of the wider context of the research and the Men's Shed movement.

I participated in and observed the Shed community as an active member for a six month period, following which I clarified and discussed my observations with six Shed members through semi-structured qualitative interviews. In addition to these methods, Shed documents and records were reviewed and discussed with key members. Data was not collected from other Men's Shed researchers, other New Zealand Men's Sheds or national Men's Shed organisations, as the focus of this research was on capturing the views and actions of the Taieri Blokes Shed. The following sections outline why specific methods were chosen and how they were structured in this research.

## **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

This method was chosen as the main source of data collection. Participant observation is an essential element of ethnographic research. It allows for simultaneous inquiry and data collection to happen through immersion in the setting. Active participation meant I became a member of the Shed, embracing the roles, rituals and customs of the Shed in developing a comprehensive understanding of the culture.

As the name suggests, the researcher in participant observation is both an active participant as well as a conscientious observer. Immersion in the activities of the Shed allowed me to experience reality as the members do. Learning and understanding came directly from my own experience. "Personal reflections are integral to the emerging analysis of a cultural group as they provide the researcher with new vantage points and opportunities to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (Glesne, 2005 as cited in Marshall and Rossman, 2011, pp.140-141). Participant observation allowed me to not only see but also feel what it is like to be part of the Taieri Blokes Shed.

I observed and participated alongside individuals at the Shed as a fully subscribed member. I was involved in a number of community, maintenance and individual projects, working by myself and alongside others. In addition to this, I attended organisational, social, fund raising and reciprocation events. As a participant observer I gained access and acceptance into the day to day life and happenings of the Shed. My initial observations in this research were broad in their description but, as time passed, I was able to capture more detail and recognise themes, norms, and issues within the Shed.

The majority of conversations I had with members can be split into two areas. Conversation in the workshop area tended to be brief and related to planning, production or instruction in constructive work. Conversations at the smoko room, or during social events, provided more detail about members' reasons for involvement in the Shed.

The understandings derived from participant observation informed the structure of member interviews and the review of cultural artefacts and secondary sources. Participant observation provided time to consider who I would recruit for qualitative interviews. The rationale for choice of interview subjects is outlined later in this chapter.

### ***Time Frame for Participant Observation Data Collection***

Participant observation data collection was carried out between July 27<sup>th</sup> 2011 and December 8<sup>th</sup> 2011. Over this period I spent 20 half-day (3-4 hour) sessions as an active member of the Shed. Dates and times of these sessions are included in *Appendix A*. During the first half of participant observation I attended on a Wednesday morning and, in the second half, on a Saturday morning. The official opening times for the Shed are 9am-12pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays, but a number of members have keys to the Shed and access the facilities in pairs outside of these hours. I only attended during official opening hours. Prior to July 27<sup>th</sup> I had visited the Shed on two occasions in July. These visits allowed me to meet Shed members, orientate myself to the setting and explain the purpose of this research to the membership. I supplied a study information sheet and informed consent forms to the Shed at these times (*Appendix B, Appendix C*).

The time-frame for participation observation was predetermined. Observational data collection was stopped after the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. The period of participant observation was deemed an appropriate length of time to collect enough data for this segment of the research. This decision was made in conjunction with my supervisor, considering the time-frames of other ethnographic studies, the requirements of a Master's thesis, and my previous knowledge of the Taieri Blokes Shed. I remained in contact with the Shed, and subsequent visits to keep myself informed on the community's development, to set up qualitative interviews, and to keep the members informed on the progress of this study.

### ***Physical Setting for Participant Observation Data Collection***

The majority of the participant observation sessions were undertaken at the Taieri Shed. I also attended social and fund-raising events.

### ***Recording of Participant Observations***

Data were recorded in two media during and immediately after participant observation. A field journal was kept and digital photographs were taken. Notes for the field journal were initially hand-written in an exercise book directly after observation sessions. These notes were then typed up as a word document which was stored on my password restricted workplace computer. All entries were dated and kept in chronological order. An invite-only Blog was set up so my observations could be shared with my supervisors. The Blogger platform also allowed me to set up a RSS (Rich Site Summary) reader and link to websites that informed this study. A RSS reader enabled me to syndicate to other websites and Blogs where new content posted on these sites is automatically updated on my Blog. A screen capture of my Blog is included as *Appendix D*.

Digital photographs were taken during observation sessions. Photos documented work processes, completed projects, workshop and socialising spaces as well as the wider geographic area.

Photos were inserted into my blog. Separate copies of all photos were stored on my workplace computer. All documents were backed up on multiple computer drives.

## QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING

Although often talked about alongside participant observation, hence confusing the distinction, qualitative interviewing is recognised as a separate methodology in ethnographical research. It is commonly used to cross-check or develop understandings gained as a result of fieldwork observations. Kvale (1996), describes qualitative interviews as “a construction site of knowledge” where two (or more) individuals discuss a theme of mutual interest (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.2). It is an efficient and effective means of capturing summative thoughts, opinions and understandings of the membership of a studied community. Interviews yield quantity data quickly.

In this research an interview guide or topical approach was used. This entailed a set of questions based on themes constructed during participant observation. This guide is intended to help guide discussion and elicit participant’s thoughts. In qualitative research interviews are often scheduled with the interviewer preparing a list of topics or questions. Researchers explore general topics or themes to help uncover the participant’s views, but otherwise respect the way the participant frames and structures the responses (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). In this study, interview participants were supplied with the interview guide one week in advance of their interview. A copy of the interview guide is included in *Appendix E*. Ethical approval had been granted before selecting and approaching any individuals for interviews. Approval has been granted to attribute all quotes.

Although, as the researcher, I shared my views, thoughts and observations about the community, the participant's perspective was of primary interest. This is in congruence with the fundamental assumptions of qualitative research. It was beneficial that interviews were conducted after the period of participant observation as, by this stage I had developed relationships with the interviewees and had developed themes based on data collected from participant observation. It helped that interviews focused on the Shed community and were not of an overly personal nature. As participants were interviewed individually they could talk freely about their involvement in the Shed without concern of the views of others.

***Time Frame for Qualitative Interviewing Data Collection***

Qualitative interviews were conducted with six Shed members following participant's observation. Interviews occurred in March 2012. Interview dates and times are included in *Appendix F*.

***Choice of Interview Participants***

The following table outlines the names of interviewees, the nature of their involvement in the Shed, and the reason they were selected to be interviewed.

<b>Names</b>	<b>Shed Involvement</b>	<b>Reason for Choice</b>
Bob Biggart	Past president of the Taieri Shed and founding member. Involved from the inception of the Shed movement in Otago.  Project worker/facilitator	Has knowledge of cultural history and development of the Taieri Blokes Shed.  Is active in promoting and assisting the Shed movement to develop throughout Otago and the South Island.

		<p>Is a skilled trades person with substantial paid employment experience in engineering and metal work.</p> <p>Provides leadership and is a cultural moderator in the setting.</p>
Ian Miller	<p>Current president of the Shed. Long term member. Active leader in the governance and organisation of the Shed and its activities.</p>	<p>Central to the organisation, governance and promotion of the Shed. Liaises with outside groups and is active in forward planning.</p> <p>Is a retired farmer with a strong work ethic related to community service.</p> <p>Has moved to Mosgiel after retiring</p> <p>Provides leadership and is a cultural moderator in the setting.</p>
Don Spittle	<p>Past treasurer of the Shed. Founding member.</p> <p>Project worker/facilitator</p>	<p>Vocal and respected member of the Shed. Has knowledge of governance systems and project coordination.</p> <p>Spent his working life as a technician and supervising technician for the New Zealand Post Office and later Telecom.</p> <p>Has moved to Mosgiel in retirement.</p>

Colin Lyall	<p>Smoko organiser and Shed Record keeper.</p> <p>Project worker/facilitator</p>	<p>Central to the day to day organisation of morning tea at the Shed.</p> <p>Comes from a non-trades employment background. Employed as a grocer for most of his working life.</p> <p>Has knowledge of cultural history and development of the Taieri Blokes Shed.</p>
Neil Buckley	Project worker/facilitator	<p>Is an extremely sociable member who is willing to express his viewpoint.</p> <p>Is a long term resident of Mosgiel. Was the owner operator of a local shoe store prior to retirement and has a history of community group involvement in the area.</p>
Mike O’Cain	Recent member and elected as Shed secretary at the time of data collection.	<p>Newly retired from a leadership role in road and transit management. Has a breadth of management and organisational experience.</p> <p>Actively seeking activities to engage in during retirement.</p>

*Table One - Choice of Interview Participants*

### ***Physical Setting for Qualitative Interviewing Data Collection***

Qualitative interviews were conducted at participants' private residences. This was at the request of participants, providing them the most comfortable and convenient location. They were offered additional options of being interviewed at my place of work or at a neutral venue. One hour was allotted per interview. This was provided as an indication of length to participants when negotiating the interview. All interviews were completed within a 50-80 minute timeframe.

### ***Recording of Qualitative Interviewing***

Interviews were digitally recorded with supplementary notes made during the interview. Recordings were reviewed by the researcher and selected quotes transcribed. All digital recordings were stored on my workplace computer with written notes kept in a locked filing cabinet.

## REVIEW OF CULTURAL ARTEFACTS

Cultural artefact review requires the collection and examination of texts, documents and artefacts produced by the community and its members. Sources include financial and governance records, newsletters, project plans, completed projects, photographs and correspondences with member and external parties. 'Researchers often supplement participant observation, interviewing, and observation with gathering and analysing documents produced in the course of everyday events . . . . As such, the analysis of documents is potentially quite rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting' (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p.160). Collected artefacts can include sources current at the time of collection as well as those archived by the community. One of the major benefits of using artefacts is that this method of data collection has minimal impact on on-going events within the community.

In this research, archival documents were able to be accessed. These included information about the early development of the Taieri Blokes Shed, the establishment of membership,

governance structures and details about previous project work, workshop development and social activities. Shed member Colin Lyall is the unofficial record keeper of the Shed and has been collecting and dating materials since the inception of the community. Other members, notably Don Spittle, have also kept Shed records and taken photographs.

## SECONDARY RESEARCH SOURCES

Secondary document sources are materials produced external to the community that help inform the wider context of a community and how it is perceived from the outside. Sources may include books, journals, magazines, newspaper articles, popular literature, digital and social media. In ethnographical research the review of cultural artefacts produced by the community is viewed as a legitimate primary methodology whereas the use of external sources is often referred to as a secondary methodology since it provides a broader context to community. Secondary research helps ethnographers broaden their work by explaining the culture or community they are studying in a larger historical, geographic, and political context. (Zemliansky, 2001). ‘. . . the imaginative use of secondary documentation sources allows for the elaboration of ‘perspective by incongruity’ (Burke 1964; Lofland 1980; and Manning 1980). ‘That is, the juxtaposition of instances and categories that are normally thought of as mutually exclusive. Such sources and devices are ideal for heuristic purposes: they can rejuvenate jaded imaginations, spark off novel conceptualisations, and develop theory’ (cited in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p133).

In this study, secondary sources include wider Shed research and academic literature as well as accounts in popular media. A number of these sources are used in Chapter Two. I kept myself updated with local and international material about the Men’s Shed movement. This involved internet searching. I was also referred to sources by colleagues who had knowledge of my project.

In addition to broader Men’s Shed literature and media, secondary sources are deemed to include articles and records written about the activities of the Taieri Shed by external parties. A number of historical articles have been kept in the Shed records.

## **JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH STRUCTURE**

The following points were considered when constructing and rationalising this study. They relate to the practicalities of conducting this research.

### **PRACTICALITY OF LOCATION AND ACCESS TO POPULATION**

The Taieri Blokes Shed is located within 15km of my workplace and residence and is easily accessible by private vehicle. As previously noted the Shed is open two days a week so this provided me with flexibility around sessions attended as well as access to a wider range of members (some members attend only one session per week). The Shed is a dedicated space (non-public) with access restricted to the membership and to visitors by arrangement. This provided a degree of reliability in the ability to observe the environment.

### **PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIPS**

Prior to starting this research I had met founding members of the Taieri Blokes Shed. Phil Bradshaw spoke to staff and students at my place of work (the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy) during the early formation of the Taieri and Kings Blokes Sheds. Following this I met with Phil on several other occasions to discuss the development of the Shed and possible research. Year three occupational therapy students have worked with the Taieri Shed on specific projects, notably a 'tool drive' and an information brochure to advertise the Shed. I talked with students about these projects and their reflections on the Shed.

### **PERSONAL INTEREST**

I have a personal interest in the community. I am an active 'Shed person' with a personal workshop. I enjoy, and have a degree of competence in, home renovation, woodwork and furniture renovation tasks. I value productivity, workmanship, and the skills and products of

workmanship. These values and interests are complementary to those of Shed members and have helped me build relationships and gain acceptance, as well as giving me a knowledge base to interpret observations. My values and interests allowed me to be an effective participant observer and justify the choice of methodology.

## **LIMITATIONS TO METHODOLOGIES**

The following section details the limitations, or common criticisms, of chosen methodologies. These limitations/criticisms are addressed in regards to this study.

## **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

With participant observation there are a number of challenges that need to be acknowledged and addressed. These include the collection and recording of data, the ability of the researcher to fully become a part of the setting, and the subjective nature of data interpretation in regards to the perspective of the researcher.

In addressing the balanced role of a participant observer I committed to the following strategies to facilitate my acceptance into the community and to avoid being a disruptive factor. All members were informed of my role as a researcher and participant. I talked with them about the purpose of the study prior to commencing, and provided written copies of the study information sheet. All field notes were made after the sessions had ended so as not to distract members or make them uneasy. My initial focus was on building relationships with members and this involved taking opportunities to work alongside them. Active involvement proved my worth (skill and knowledge) and commitment to the setting. I made a conscious effort to keep conversations about Shed attendance and its attributed worth separate from the practical and procedural requirements of work tasks. Photographs were taken outside of the time I was involved in Shed projects. Photos captured what was happening at any given time and members were never asked to stop work to pose for photos.

It is accepted that recorded observations are never going to be fully descriptive of the activities of a setting. During observation my focus was on the constructive work I was involved in and, in turn, the members I worked alongside. Although I got to know the majority of Shed members, having no 'working relationship' with some members meant some of my observations were at a distance or secondary. My observations were limited to my experiences in the setting and as such need to be acknowledged as subjective.

The extent to which the researcher can fully become a participant is in part dependant on the nature of the setting. Although I have stated commonalities with members of the Shed, including an affinity for constructive work, a degree of skill and knowledge and a similarity in cultural background, there were notable differences that affected my ability to become a full participant. I am a number of years younger than the average Shed member, I come from an academic background, I do not reside in Mosgiel and, most importantly, my stated purpose was to study the community for a limited period of time. It is accepted that my presence as a researcher had an unmeasured effect on member's behaviour where answers to questions and actions may have been tailored to meet the perceived requirements of this research.

Given the selective and potentially 'subjective' nature of data collection and analysis, it is inevitable that the researcher's personal and professional beliefs will influence what is considered relevant. This influence has been acknowledged throughout this research.

## QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING

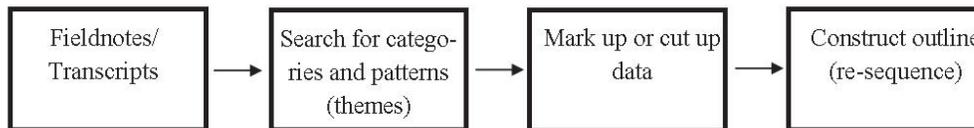
Qualitative interviewing as a singular method has its limitations. It is a snapshot of a participant's viewpoint on presented questions at a specific time. In this study, interviewing was used as a methodological approach to supplement and test my observations. Qualitative interviewing of selected members enabled 'member checking' of my observations against the views of selected participants. Member checking is where the researcher asks for participant feedback on his or her recorded observations to ensure that the researcher is accurately depicting the participants' experiences and the conclusions drawn from the data (Ember and Ember, 2006).

## CULTURAL ARTEFACTS AND DOCUMENTATION

Cultural artefacts and secondary sources have complemented participant observation and interviewing in this research. They have expanded my knowledge of the community and the wider context of the local area and the Men's Shed movement. The study of cultural artefacts and text alone will not tell the researcher everything about the community. It needs to be remembered that cultural artefacts and secondary sources are documents produced by or about the community and may be a misguided, biased or simplistic representation of the community. They are not 'social facts' but do provide representation of organisational routines and decision making processes (Coffey, 1999).

## DATA ANALYSIS

Although there are multiple approaches to the detailed analysis of data collected in ethnographic research the basic mechanics are relatively straightforward. Figure 19 provides a summary of data analysis procedure (Fielding, 2011, p.27)



*Figure 19 - Data Analysis Summary for Ethnographic Research*

Data collection and analysis often happen simultaneously when the researcher is trying to make sense of what they are observing as it happens (the here and now). The following sections detail my analysis of empirical materials and the analytical reflexivity practices adopted in this research.

## EMPIRICAL MATERIALS

My field journal, including photographs, and the qualitative theme checking interviews were the main empirical materials analysed in this research.

All handwritten field notes and photos were transferred (within 24 hours) to my hard drive. My field notes include observations, heard comments, discussion I had with members, and my general impressions and musings. Initial notes were elaborated on when transferred. The method of recording brief notes and points immediately following fieldwork experiences to expand later is a recognised practice in ethnographic literature (Brewer 2000; Bryman 1988; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2001). I collected and scanned artefacts and documents such as my name badge and receipt of membership to include in my field journal.

The second major source of empirical material was the qualitative interviewing of six members. The audios of all interviews were recorded. Interviews were then partially transcribed. When transcribing selected quotes from interviews, I attempted to capture exactly what members said, word for word, including any pauses and grammatical errors. Selected quotes and the fieldwork journal were subject to the analytical processes outlined below.

In addition to these two main sources, cultural records and secondary sources written about the Taieri Blokes Shed were collected and underwent the same analytical process.

## ANALYTICAL PROCESSES

There is general recognition amongst ethnographic researchers that empirical materials are analysed, managed and interpreted during fieldwork and data collection stages (Gobo, 2008). My analysis of materials was on-going starting from the first point of contact with the Taieri Blokes Shed. This immersion in material and repeated examination of my field notes enabled me to establish a base of understanding about the Shed culture, subsequently developing themes and theories which I could test in informal conversations with members and in

qualitative interviews. This on-going thematic analysis helped in the selection of Shed members to be interviewed.

Before writing, I subjected all empirical materials to an analytical phase following fieldwork and qualitative interviews. I chose to follow the matrix-based tool for qualitative data analysis developed by the Qualitative Research Unit at the National Centre for Social Research in the United Kingdom. This tool is called 'Framework'. Framework requires the organisation of data into a series of matrices from which a thematic analysis is conducted. It aims to organise and manage empirical data. Matrices assisted in the generation of meaning and interpretations (Smith and Firth, 2011). Although I used the Framework tool as a guide, my data coding was generated from my experiences as a participant observer. Codes were based on reoccurring themes that were observed.

Firstly, all of my empirical materials were reviewed to gain an overview of the scope of what had been captured. In reviewing materials I developed a framework which listed broad themes and related sub-themes. Development of themes was a result of reading and re-reading materials and becoming immersed in the data. This broad process is familiar in ethnographic research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1984; McCracken, 1986).

Secondly, I coded words, phrases, sentences, quotes and images which, by my deduction matched the developed themes. This process led to the refining of initial themes. All coded materials were transferred to 'thematic charts' where broad themes were developed as columns which in turn included a number of sub-themes. For example 'meaningful constructive work' was one main theme with subthemes of 'workmanship', 'cognitive application', 'planning and resourcing' and 'hierarchy of projects'. Quotes, journal extracts and cultural records that corresponded to themes, were tagged and transferred into their relevant column. This ordering process condensed empirical materials and assisted me in making sense and coherence. Using 'Framework' as my approach to manage and structure empirical materials strengthens the analytical process by providing an audit trail where links can be made back to source observations, documents or quotes. A number of qualitative researchers and authors have made the point that insufficient documentation related to

analysis processes, raises questions about trustworthiness (Anastas 2004; Beaman 1995; Cresswell 1998; Padgett 1998). Sample coding of a field journal entry, a qualitative interview transcript, a cultural artefact, and a secondary source are included (*Appendix G; Appendix H; Appendix I; Appendix J*). In addition to this a sample of the thematic chart for constructive work is included alongside a key to coding abbreviations (*Appendix K; Appendix L*).

I looked for patterns and themes in the analysis process involves inductive reasoning (Wolcott, 1994). This means moving beyond description and understanding of empirical materials to infer broader meaning. In this research, broader meaning takes account of the previous research on the Men's Shed movement, constructive work, wellness in aging and the underpinning philosophies of occupational therapy and occupational science. Inductive reasoning forms the basis of my Findings chapter and the inferences made in the Discussion and Conclusion sections.

This next section considers my approach to the analytical process and the lens through which I viewed materials.

### ***Analytical Reflexivity***

Acknowledging the principle of reflexivity in this research recognises the influence on my engagement in fieldwork and the recording and analysis of empirical materials. Reflexivity requires an awareness and exploration of how I interacted in the social world I analysed (Mason, 2002). It relates to how I have made sense of Shed membership and the members' experiences of me as the researcher (Grills, 1998).

My subjectivity in this research is acknowledged and I have not sought to neutralise it. My personal and professional belief in the link between engagement in meaningful occupation and health and wellbeing helped me recognise the gap in current research on Men's Sheds. My professional and personal experiences have shaped the lens through which I have analysed and interpreted material.

In analysing and interpreting empirical materials I have been conscious of sharing but not imposing my views on Shed members. Participation and acceptance at the Shed required my engagement and contribution to the setting. This meant sharing my views and options in the collective which is an expectation of all members. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note the importance of reflexivity in the ethnographic analytical process, where the ethnographer is not placed above or apart from the research participants.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided an overview of chosen methodologies as well as providing detail about the mechanics of my research structure and approach. A brief explanation of the foundations of qualitative research and an ethnographic approach has been given to provide context for readers. Key methodological approaches have been introduced and justified, alongside their limitations, with details regarding time frames, location and recording provided. Ethical considerations are detailed and allowances for health and safety are acknowledged. Appendices information has been included in this study to complement these descriptions. Data analysis procedures are delineated in this chapter.

The following chapter presents the findings from this research which have been organised in identified themes using the Framework Analysis. Findings describe the Taieri Blokes Shed and address the research aims.

## **FINDINGS**

Men don't talk face to face they talk shoulder to shoulder.

Barry Golding

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a community where like-minded individuals can find fellowship and wellbeing through engagement in constructive work for their own benefit and the benefit of the wider local community. This chapter presents the findings of my research, drawing on data from field observations, cultural records, secondary sources and qualitative interviews. The presentation of findings is in line with the stated research aims outlined in my introduction. The first part of this chapter provides a social history of the Taieri Shed. This history is created from the records of the Taieri Blokes Shed which have been checked for accuracy against interviews with founding members who remain active in the development of the Shed.

The Shed is embedded in a culture of mateship and workmanship. The occupational nature of this community attracts people with certain attributes and attitudes. The ethos of this Shed will be outlined alongside the key qualities expected of membership.

Constructive work is the central occupation of the Taieri Blokes Shed. The form and nature of constructive work is presented here, including comment on the value and meaning attributed to workmanship, the hierarchy and organisation of production, and association to place, tools, equipment and materials. Involvement in constructive work provides the structure for formal and informal social interaction at the Shed.

There are a number of occupational roles and responsibilities that support constructive work and social activity at the Taieri Blokes Shed. These include project management, mentoring, maintenance, governance, promotion and hospitality. These roles will be described in relation to constructional work and social activity. Links are made here to the qualities that are valued in mateship, notably practicality, teamwork, dedication to common tasks, compassion and

honesty. The interconnectivity of occupation, people and the environment is addressed in the findings, as well as the Shed's relationship to the local community and other organisations.

The Taieri Blokes Shed has identifiable rites of passage leading to membership and acceptance in the community. The rites of passage section in this chapter includes statements about the profile of membership, how individuals are inducted into the community, when membership is recognised and why people choose to leave the community. The role of cultural regulators is acknowledged in the community.

Involvement in the Shed enables members to remain active and productive after retirement from paid employment. There are a variety of wellbeing benefits recognised by the members. These benefits are chronicled in this chapter.

In concluding the research findings, members' views on the current health of the community and perceived implications for the growth and development of the Shed are outlined.

## **SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

The following history charts significant developments in the Taieri Blokes Shed community. It has been developed from records kept by the members and cross-checked through qualitative interviews with members, particularly with founding member Bob Biggart. The introduction of the Shed concept in Dunedin has resulted in two Sheds (The Kings High Shed and The Taieri Blokes Shed) being developed. On a day to day basis these Sheds operate separately from each other. This history will focus on the Taieri Blokes Shed but also includes broader information about the Shed movements development in the Otago region. Bob Biggart continues to be the common link between the two Dunedin Sheds as well as actively promoting the Shed movement in the wider Otago region.

Colin Lyall and Don Spittle have been instrumental in keeping cultural records and made them freely available to me. The following timeline is supplemented by key documents and photos. The source of these documents and photos has been acknowledged where known.

## TAIERI BLOKES SHED DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



## SHED HISTORY IN CHRONOLOGY

### **2007**

#### *Initial Meeting and early consultation about developing the Men's Shed concept.*

A meeting was called to investigate potential support for developing a Men's Shed in the Dunedin area. Phil Bradshaw (Area Naval Commander) introduced the original Shed concept based on his experience of the Men's Shed movement in Australia. This meeting was held at Taiora (the Navy recruitment rooms). During and subsequent to this meeting Phil Bradshaw consulted with St Johns, The Returned Servicemen Association (RSA), Age Concern, Methodist Mission, Rotary and the New Zealand Police about developing the project further. The outcome of these talks led to the formation of the Dunedin Men's Shed steering committee. This steering committee operated under the working title, Bloke's Sheds New Zealand, with the directive to make the Shed concept happen in Dunedin. Initial membership of the Steering Committee was composed of people from Age Concern, the Dunedin City Council, Methodist Connect, the Royal New Zealand Navy and St Johns.

#### *Public Meetings*

During the latter half of 2007, Public Meetings were called to gauge the interest of potential membership in the Dunedin and Mosgiel communities. Phil Bradshaw and members of the steering committee talked to a number of groups in different settings. This resulted in several individuals expressing interest in future involvement. Phil compiled and distributed regular newsletter updates during the initial consultation and planning stages. These were distributed to any parties who registered their interest in future involvement.

#### *Developing a Physical Location and Early Project Work*

Initially, the steering committee considered using the Navy's training shed in the wharf area but this was subsequently found to be unavailable. With growing public knowledge of the

Shed initiative, approaches were made about project work. One of the first projects was building replica gas lights for Naseby Township. With no physical workshop owned by the Blokes Shed this project was undertaken, by arrangement, at a workshop based in Waverly Street, Dunedin. This project involved a small crew of workers, many with experience of metal fabrication.

The Steering Committee and its members continued to search for suitable premises throughout 2007. Towards the latter part of the year, premises offers came in from Kings High School and The Otago Aero Club. Both offers came almost at the same time. Kings High offered the use of an old tractor shed while the Otago Aero Club was willing to make available two connecting buildings either side of the main hangar at the Taieri Aerodrome.

## **2008**

In late February 2008 the first official meeting of the Taieri Blokes Shed was held. This meeting included members from the steering committee and individuals who had expressed an interest. Beneath is a copy of the newsletter (figure 20) which documents the discussion points from the meeting.



## **BLOKES' SHED**

### **Newsletter**

**Update 28 February 2008**



***The Dunedin Blokes' Shed Update***

The inaugural meeting of the Taieri Bloke's Shed was held at the Otago Aero Club Lounge on Friday 22 February 2008. A small but enthusiastic crowd was present and the meeting explained the shed concept in detail.

The Otago Aero Club has very generously approved the use of the lean-tos attached to the old National Airways Corporation Hangar as a permanent home for The Taieri Bloke's Shed. The lean-tos require a decent spring clean before fitting out can commence; to this end there will be a working bee on **Saturday 15 March from 9:00 am**. All shed members are encouraged to attend and help with this effort, and it would be helpful if you could bring brooms, buckets, mops and some cleaning products. The Aero Club will provide a trailer for rubbish.

Until such time as a permanent venue for The Dunedin Bloke's Shed becomes available (and there is some promising progress being made on that front at present) the intent is to fit out The Taieri Bloke's Shed for the use of all, with rationalisation as required down the track. Until a permanent Dunedin venue comes on line it is intended to outfit the interim shed in Waverly Street (that Brian Hastie has very generously provided) with the minimum required to complete the current projects.

Whilst the aim is for the Bloke's Shed to 'earn its keep' through the undertaking of community projects, it is very much intended as a place where members can utilise the tools and equipment to progress their own projects. To this end the outfitting of the Taieri venue as soon as possible is considered critical.

A small work party on Saturday 23 February uplifted an additional array of equipment donated by members of the public, which included two band saws, another work bench, several vices, a range of power tools, hand tools, miscellaneous nails, fasteners and odds and ends. A number of fluorescent light fittings have also been recently acquired from a building undergoing renovations. We have also been offered the contents of a large shed and there is the likelihood of the permanent loan of another metalworking lathe in the next few months.

The Dunedin RSA has matched the Dunedin City Council's grant of \$1000 and an application for funding has been submitted to the Lottery Grants Board to assist with the fit out of both sheds. Other funding applications have also been submitted, however, some have a significant lead time between application cut off and the release of money to successful applicants.

So, the way ahead for the Taieri Bloke's Shed is to conduct a spring clean during the working bee on Saturday 15 March from 9:00 am. The next step will be determining the layout of the shed (there are a variety of rooms in the lean-tos that could be used in several ways) followed by the painting out of the various areas, fitting of additional lighting and power points, building of workbenches and storage racks and a myriad of other tasks that ideally will be undertaken before moving equipment in. The detail of the next steps will be figured out at the end of the working bee.

Phil Bradshaw  
**Bloke's Sheds NZ**

477 8231 Work  
489 7974 Home  
0274 743 990 Mobile

Figure 20 - Blokes Shed Newsletter February 2008

*March 2008*

In March 2008 the first working bee was held to clean out the offered Shed spaces at the Aerodrome with Phil Bradshaw, Warren Harris, Brian Jones and Bob Biggart amongst them. This group differs from current membership with a number of these individuals involved only in the initial renovation of the spaces. Membership of this group came mainly from Dunedin city. There was a common focus on getting things up and running, not necessarily looking at their own long term involvement.

The steering committee applied for funding grants in the first half of 2008. Age Concern supported the application to the Lotteries Commission for funding to repair and fit out the Taieri Shed with basic machinery. Figure 21 provides a pictorial collage of the Shed areas as they existed after the removal of unwanted materials and prior to fit out and renovation.



*Figure 21 - Image collage showing spaces before fit out and renovation*

June-July 2008

The two Dunedin Sheds (Kings and Taieri) received a joint Lottery funding grant of \$10,000 in June 2008. This was split equally between the two Sheds. As reported at the time, money was intended for the fitting out of both Sheds, supplying utilities like safe and reliable electricity.

Star 19/6/2008

# Grant gives blokes' sheds a timely boost

**By BRENDA HARWOOD**  
THE Dunedin Blokes' Shed movement took a big step forward on Saturday, when a team of "sheddies" transported donated tools and machinery to the new Taieri Blokes' Shed at Taieri Airport.

Based in the former National Airways Corporation building, now occupied by the Otago Aero Club, the shed has been cleared out, repaired and painted in recent months, ready for the shift, Blokes' Shed steering committee member and Navy Otago resident naval officer Lieutenant Commander Phil Bradshaw said.

The news this week that an application to the NZ Lottery Grants Board for a \$10,000 community grant has been successful means that the setting up of the city's two blokes' sheds — the Taieri Blokes' Shed and the Dunedin Blokes' Shed at King's High School — can proceed apace.

The funds would be split evenly between the two sheds and would be used for recladding and lining, the provision of adequate power supplies and other important basic work, Lt-cmdr Bradshaw said.

The Otago Aero Club had been very supportive and would also see the benefits of the blokes' work when they completed a "smoko room" at the complex.

"It's a win-win situation," he said.

"Everyone is very enthusiastic about the project, and are really enjoying working together to get the shed ready," Age Concern Otago chief executive and steering committee member Susan Davidson said.

"And that's what the blokes' sheds are all about — bringing men together."

In the coming weeks, the men will sort through the large amount of donated materials and get the shed tidied up in preparation for its official opening and public open day on July 12.



**A place to call home:** Taieri Blokes' Shed members, steering committee representatives and friends relax at Taieri Airport on Saturday. Pictured are (from left) Colin Lyall, Age Concern chief executive Susan Davidson, Kevin Moloney, John Hesketh, Blokes' Shed interim chairman Meikle Skelly, Phillip Purves, David Jones, Walter Gibson, Owen Harkness, Warren Harris, Navy Otago resident naval officer Lieutenant Commander Phil Bradshaw and daughter Issie (3), Otago Aero Club committee member Mark Hely and border collie Ben.

Figure 22 - Grant gives shed a timely boost (Harwood, 2008)

Following the acquisition of funds, development plans were drawn up for the Taieri Sheds future layout and equipment fit out (figure 23)

Further to the set up and development of the Shed movement in Dunedin, third year occupational therapy students from Otago Polytechnic worked with the Taieri Blokes Shed on a tool collection project. This was part of their community fieldwork project work. Requests were put to the local community to donate unused or unwanted tools and equipment to the Shed. Tool drop sites were organised at business and community sites throughout the Dunedin region. The detail of this project is outlined in the article titled Tool time at the blokes shed (figure 24).

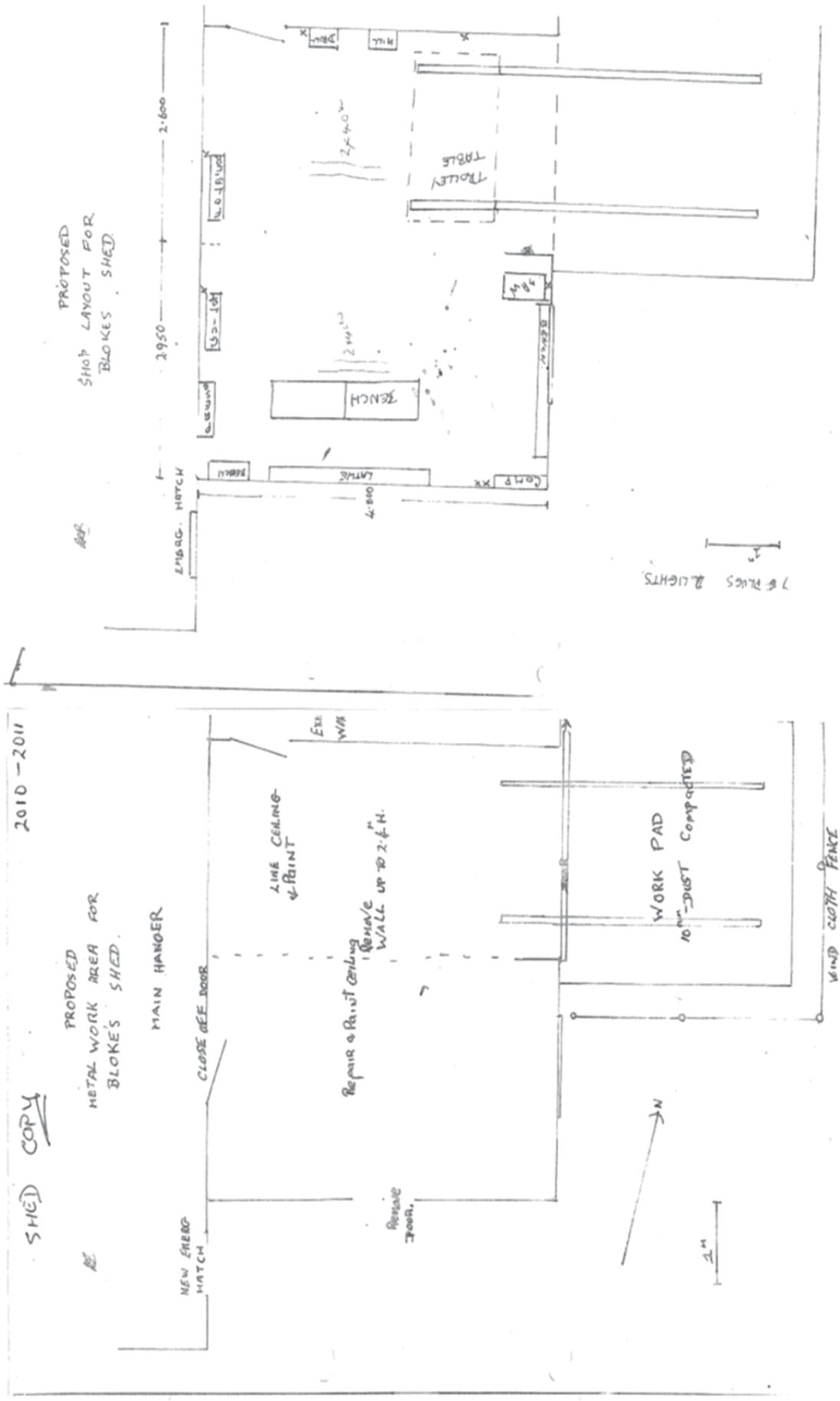


Figure 23 – Hand drawn plans for Taieri Shed development 2008

## Occupational therapy students launch appeal **Tool time at blokes' shed**

By **BRENDA HARWOOD**

WITH work set to start soon on refurbishing the proposed Dunedin Blokes' Shed, in the grounds of Kings High School, the time has come to "set the ball rolling" with a tool drive.

That's the word from Blokes' Shed steering committee member, Dunedin Resident Naval Officer Lieutenant-commander Phil Bradshaw, who is keen to see the city's second shed up and running.

"Now the the Taieri Blokes' Shed is well and truly established, the steering group is moving to get the Dunedin Blokes' Shed under way," Lt-cmdr Bradshaw said.

Roofing Solutions would provide the materials needed to re-roof and re-clad the small building, and work would begin in the coming weeks, he said.

"There's a lot of support out there in the community for the shed, so it's time to make it happen."

Third-year Otago Polytechnic occupational therapy students Hamish Wohlers and Kim Paterson are running a "tool drive" this month for the



**Big push for tools:** Otago Polytechnic occupational therapy students Hamish Wohlers (left) and Kim Paterson, pictured with the building at King's High School that is to become the Dunedin Blokes' Shed, are running a tool appeal for the shed this month.

shed.

The pair are calling for donations of surplus workshop tools and machinery for the shed.

From June 7 to 21, "drop box" collection points for tools

will be available at HMNZS Toroa, Mosgiel Mitre 10, The Toolshed in South Dunedin, Foley Plumbers, Mornington, Salmund College in North East Valley, Mitchell Motor Court in Kaikorai Valley,

Portobello Police Station and Port Chalmers Museum. A collection service will be available — phone Age Concern Otago on 477-1040, Lt-cmdr Bradshaw on 027 474-3990, or Kim Paterson on 453-1101.

*Figure 24 - Tool time at the blokes' shed: Occupational therapy students launch appeal,(Harwood, 2008)*

In 2009 a second group of occupational therapy students helped produce a two-page information pamphlet for the Taieri Blokes Shed aimed at promoting the services of the Shed in the local community while also calling for new members (figure 25).

## Taieri Blokes' Shed



**For more information**

Do you have a potential project for the Blokes?

Are you interested in becoming a member or making a donation?

Contact us by telephone or email and we can have a chat!

Bob Biggart  
(03) 488 2547  
biggles16@clear.net.nz

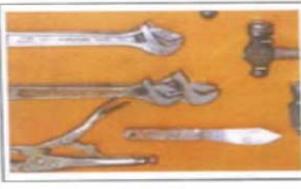


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### HISTORY OF BLOKES SHED

The concept began in Australia as Mens' Sheds before it came to New Zealand, where we made it our own, and the first Blokes Sheds began to open as individual clubs.

Locally, initial meetings began in 2007 to establish Taieri Blokes Shed, which was up and running by July 2008. In 2009, Kings High School offered Taieri Blokes Shed the use of some old sheds, which led to the birth of Dunedin Blokes Shed.



### Types of PROJECTS

The members of the Blokes Shed possess a diverse range of skills, enabling us to tackle a variety of projects.

Types of projects may include:

- Wooden Toys
- Indoor/Outdoor Furniture
- Children's Playground Equipment
- Wooden Garden Features
- Small Fences/Home DIY
- Raised Garden Beds
- Wooden Compost Frames
- Dog Kennels
- Children's Play Houses
- Bird Houses
- Letterboxes
- And Many More!

There are no labour charges. The only costs involved are for materials and a minimal amount for overseas.

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### Supporters of Taieri Blokes' Shed





The Blokes Shed is an organisation that provides a relaxed social environment and physical space for its members to work on projects, which help give back to our community. Our focus is on working with not for profit community organisations.

The Blokes Shed aims to:

- Provide companionship, workshops and a social environment for the members
- Share skills and knowledge
- Encourage wellbeing and health, as well as mentoring.

Figure 25 – Information pamphlet for the Taieri Blokes Shed

From the middle of 2008 onwards, promotion of Taieri Shed increased through word of mouth, ongoing talks to public groups and through publicity and growing recognition from the local media. During this time many of the current members joined including Walter Gibson, Fred Deans, Dave Thomas, John King, Colin Lyall, Don Spittle, and Michael Skelly. A number knew each other from previous community and social activities in Mosgiel and the surrounding areas.

The Taieri Blokes Shed membership grew slowly but steadily. The majority of the original group involved in the renovation of Shed areas had moved on, apart from Bob Biggart. Many were happy having set up the Shed ready to pass on to a new membership. Some left because their ideas about the governance, ethos and structure of the Shed were not being appreciated. Others left because their particular needs were not being met in the development of the Shed. In the view of Bob Biggart, the original chairperson wanted strong governance structures put in place but other members just wanted to get on with the development of the Shed. 'Making it work' and a 'practical' attitude were evident from the beginning. Knowing who the members were and what they wanted was given priority over setting rules and regulations around governance.

*We had to let things run their course. We didn't know what was going to come out of it.*

Bob Biggart

From the time of the Shed's occupation of the Taieri site, Mark Healy (Aero Club representative) did a great deal of work to amalgamate the Shed in the setting and alongside the Aero Club's use of the space. Bob Biggart acknowledges that Healy was a driving force in the initial stages of the Shed's relationship with the Aero Club, a relationship that was vital if the Shed was to succeed.

The first approach for project work was made in mid-2008. Shed members were asked by the local police to manufacture replacement letter boxes, at cost, for those vandalised in the local community (figure 26).



*Figure 26 - Early community project: Letter boxes*



THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED  
WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED BY COMMODORE BRUCE PEPPERELL,  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVY  
SATURDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2008  
TO INVENT, YOU NEED A GOOD IMAGINATION AND A PILE OF JUNK  
THOMAS A EDISON 1847 - 1931

*Figure 27 - Image: Commemorative plaque marking the opening of the shed.*

*Saturday 12 July 2008*

On this date the Taieri Blokes Shed was officially opened. A ceremony presided over by Commodore Bruce Pepperell of the New Zealand Navy marked the event (figure 27). The opening of Taieri Blokes Shed was covered in print media (figures 29, 30, 31) with invites send out to attend the event (figure 28)



The Dunedin  
Blokes' Shed

The Dunedin Blokes' Shed would like to formally invite you to the opening of the  
Taieri Blokes' Shed

**When: Saturday 12 July 2008**

**Where: Taieri Aerodrome, Stedman Road, Mosgiel**

**Time: 10.00am**

Opening presented by Commodore Bruce Pepperell, RNZN, Deputy Chief of Navy

Light refreshments will be available after the Ceremony

Please RSVP by 7 July 2008  
Phone (03) 474 3830 or,  
Email [cars.reception@dcc.govt.nz](mailto:cars.reception@dcc.govt.nz)

*Figure 28 - Invitation: Opening ceremony Taieri Blokes Shed*



Figure 29 - Commodore to open Taieri Bloke's Shed, (Harwood, 2008)



Figure 30 - Bloses shed open, (Bloses shed open, 2008)

The Star 17-7-2008

# Commodore opens blokes' shed

... and they're already working on their first community projects

**By BRENDA HARWOOD**  
THE ladies were on the barbecue as more than 60 people, predominantly blokes, gathered for the official opening of the Taieri Blokes' Shed on Saturday.

In keeping with the "blokey way", speeches were kept short, while the cups of tea and barbecued sausages were in plentiful supply.

Deputy Chief of Navy commodore Bruce Pepperell did the honours and complimented the Dunedin Blokes' Shed steering committee, the community and the men themselves on a successful project.

"This is a tremendous initiative, and I am very pleased that the Navy has been a part of it," Comm Pepperell said.

"There is a wonderfully diverse group of people here, and that reflects what a useful concept it is."

Interim shed chairman Mickle Skelly was delighted with the turnout for the opening and noted that several new members had signed up to join the shed.

"That's what it's all about for us — getting the men involved," Mr Skelly said.

Steering committee member Dunedin Resident Naval Officer Lieutenant commander Phil Bradshaw paid tribute to the dedicated group of men who had invested many hours of effort in refurbishing the Taieri Blokes' Shed at Taieri Airport. The establishment of the shed would not have been possible without the support of the Otago Aero Club, which had donated space in its hangar for the shed, Lt-cmdr Bradshaw said.

He also acknowledged the efforts of *The Star* in promoting the idea of blokes' sheds in Dunedin, and in supporting the concept through its various stages.

Fellow steering committee member Age Concern executive officer Susan Davidson was also delighted at the turnout for Saturday's opening, and was impressed by the transformation of the space.

"It's looking great — the blokes have done an excellent job," she said.

The Taieri Blokes' Shed is already set to embark on its first community projects, including making lanterns for Naseby, and working with police to replace vandalised letterboxes for people in need.

A meeting to formalise the governance of the Taieri Blokes' Shed and elect a permanent committee will be held this Saturday, at 2pm, at the shed itself.



**Sign of the times:** Members of the Dunedin Blokes' Shed steering committee and the interim committee of the Taieri Blokes' Shed gather under the new sign after the shed was officially opened on Saturday. Pictured were (back row, from left) David Jones, interim shed chairman Mickle Skelly, Ray Clark, (middle row) Darrel Robinson, Les Warwood, Melva Opai, Bob Biggart, (front row) Dunedin RSA welfare officer Maggy Brownlie, Age Concern Friendly Voices co-ordinator Ann Wharton, executive officer Susan Davidson, Methodist Mission Community and Social Services manager Shona Johnsen, Dunedin Resident Naval Officer lieutenant commander Phil Bradshaw and Deputy Chief of Navy commodore Bruce Pepperell.

**Efforts rewarded:** A crowd of about 60 people listened as the Deputy Chief of the New Zealand Navy commodore Bruce Pepperell declares the Taieri Blokes' Shed officially open.

Figure 31 - Commodore opens blokes' shed...and they're already working on their first community projects,(Harwood, 2008)

October 2008

October 2008 saw the development of the governance structure of the Shed. Key decisions were made. Annual subscriptions were set at \$10 per member for the year, the first membership cards were distributed and a membership list was drawn up. Publicity officers were appointed to promote the Shed in the local community.

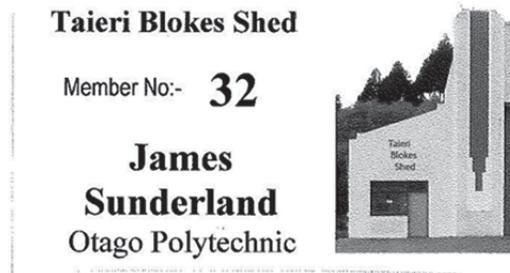


Figure 32 - Sample membership badge

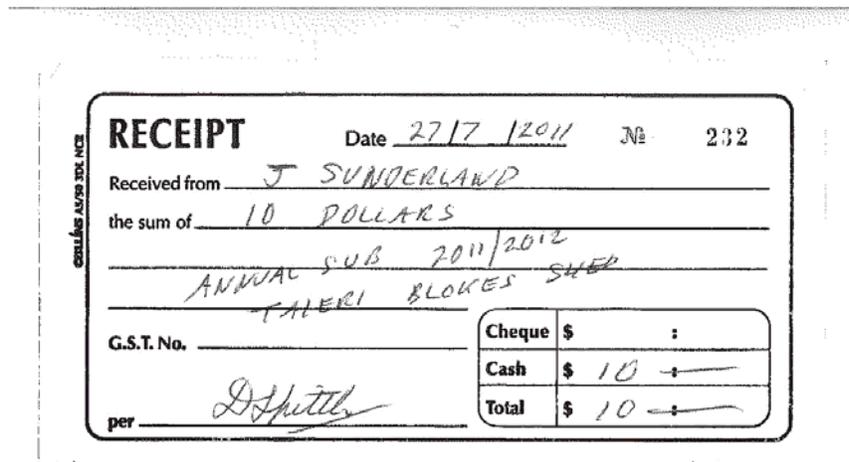


Figure 33 – Sample annual subscription receipt

*Mid 2008 onwards*

From mid-2008 the Taieri Blokes Shed actively promoted their services (figure 34) and as a result became engaged in a number of projects for a variety of community groups. Notable initial projects included making runway signage for the Aero Club and constructing walkways for the Orokonui Sanctuary (figure 35), and the afore-mentioned letter boxes.

These community projects were being undertaken while the Shed was still being fitted out. Since this time there has been a constant supply of community projects which has meant the Shed has not had the luxury of unobstructed time to set up the workshop. As a consequence, Shed development and community projects have had to run concurrently.



Figure 34 - Workshop ready to go, (Harwood, 2008)



Figure 35 - Ecosanctuary track a major project, (Valentine, 2008)

**2009**

2009 saw a continuation in demand for community project work alongside development and maintenance work on the Shed areas. Figures 37-50 on the ensuing pages show some of these early project works and the breadth of groups and individuals they worked with.

*July 2009*

The first operational anniversary of the Taieri Shed was acknowledged on 11 July 2009. The membership of the time is captured in the image below. Most of these men were foundation members of the Shed or joined soon after the official opening.

**Taieri Blokes Shed  
1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary  
11 July 2009**

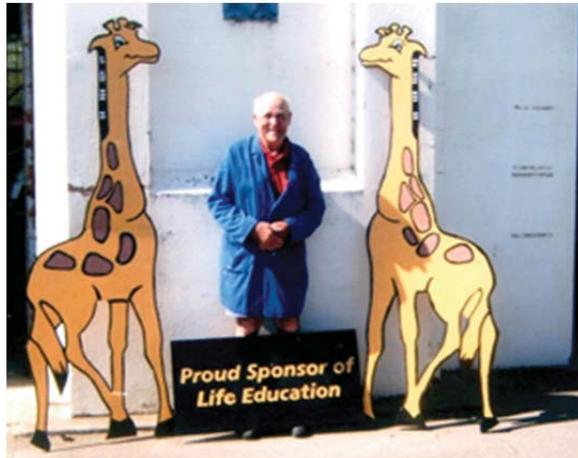


**Colin Lyall – John King – John Lindsay – Don Spittle – Dave Thomas – Jim Doolan  
Neil Buckley – Fred Deans – Walter Gibson**

**Absent**

**Ian Miller – Warren Harris – Bob Biggart – Phil Bradshaw  
Brian Stevens – Meikle Skelly – Paul Beattie – Alan Anderson**

*Figure 36 - Image: Taieri Blokes Shed 1st Anniversary 11th July 2009*



*Figure 37 - Image: Giraffe made for Life Education*



*Figure 38 - Image: Stilts made for Outram School*



*Figure 39 - Image: Dressing-up Trolley made for Mosgiel Play Centre*



*Figure 40 - Image: Railway Bench Seat restored for Outram Historical Society*



*Figure 41 - Image: Lucky Wheel made for Outram School*



*Figure 42 - Image: Playground Counters made for Outram School*



*Figure 43 - Image: Pamphlet Rack made for Age Concern*



*Figure 44 - Image: Games Trolley made for Chatsford Retirement Home*



*Figure 45 - Image: Garden Trolley renovated for Mark Healy*



*Figure 46 - Image: Carpenters Bench built for Green Island Kindergarten*



*Figure 47 - Image: Ramp in place built for Mosgiel Residents*



*Figure 48 - Image: Ramp on delivery built for Mosgiel Residents*



*Figure 49 - Image: Garden Shed built for Middlemarch Community Gardens*



*Figure 50 - Image: Lectern built for St Marys Mosgiel*

*September 2009*

The Dunedin Kings High Shed opened on the fifth of September 2009. A number of the Taieri Shed members attended the opening ceremony. The Taieri Shed development differed from the Kings Shed in that they were able to concentrate on establishing their workshop and smoko areas before focusing on community projects.

**2010**

Focus on project work continued. Membership and the Shed's profile in the local community developed steadily over 2009. Work continued on the workshop and smoko areas, renovating and ordering them to meet the needs of project work, social activity and Shed meetings.

**2011**

*January 2011*

The majority of early projects were woodwork based but at the beginning of 2011 resources were put into the development of the metal-work area which sits at the rear of the woodworking room. There was a desire to develop a metal work area to respond to the skills of the members and increase the scope of potential community and individual project work. There was a core group within the membership who had trades based metal-working skills which were felt to be underutilised in community projects.

*June 2011*

In mid-2011 two development projects were started. The first was the building of a woodshed to store materials which, in turn, freed up room in the main workshop. The second was the renovation of an old shipping container to be used as a welding area. The woodshed was

completed during my time as a participant observer at the Shed while the shipping container remained an ongoing project.

This concludes the history of the Shed's development up to the start of my involvement as participant observer in this study. The following section looks at the structure and organisation of the Shed at the time of writing.

## **TAIERI BLOKES SHED: STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION**

### **OPENING TIMES**

Currently the Taieri Blokes Shed is open from 9am to 12.30pm on a Wednesday and Saturday. There are a number of established members who have keys to the Shed. Access and use of the Shed is permitted outside of the above hours as long as more than one member is present to work on projects.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

As of April 2013 the Shed has a membership of over thirty-five. On any session up to twenty-five members can be in attendance. All paid-up members have committee voting rights with meetings being held on the first Wednesday of every month. The governance structure of the Shed includes a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer as well as Promotional Officers and Media Liaison officers. Minutes are recorded for all meeting.

## **SHARED VALUES OF THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

Early in my observations of the Taieri Blokes Shed I recognised an evident structure, order, and routine in the actions of the community. Members interact in a cooperative manner and have a common drive towards being productive in their time at the Shed. There is an obvious attachment of purpose and meaning to the activities of the Shed and clear indications of a growing community, consistent productivity, attention to detail in constructive work and strong governance. This is a community that values the contribution of individual members and enjoys each other's company.

For a number of members, active involvement in the Shed has enabled them to transition to retirement from paid employment.

For some members this transition has required a move to a new community (Mosgiel). It should be noted that retirement is a word loaded with connotations. The majority of Shed members do not view their lives as sedentary and they are not merely passing time. There is a broadly identifiable focus on remaining active and contributing to their lives and the lives of others.

Meaningful constructive work, as seen in the previously illustrated projects, is the main occupation of this community. There is value placed on engaging in work alongside others and in 'a job well done'. The following sections provide a detailed review of how constructive work is structured at the Shed and valued by the membership.

Although constructive work is the central focus of the Shed, productivity is seen as being more than just constructive work. Productivity is linked to a number of roles that sustain the Shed community and allow for constructive work to happen. Productive roles separate from constructive work include maintenance tasks, governance, promotion, recordkeeping, catering and hospitality. These supporting roles are both shared and unique to individuals within the setting. Members who are willing to contribute in whichever way they can are accepted as equals in this community, thus demonstrating the qualities of inclusive mateship (egalitarianism and social inclusion).

Social inclusion is not just dependent on productivity, it also relies on a member's willingness to work and socialise alongside others. Being a Good Bloke at the Taieri Blokes Shed is attributed value and generally means you are easy-going, sociable and generous towards other members.

In regards to the community projects the Shed undertakes, there are enough members with trade skills to manage projects and to delegate roles to others. Project work is dependent on those who have the skills to lead and coordinate the projects, as well as those who are willing to provide labour, man power and a willing hand. Team work and dedication to a common goal are driving forces in the various contributions of members. Skilled workmanship is valued in the setting and contributes to a member's social capital. There is a distinction made between skilled and unskilled work.

There are a number of members who are accepted for their practical skills so they are elected to lead projects and provide direction for others. These leadership roles appear to be taken on willingly by members who can use their skills and abilities while teaching others.

Qualities such as practicality, generosity and productivity are evident here in their willingness to share what they know and contribute to the betterment of the Shed community as well as the wider community through completed projects. There is an association here with the concept of occupational transition, in that those members who have come to the Shed with practical trades skills are enabled to use these skills in project work and leadership roles. They are able to transfer valued attributes from their past work experience, enabling occupational identity and occupational satisfaction.

For some members the majority of their productivity in the community is away from the processes of constructive work. The input of some members is focused on coordination of the community, the purchasing of material, consultation and promotion of the Shed, record keeping and, importantly, the management of the daily smoko. Some of the key roles and responsibilities that constitute productive input into the Shed are noted under the sub-headings of cultural practices.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MEMBERSHIP

For any community to work there needs to be shared interest/s, a reason, or reasons, to commune. In the words of a number of the members, having a shared interest, a motive to unite around, was of primary importance to their own involvement. The primary shared interest is constructive work.

. . . to mix with people of similar ilk . . . . desire for everyone to use their hands . . . I like being amongst people who've all got very similar interests

Don Spittle

Mike O'Cain, another interviewed member, recognised that this desire to come together over shared interests is not unique to the Shed. It is a foundation of a number of communities where participation is chosen.

These guys when they come along and do something . . . they're getting away from home into an environment where they're interacting with guys that have similar interests and they're doing something. I can't see it in a lot of ways being much different than a bowls club.

Mike O'Cain

However, through my involvement at the Shed it is clear that the Shed offers something that other, more traditional, retirement options do not. This is not a sporting pursuit or recreation like a golf, croquet or bowls club; it is not a place to commune with others who have served in the military like the RSA, and it is not based on beneficence through fundraising and business connection like Rotary and Lions clubs. This is a place where the focus is squarely on constructive work, where members plan, design, build and engineer alongside others who share this interest. There is an understanding within the Taieri Blokes Shed community that the main purpose of the Shed is productivity.

Productivity is seen as a balance between individual and community project work and the roles that support these projects at the same time as supporting the sustainability and growth of the Shed community.

When you get a group of likeminded men they get along together.

Neil Buckley

This culture of productivity is evident in New Zealand society and particular in males over the age of 65 years. These are men for whom practicality is not only a virtue but a requirement in maintaining one's home and, for many, an essential component of their paid employment. For these men, being practical in a constructive sense is seen to bestow social capital. They have been brought up in a period of New Zealand's history where a larger portion of the population was employed in trades work or practical vocations like farming; a time when there were fewer restrictions around renovating and building your own home, fixing and modifying your car, motorcycle or consumer objects. For many men of this generation their immediate focus was on building, repairing and overhauling rather than purchasing and disposing.

Reciprocity, the balance of doing for the benefit of others as well as for the benefit of self, is an attribute. Persons who enter this community need to be willing to give back to the Shed community and the wider Otago community through what they make, the time they devote, and their willingness to assist in the governance, promotion and maintenance of the Shed.

These requirements link with the mateship values of teamwork, dedication to a common duty and the ideal of a Good Bloke being practically minded. There is an expectation that Shed membership entails mutuality, that is, not only utilising what the Shed has to offer but actively contributing to the shared activities which foster and support the ongoing sustainability of the Shed, and benefit the wider Mosgiel and Otago community. The Taieri Blokes Shed is a community of leisure that overlaps with a community of work - a place members choose to attend because they are true enthusiasts.

As previously stated, not all members of the Taieri Blokes Shed have a trades background. This does not mean they are not welcome to join the community. There is a willingness to include anyone who has the wish and ability to contribute. There is no expectation that every member should be able to guide projects or demonstrate a high level of workmanship in order to be included and valued. In summing up the attributes of Shed members, Ian Miller states acceptance is based on:

. . . being able to work and share ideas with others . . . . What we like to do when a new one joins is find out what their skills and capabilities are . . . see we've got one or two of them, and some of them are founding members, they're quite happy just to hold things, or paint things or sweep the floor they won't tackle a project as such but they're happy to be supportive members to others and they are still a very valuable part of the Shed . . . just because they haven't got specific skills is not to say they're not needed.

Ian Miller

This is backed up by Don's succinct statement about taking on roles. Roles within the Shed can be formal or informal, skilled or unskilled.

Attendance and willingness to take on roles helps define membership.

Don Spittle

The willingness to participate or to 'give it a go' is echoed in the comments of Mike O'Cain. He believes the Shed provides opportunities which can be realised when an individual shows a willingness to contribute and has an idea of their capabilities:

You're certainly made welcome . . . but the interaction gets into participating, getting in and doing things . . . to get anything out of it you got to participate in things . . . it's only after you've established some of your credentials you can start going your own way . . . if you go into something you've got to participate in it . . . you've got to go along with something in mind to do.

Mike O'Cain

*A Male Only Domain*

The membership has differing interpretations about how strongly it is stated that the Shed is a male-only domain. From my time as a participant observer I would say most members value male-only company within the setting. They place value on supporting each other and working shoulder to shoulder while also being comfortable within a setting that affirms male values and the qualities deemed part of being a Good Bloke.

Male company is important

Neil Buckley

I believe that the membership, in general, does not feel comfortable in openly labeling the Taieri Blokes Shed a male-only community, as is the case with most Australian Sheds and a number of New Zealand Sheds. This is due to contemporary societal views on inclusion and equal opportunity. In fact, some members have made a point of saying the Shed is gender inclusive.

However, although there is nothing formally stated in relation to females not being able to join the Shed, there is recognition that a female presence at the Shed would alter the dynamic, with a number of members feeling it has the potential to impact on their own attendance. There is a comfort in being in the presence of men who have similar interests, backgrounds and are in the same age bracket. A number of members thought there was nothing wrong with excluding female membership as there are a number of female orientated groups active in the community.

If you had a woman in the Shed you wouldn't say a lot of what we do at smoko.

Ian Miller

The other thing I like about the Shed is that it's a male only place and to my way of thinking I would not like to see females introduced to it . . . because I don't think there's a place for them. I've got nothing against them but there are places for them.

Neil Buckley

Some members feel that if there is a need for females to engage in constructive work activities there could be an option of making the Shed available outside of the times it is currently used. There has been talk about opening up the Shed facilities, when they are not being used by the members, to various craft and social groups which would include females.

Females are definitely welcome to visit the Shed and have supported the Shed in a number of capacities, including organising fundraising events and attending social functions with partners who are members.

#### WHY PEOPLE LEAVE THE SHED

Members are expected to give back to the Shed community in a way that fits their skills and interests. This is a community that is built on like-mindedness and it is this which attracts and sustains the membership. Very few members who ascribe to the values of productivity and reciprocity leave the Shed.

The Shed has experienced a steady growth in membership and a very high rate of retention. Those who do leave tend to do so because they are unwilling or unable to fit in with the projects of the Shed and contribute beyond their individual project needs. In the early stages of the Shed's development some individuals were happy to limit their involvement to setting up the workshop areas. One member left because he believed clear governance structures should be in place before any project work was undertaken.

## **CULTURAL PRACTICES**

### **THE NATURE OF MEANINGFUL CONSTRUCTIVE WORK AT THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

Shed work can be anything from potting plants to building sky rockets. It's about making things.

Bob Biggart

The Taieri Blokes Shed is first and foremost a place for constructive work. Although governance, promotion, external relationships, record keeping and other support roles are vital, it is the completed artifacts and projects, the utilitarian outputs, which are essential to realising the purpose of the Shed. The Shed was conceived on the understanding that members would undertake both individual and community projects, building, creating engineering and designing.

Members express a clear desire to remain productive in their lives where the ability to be productive reflects their occupational identity. As stated, some come from trades backgrounds and the majority have been involved in constructive work throughout their lives. Many have large reservoirs of tacit knowledge they can draw on and skills that have been honed over years of 'doing'.

Some are highly skilled in the particulars of one trade and can lend their hand to other areas, while other members have limited knowledge of trades work but are willing to apply themselves to assist in projects and learn from others. Although some members in the setting have much to pass on and teach, no one is precluded from learning. The Shed provides an environment where members can remain productive; where the work is seen to be real because it has a real purpose.

#### ***Working away from Home: Individual and Community Work***

A significant proportion of members have workshops in their own home. Many of these individual workshops are highly organised workspaces that are trade specific e.g. woodworking, joinery, metal fabrication. A number of interviewed members stated that they

could still work on projects at home, and did so, but chose to come to the Shed to work alongside others, to have access to tools and knowledge they didn't have at home, and to complete projects that are of benefit to the wider community. During my time as participant observer it was clear that there is no shortage of community projects. In fact, there has been a steady request for project work from the local community since the Shed's inception. The Shed has taken on a variety of projects working with local schools and play centers, libraries, rest homes, gardening societies, councils, and environmental groups. They have also worked with a number of individuals on projects where the costs or coordination would have been prohibitive if not for the Shed.

The quantity and demands of community projects have often been at the expense of individual member's personal work. This is a point recognised by Shed members and mostly seen as a reality rather than a frustration.

We seem to become more involved in community projects at the expense of personal projects. Individual projects are now secondary . . . . symptom of the success of the Shed as well as wanting to get more money, funds.

Don Spittle

### ***Productivity and Workmanship***

There is a common value placed on workmanship at the Taieri Blokes Shed. It is not acceptable for products to be purely functional or 'good enough'. Pride is taken in the completion of products that are fit to purpose in that they are well designed, have ease of use, durability, and aesthetic appeal. This is directly tied to the skills of the members, those who provide direction and those who follow. Through its completed projects the Shed has built a reputation for quality and affordability. This reputation is important to the members and is to the forefront when planning and completing new projects. The following extract has been taken from my field journal to illustrate meaningful project work and the application of workmanship.

*Neil Buckley was working on planter boxes. This was an ongoing project for an upcoming Heritage Rose conference. Neil was particularly enthusiastic about the planter boxes being used at the conference instead of cheap conference bags. The planter boxes were to be distributed at the conference so attendees could collect materials (pamphlets, flyers, notes etc) at the event and later use them in their potting Sheds. Given they were to be reused in the future Neil is very particular about the workmanship. He wants to produce a uniform and durable product that has ascetic appeal. For Neil this is a long term project and one in which he has committed a significant amount of time. He uses his key to work outside of the Shed hours with the help of another member.*



*Figure 51 - Image: Trays for the Heritage Rose Society 2011*



*Figure 52 - Image: Neil Buckley working on Trays for the Heritage Rose Society 2011*

*‘My most rewarding project? Building of the trays for the Historical Rose Society . . . built 110 for their conference.’*

Neil Buckley

Quality of workmanship is valued within the Shed as is the ethos of production ‘from scratch’, utilising problem solving, ingenuity and the resources available (‘making do’). If and when required, suitable materials are purchased for specific jobs if they cannot be fabricated from what is unused at the Shed. I observed on many occasions that members did not want to ‘cut corners’ with their projects.

I observed clear evidence of tacit knowledge in action at the Shed. This was apparent in the speed and techniques used by some members and their ability to teach others techniques related to past jobs and practices. Those with knowledge assist others to work through

projects and fabricate rather than buy materials and components. Members voiced satisfaction in testing their skills and finding solutions.

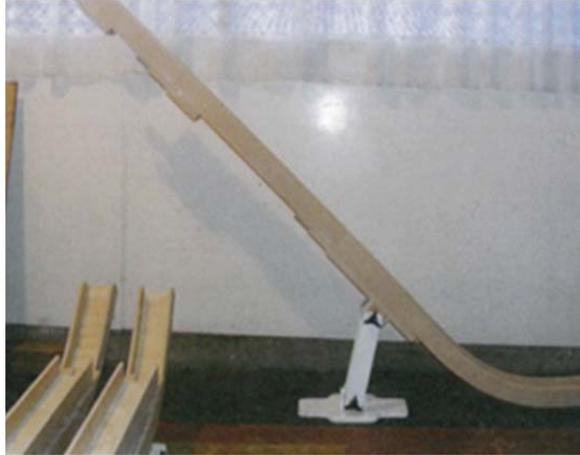


*Figure 53 - Image: Project discussion in woodwork shop*

### ***Cognitive Application***

A number of the community projects undertaken by the Shed involve planning and problem-solving. Part of the attraction of the Shed, to the wider community, is having a place where members are willing to tackle projects that are out of the norm. A number of projects require application to task involving research and experimentation with materials and construction.

An example of cognitive application I observed was the design and building of Boccia ramps. Boccia is a game which is best described as a cross between lawn bowls and petanque. It is a highly popular sport for people with physical disabilities where a ramp can be used as an assistive device to direct balls. This project required members of the Shed to build multiple ramps based on pictures and examples of previous setups. From what I observed, the appeal of this project came in designing a product that would not only work but work well for the eventual user.



*Figure 54 - Image: Boccia Ramps build by Shed*



*Figure 55 - Image: Meeting with group who commissioned Boccia Ramps*

### ***Recycling and using materials***

Within the work practices of the Shed there is an interest in recycling materials in order to not waste what has potential value and to keep project costs down. Shed members and members of the public regularly donate materials and equipment to the Shed. The acceptance of materials is informally monitored.

We used to take everything that people donated. Now have to be careful about what to take due to space limitations. We've got to say 'no' to some things but we explain that to the families.

Ian Miller

I observed differences of opinion about what should be kept by the Shed and what should be discarded. This was apparent when I worked with a fellow member to reorganise wood and other materials from the workshop loft to the newly constructed woodshed. Decisions about what to keep often differed between those who had the most experience in using materials and so could make an informed decision about worth and those with less experience.

It is common for individual members to negotiate personal use of any materials not used by the Shed or deemed to be waste. Scrap wood is taken home by members for use or cut into firewood.

### ***Hierarchy of Project Work***

There is a clear hierarchy in group projects where those with the relevant skills assume control of projects and provide direction for others. Projects are assigned to members where continuity of those working on a task is seen to be essential to a successful outcome. Allocation of project work and associated timeframes enforces expectations around attendance and contribution. When project leaders are appointed they hold the overall vision of the means and ends of each project. Project leaders liaise with community groups who have commissioned work.

What we do if we have a reasonable project is delegate a member to take a lead on that and he will then ask any of the other members he feels he wants to ask to help him on that project.

Ian Miller

There are approximately ten to fifteen people who can be trusted to coordinate projects, depending on the complexity of the requirements. During the monthly Shed meetings I attended, the issue of allocating members to coordinate the separate workshops (metal, welding, wood) was raised without a formalised decision being made. There is an obvious intent to structure the way community projects are planned and carried out. The Shed community prefers to have three to four projects happening at a time, depending on the size of the projects and space available.

### ***Teaching and Learning***

You have to be willing to try something or teach something.

Don Spittle

In line with qualities such as generosity, team work, and dedication to a common task, there is a focus at the Shed on the sharing of knowledge. This willingness to teach while working with or alongside others is key to membership. As outlined, there are a range of skills and experiences within the membership. Some members are sought out for their specific knowledge e.g. electrical, joinery, metal fabrication. These members are the unofficial 'go to' people. Those members who have very little past experience but are willing to seek help are readily taught.

You get the odd person who doesn't have much idea or has big ideas and doesn't know the practical side of doing it . . . and you go over there and talk to one or talk to two, or three of them (members with trades experience) and they can soon put you on the right line.

Colin Lyall

Often learning happens without direct instruction or explanation, through observation of the actions of others.

Learning off each other or learning by association.

Don Spittle

As noted, the tradespeople in the Shed have many years of experience and hold a wealth of tacit knowledge of techniques and practices in their areas of expertise. Some of these techniques and practices have been superseded in their trades areas due to changes in materials, tools, specialisation, equipment, and preassemble, all aimed at either reducing time requirements or simplifying tasks. Given the reduced time pressures at the Shed and the desire to produce quality products, members can make choices about the processes they use and teach to others.

During one of my sessions at the Shed I had the opportunity to learn from one of the tradesmen. The following account is taken from my field journal and reflects the skill and experience of the member and his willingness to share knowledge in an appropriate manner.

*Peter is a joiner by trade with close to fifty years' experience working with wood. I had brought along an old wood plane I wanted to recondition. Peter gave me advice on first removing the rust with a fine sandpaper before oiling all parts prior to reassembling the plane. Peter had been sharpening some of the Shed's chisels, on the electric grinder. I showed him the chisel set I'd brought along which had passed down to me from my father-in-law, and asked if he could help me sharpen them after smoko. He agreed and offered to sharpen the plane blade as well. I watched him working on the Shed chisels first and he*

*talked me through the processes involved in cooling the blade in water, removing any chips from the cutting edge and grinding to a straight and even angle. All of this required physical skill and experience which was obvious in his work. Other members later noted that this wasn't an easy job but it would be easier if the Shed had wider grinding stones or fixed guides on the grinders. Having the right tools for the job.*

*After smoko, Peter sharpened all my chisels and the plane blade. Originally I was keen to have a go at this myself but realised that, given the skill involved and the preciousness of my chisels, Peter should take charge here. He showed me how to smooth off the gowned edges on the soak stone so I took on this role and tidied up all chisels and the plane blade. I then reconstructed my plane using one of the Shed planes as a guide. Peter assisted me at the end to set the height of the cutting blade.*

*After working with Peter I thanked him for all his help. He told me to practice on older blades at home. He said that the steel in my chisels was of high quality and they should be looked after. I was impressed that he could make this distinction. We then got talking about old woodblock planes he used to work with and I told him about my great great grandfather who was the builder and coffin maker in Akaroa.*

*Peter said that this was common practice in the small villages of Holland where he came from, where builders and joiners were expected to 'lend their hands' to a number of tasks.*

*He then told me an amusing story about one builder who got the coffin dimensions wrong and the lid would not shut properly when the body was inside. He had me laughing at his account of the men trying to force the lid shut which resulted in the body dropping through the bottom of the coffin.*

*Afterwards I talked with Ian and Don about how much I appreciated Peter's help. They were quick to note not only Peters skills and knowledge but also that teaching was one of the functions of the Shed. Something I duly acknowledge.*

The following example, also from my field journal, illustrates how projects are managed at the Shed. The direction provided by the project leaders is often inclusive while providing the direction required in keeping the task on track. This example comes from my experience of working alongside others at the Shed fitting blinds to the front of the newly constructed wood Shed. Jim Doolan was the leader of this project.

*Jim acted as foreman and provided direction while also seeking advice from other members who had previous experience. Jim had been tasked with overseeing the construction of the woodshed given his vast building experience. Other members acted as laborers or were allocated tasks depending on their abilities.*

*The members appeared to be observant of the skills of others and what they could contribute. Encouraging comments like, 'I see you've done that before', were passed on my ability with a hammer. There was another relatively new member in this project and his advice was sought once he demonstrated a degree of knowledge and skill and discussed his previous constructive experience. During our work Jim came and went saying he wanted to leave it over to us, returning periodically to check on progress and question why we were doing things as we were. I felt confident taking on the task and working with two other members who started to look to me for advice in directing the project. I tried to follow Jim's instruction and asked Michael and Neil for their thoughts.*

*Neil was happy to suggest small things like doubling up the saw horse as a mobile work bench. He, however, often deferred to my judgment with good-hearted comments like, 'I know a tradesman when I see one'. Other members came and went over the morning, many commenting on how good the blinds looked. During this task I felt my point of view and judgment were respected and I felt like a valued member of the Shed.*

*There was care taken with this project. The project leader Jim set the standard of work in an inclusive but directive manner. There was a sharing of control.*

### ***Building and Maintaining of Workshop Places***

‘Women share their thoughts, fears and aspirations at will. Blokes need a defined, controlled space to do it in’ (Ralston, 2011).

It is said in a lot of the Shed literature that when you create a space for men to talk they will often share and things will happen. This statement is in line with my observations of the Taieri Blokes Shed.

At the Taieri Shed there is a very definite separation of the workshop spaces from the social space (the smoko and meeting room). This physical separation is widely appreciated by the Shed as it helps set boundaries around expectation in each setting.

Unlike other Sheds, where the first focus has been on the planning and construction of workshop spaces, the Taieri Shed members have evolved, adapted, renovated and grown their workspaces while community work takes place. As a result, there is ongoing consideration of how to best manage and utilise space as the membership grows and projects are accepted.

We’ve always been a little bit behind the eight ball. We’ve never laid out the workshop from day one. We’re only starting to lay that workshop out now three years later.

Bob Biggart

There is a realisation that they are in a position where they are fulfilling the needs of the membership and the local community and cannot pause project work to organise their current workshops.

We’ve got to keep projects going while also developing the workshop (physical layout and requirements of the Shed).

Ian Miller

The Shed members have worked and laboured to create a place of production as well as a place where members can be in the company of each other. This involved a good deal of time and energy.

If you'd seen the place as it was and as it is now, a lot of work went in initially.

Colin Lyall

The following section presents findings on the workshop areas.

### ***Tool Storage and Workshop Layout***

There are differing views amongst the members on the use of space to best meet purpose. These ongoing discussions depend on the flavor of the group and the projects received. Some members have stronger views than others about the development of specific workshop areas e.g. metal work and welding, while others would like to see a concentration on the woodworking area as this makes up the bulk of project work to date. A number of these debates are influenced by the size of the workshop and the pressure on space when daily attendance is high (20 plus).

Although there are ongoing discussions about the utilisation of the workshop spaces I found that the workshop areas afforded the completion of project work and members are able to 'make do' in the available areas. There is a willingness to share equipment and spaces and outside areas are often utilised if weather permits. This willingness further demonstrates values of team work and working to a common cause. Priority of space is given to community projects over individual work although from what I observed there were few cases where both could not be conducted in the same space. Members are prepared to work around each other's needs, often involving interplay between projects related to tool and equipment use and assistance with lifting and holding.

Storage and work spaces are organised and there is a general knowledge amongst the members about where tools and equipment are kept. The following images provide detail about the layout of areas and the utilisation of space, which is often confined given the numbers attending.



*Figure 56 – Hand tool storage racks in woodshop*



*Figure 57 - Workbench in woodshop*



*Figure 58 – Wood workroom from entrance to metal shop*



*Figure 59 – Metal shop machinery*



*Figure 60 – Metal shop main workbench*

### *Health and Safety*

Consideration has been given to the requirements of workshop tasks and the separation of defined spaces. The woodworking area is the largest and most used space. Benches, lathes and mitre saws are positioned around the perimeter of the space away from the main thoroughfares. Bench saws and thicknessers have all been fitted with extraction systems so as to keep the space as free from dust as possible (see figures 62 and 63).

From my observations, safe use of equipment in the workshop environment is based on members' work experience, with those with trades experience teaching those without. There are no formal statements, documentations or procedures around health and safety, the use of equipment or the design of the workshop layout. Common sense, team work and teaching are seen as ways of maintaining a safe environment. I found that members are conscious of the safety of the work environment and concerns are regularly raised at monthly meetings.

There have been issues raised in the membership about the use and repair of equipment. This is generally done at monthly meetings, however there is no formal system of informing each other of breakages, other than word of mouth.

Unfortunately sometimes breakages are not reported.

Don Spittle

During my observation period, notices were placed in areas around the workshop, e.g. the thicknesser, to encourage maintenance. I also noticed that, while the workshop area was generally tidy since members cleaned their workspaces after use, there were no set expectations or rosters for cleaning the workshop. This level of organisation did not seem to be required as tidy workspaces seemed to be a social norm.

As previously noted the Shed is open to members outside of set hours to work on projects. In considering the safety of the membership round the Shed equipment and environment, there is a clear expectation that members only access the Shed if they have one or more other members with them. The limited amount of keys to the Shed helps regulate this as members are often dependent on others for access.

As a non-profit organisation the Taieri Blokes Shed is not subject to workplace inspections and are sheltered from direct scrutiny by being embedded in the physical environment and governance structure of the Taieri Aero Club.

The only rule is there has to be two people when you're working with machinery... which is very wise.

Neil Buckley

It is realised by a number of members that there is a risk of accident and injury, given the way the Shed has been developed alongside project work. Increased membership and crowding of the workshop add to the potential dangers. The implications of an accident have the potential to put the Shed and its operations under scrutiny and could put the community at jeopardy.

The reality is in this world or in the New Zealand environment if you don't have the appropriate systems in for health and safety . . . to look after your public interface you run the risk of when something goes wrong you carry the can it's just the way it is.

Mike O'Cain



*Figure 61 – Workbenches utilising natural light and away from main throughfares*



*Figure 62 – Thicknesser and mitre saw*

Health and safety concerns were addressed in two projects I observed. The first project involved moving wood stored in the woodshop loft to a purpose built woodshed. This freed up space, allowing replacement of a supporting beam, while addressing concerns about the amount of wood stored in the loft and its associated weight (figure 63).



*Figure 63 – Loft in woodshop following removal of excess wood*

The second project involved separate areas being provided for metal fabrication and welding. Welding activities were not fully active at the Shed during participant observation but care has been taken in setting up a purpose-built area where the dangers associated with this activity can be regulated. The Shed committee purchased a shipping container that is situated to the side of the main workshop building. It is fitted with a power supply and will be a contained area for gas and welding gear accessible to those with the knowledge and skills to use this equipment. The shipping container provides one of the supporting walls for the new woodshed.



*Figure 64 – Welding container (interior)*

## **SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AT THE TAIERI BLOKES**

### **EQUALITY**

There is a strong emphasis on equality amongst the membership. This is evident in the governance of the Shed where all members form the Shed's committee and have the right to be heard in the decision-making processes. There is social capital attached to the skills and contributions of members and some are recognised for their importance to the overall maintenance of the community. This being said, it was evident to me that no member was afforded privileges above and beyond another. Recognition of value is not reflected in privilege or a hierarchy. A number of the Shed members have been members of unions in their working lives as well as members of rural communities where everyone is expected to play their part and help one another.

I observed a resistance amongst members to have any special recognition or rights for founding members over other more recent members. This view was often strongly stated by the founding members and I feel serves as a stout cultural guide to others. There is a collective feeling of 'we're all in it together' with no discrimination. In saying that, acceptance of equality is recognised only if an individual is able and willing to contribute.

### **LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER AND ACKNOWLEDGING DIFFERENCES**

There is recognition that a number of personalities exist in the Shed community and at times members will not see eye to eye on how projects should be carried out, or how Shed activities should be governed. These points of difference are openly acknowledged at the Shed:

You get one or two who don't see eye to eye but you get that in any walk of life.

Colin Lyall

Different ways of doing tasks might lead to reluctance in what is tried.

Don Spittle

Compromise is often sought when planning tasks and at times members might forgo their opinion for the good of the collective. A number of members have worked out who they feel comfortable working alongside, and teams for community projects often self-select or are based on previous successes. There is minimal underlying tension at the Shed. I did not observe any members not attending the Shed due to a break down in relationships with others. It's true to say members have a good gauge on each other's personalities.

Acknowledgement of difference in the membership sits alongside the value placed on mutual support in this community. Mutual support is clearly evident in the interactions of the Shed, with members acknowledging not just differences of opinion but also differences in ability, energy, skills and physical and mental health.

We've got to be generous towards each other and accept what one can and what one can't do . . . I know physically there are a lot of things I can't do that others can.

Neil Buckley

We're all there looking after each other.

Bob Biggart

Evidence of mutual support outside the Shed will be discussed later in this chapter. The following extract from my journal provides an example of how member care for each other. In this example the Shed member does not fit within the 'normal' demographic.

*In the past few months a young fourteen year old male has been attending the group. He has been supported by his parents to attend the Shed as a way of investigating an interest in engineering as a future career.*

*After several months of regular attendance the subject of his official membership was raised as a point of general business at a monthly committee meeting. A number of members were positive in their comments, noting his willingness to get involved, knowledge of construction, problem solving and general good nature. He was seen to fit the attributes of a Shed member.*

*One member stated he was a 'good kid' and this was met with agreement. A motion was passed to grant membership on the proviso that this was agreed upon by his parents and that he wore correct safety equipment while at the Shed. A number of members voiced concern for his hearing and sight and referred to their own sensory loss as a result of trade careers.*

*During smoko I got talking with the young man about why he came to the Shed. He was looking to get work experience in the engineering field and hadn't had much luck until a family member suggested he approach the Shed. He told me he really enjoyed attending and learning off the men. To me he appears very mature in his approach to the work. He quickly asked for advice and made suggestions, for example fixings for the blinds we were working on.*

*A number of the other members like giving him a 'hard time', joking that they would write a report for his teacher or analysing his work by making good humoured comments. He seemed to respond well to this and even made humourous comments on the work of other members.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SMOKO TO FELLOWSHIP

We (humans) turn the consumption of food, a biological necessity, into a carefully cultured phenomenon. We use eating as a medium for social relationships: satisfaction of the most individual of needs becomes the means of creating community.

(Visser, 1992, p. ix)



*Figure 65 - Image: Members outside smoko Room*

Morning tea is commonly referred to as ‘smoko’ amongst the group. It is an anchor point for the daily activities of the Shed. There are clear roles and routines around the structure of this time. Smoko occurs on every morning session between 10 or 10.30am. Colin Lyall plays a key role here in organizing the morning tea. Colin, in essence, runs the smoko room. He is a regular attendee of the Shed and appears to take pride in this role and his contribution to the Shed. He readies the tea and coffee, ensures baking is on offer - along with the collection jar so members can contribute a gold coin donation. Colin calls people to smoko from the workshop. The importance of Colin’s role is valued by the rest of the membership. He is seen as having control over this setting and has ‘things in hand’. This became apparent to me early on in my time with the Shed when I offered to bring in baking as a complement to my introduction of the study to the membership. Ian Miller, whom I talked to about this, told me he ‘would have to check this with Colin first’.

The smoko room is his (Colin's room), anything you do you run past him first.

Don Spittle

The regularity of the smoko routine, combined with the expectation (cultural norm) that all members take a break, means the Shed balances a culture of productivity alongside a culture of mutual support and sociability. This chance to connect and share in the lives of each other is regarded by all as vital to the Shed's ethos. Smoko puts the social side of the Shed to the forefront. The social side is recognised as being key to the ongoing success of the community.

The social side's just as important as the working side . . . they all enjoy going and having a cup of tea and a cup of coffee and having a wee yarn or somebody has made something and they bring it along to have a wee look at it . . . . one of the few times when everyone is together.

Colin Lyall

I think it's the fellowship that we have, sharing ideas. I believe personally . . . I put a lot of emphasis on our lounge room and having morning tea there. Just the fellowship we have in that room. People can sit beside different people at morning tea and you talk about things . . . that fellowship in that room it's great. That lounge or smoko room is the makings of the Taieri Shed .

Don Spittle

Smoko time is the only time, outside of structure meetings and social events, when all members are together and can talk freely away from the requirements and processes of projects.

I think it (smoko break) is very important. It is the only real social time you have with each other . . . other than ‘get out of the way’ or ‘you’ve got my hammer’.

Bob Biggart

Although not an explicitly stated rule, I observe a clear separation between the discussion of project work being primarily confined to the work areas, and social conversation to the smoko room. Like the organised workshops, having a separate physical place for smoko is essential to differentiating between the ‘work’ and ‘social’ functions of the Taieri Blokes Shed. The separate smoko room enables members to talk freely with each other away from the noise and business of the workshop space.

Smoko . . . gives you a chance to air ideas for a start . . . to get together and talk about things other than what you are doing . . . when we’re in the Shed itself we tend to get involved in the projects in little groups whereas in the supper room everyone has a chat and do quite often pull legs too.

Don Spittle

The tone and manner of the humour at the Shed provides a strong indication of the member’s knowledge of each other.

Give each other hell at times . . . if you dish it out you’ve got to be able to take it.

Neil Buckley

Smoko is the one time throughout the morning when all members are together. There is a lot of good humoured banter amongst the group. The members give each other a ‘hard time’. Jokes are light-hearted and often link to a member’s character traits, work ethic, past history, and activities outside of Shed time. From my observations, humour often included recognition of someone’s skills or abilities and contained elements of admiration. The follow extract from my journal provides an example.

One member was the source of constant good humoured jibes at smoko. It took me a while to find out that this was due to the large whitebait catch he had made in the previous few days. Many of the members felt whitebait patties should have been on the smoko menu.

Smoko is also a time when general Shed information is passed on to the members including up-coming events, project planning, social occasions and wider community relationships. Smoko allows acknowledgment of milestones including birthdays and annual events such as Christmas and Easter. It provides a time when new members and visitors (including dogs) can be introduced to the Shed and its membership.



*Figure 66 - Image: Members at smoko December 2011*

This following account is taken from my field journal to illustrate the events of a typical smoko break and to indicate how the time is used for social catch-ups as well as providing information about the community and confirming shared responsibilities.

Colin called members to smoko by walking around the different project groups. Once Colin started, other members joined in, encouraging project work to be put down and for people to take a break. 'That can wait till after'. In the smoko room the tea and coffee is laid out in a specific area, with the urn filled with boiling water ready to dispense. A mix of bought and homemade baking is available. It is not uncommon for members or their wives to bake for the Shed.

A collection jar is placed near the tea and coffee area. Members are expected to contribute a gold coin. The proceeds go towards the cost of tea, coffee and food as well as a supplement for larger social events like the end of year Christmas dinner and bus tour.

Members help themselves to a drink and something to eat. Various groups engage in conversations about current sports and news events as well as their activities outside of the Shed. In observing these conversations it is evident that the members know about each other's interests (within and beyond the Shed), and about their families and partners. Talk about the local Mosgiel community is also common.

During this particular smoko, Ian uses the platform to inform members of the following:

- The health status of two members who haven't attended for the past two weeks
- A reminder about the evening meal that is planned for the upcoming Friday at the local tavern. This event involves partners and has been organised to be as affordable as possible for members. Upwards of 20 people are expected to attend and members appear to be looking forward to the evening.
- Attention is drawn to recent articles from the NZ Listener magazine, that outlines the Men's Shed movement in New Zealand. Copies are made available for members to read.

Smoko lasts approximately 20 minutes before members return to the workshop and their projects.

## MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS AWAY FROM THE SHED

The strength of this community is evident in how members interact not only within, but also away from, the Shed. Many choose to spend time in each other's company outside of the Shed, engaged in a variety of other occupations including walking groups, white baiting, golf etc. The Shed has regular social activities which are well attended by the members and their partners.

I meet people and have relationships that I'd like to continue if the Shed closed tomorrow.

Don Spittle

Given the average age of the membership, health concerns are common. Ian Miller as president, along with the other members, makes a point of keeping in touch with anyone who is in ill health or is caring for a partner or family member who is unwell. As described in the previous journal entry, Ian updates the general membership during smoko breaks or at monthly meetings.

Anyone's only got to be sick or have a partner in the hospital or something and there are always two or three enquiring how they are or can they help.

Colin Lyall

The way members shared information at the Shed indicates good networks of communication outside of the Shed and a willingness to support one another when needed. Attendance is not a requirement but if someone is absent for more than a few sessions it is likely they will be rung by Ian or one of the other members. These connections link with the values of being a mate where members are not only sociable but generous towards each other and loyal to those who are part of the community.

## ORGANISED SOCIAL EVENTS

Outside of set opening times the Taieri Shed puts an emphasis and importance on mixing as a group with wives and partners. It is seen by many in the group as the key to getting to know one another.

Involving wives in social activities to get to know each other better outside the Shed is very, very important.

Ian Miller

There are two major social events over the course of the year: a midwinter dinner and a Christmas bus tour and meal. These events have happened over the past three years and are looked forward to by the members. During my participant observation Ian Miller was instrumental in organising these events especially the bus tour. His wife was also a great help here. Numerous other members contribute ideas and feedback about planning social events. Potential ideas for events are brought to monthly meetings and discussed in line with their appeal and affordability.

I attended the Christmas bus tour and dinner on December 2011. This was my last participant observation session at the Shed. The following account has been adapted from my field journal to show the thought and planning that goes into social events outside the Shed.

On this trip members met at a designated spot in Mosgiel at 2pm and boarded a hired bus. Approximately thirty members and their partners were in attendance. Our end destination was Palmerston where we had a meal booked at one of the local pubs. On the way there we had three organised stops.



*Figure 67 - Image: On the bus Christmas Do. December 2011*



*Figure 68 - Image: First stop Orokonui Ecosanctuary. Christmas Do December 2011*

The first stop was at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. This destination was chosen as it was a recent development in the Otago area and, importantly, was one of the first communities who employed the services of the Shed to make walkways for their bush tracks. Although the Shed had made the walkways, the majority of members had not visited the center and were highly impressed by what they saw. It provided some with a context to the project and their contribution.



*Figure 69 - Image: Second stop Blueskin Bay Nursery. Christmas Do December 2011*

The next stop was the Blueskin Bay Nursery. This spot had been chosen as many of the wives, and a number of the members, were keen gardeners. In addition to being a Nursery there were a number of garden sculptures and handcrafted ornaments for sale. Some of these appealed to the members who examined how they were made and how they could be constructed at the Shed. A number were impressed with a garden sheep sculpture which utilised old bed wires.



*Figure 70 - Image: Sheep sculpture Blueskin Bay Nursery.*

The final stop was a visit to the peninsula reserve at Karitane where we were provided with a tour guide from the local Kati Huirapa Runaka ki Puketeraki. Many had not been to the area and were keen to hear about the history of the place.

To me these three stops demonstrated how the trips were planned with everyone in mind, aiming to be inclusive. Organisation had not only considered the finances of the community but also the range of interests within the community while providing something new and different.

Over the meal I had a chance to talk with a number of the wives and partners of members. They were unanimous not only in their praise of the trip but also in the value they attributed to the Shed community and what it provided for their husbands and partners. This attribution of value is evident in how they support other Shed events outside normal sessions. It is common for wives to bake for fund-raising events such as the tool auction held in the hangar next to the Shed, or for visiting delegations to the Shed such as the founding members of the Alexandra Men's Shed who came for support and advice.

## **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

Governance of the Shed viewed as ‘responsible’. Everything is brought up and you have a chance to say something about it . . . governance is the responsibility of the whole group.

Neil Buckley

### **GOVERNANCE ROLES**

The Shed has a defined governance structure and within this there are a number of formal roles, including President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Promotions Officers. All Shed members are members of the committee and, as Neil states above, this comes with the expectation that members contribute to decision making.

The Sheds monthly meetings follow a clear and traditional committee meeting structure. Apologies and attendance are recorded, previous minutes reviewed, an agenda of items including a treasurers report, project reports and points of interest or concern that affect the Shed, is presented and discussed. Time is allocated at the end of the meeting for any member to raise issues under general business. Minutes are recorded for every meeting by the Shed’s secretary.

An Annual General Meeting is held where members are elected or retained in governance roles (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and promotions officers). This meeting is advertised in the local paper (Otago Daily Times) as a way of ensuring transparency. It is recognised by the wider membership that the assigned governance roles serve the greater good of the Shed. Members elected to these roles draw on past experiences. Just as it is with the application of trades knowledge, the governance structure gives those members who have the ability and/or the desire to fill these roles the opportunity to contribute in a productive manner. Although these roles call for a contribution beyond normal membership, the members who

take on these positions attribute meaning to their contribution. Roles are taken on for personal satisfaction and out of a sense of responsibility to the Shed community.

Ian Miller's contribution as Shed president is valued by other members. His organisation and commitment of time and energy is vital to the day-to-day running of the Shed. Ian is valued for the direction and leadership he provides without being over-bearing or controlling. The skills he brings to the role are valued, like those of the skilled tradesperson in the setting.

We need a leader like him (Ian) rather than a more forceful type.

Neil Buckley

The promotions officers' roles are accepted by the membership as having meaning and purpose not only in attracting new projects for the Shed but by also providing a presence in the wider Mosgiel and Otago region through word of mouth and print media.

## CULTURAL REGULATORS

In the Shed's history Bob Biggart stands out as a member who has actively advocated and supported the development of the Shed movement. He holds true to the philosophies of the Shed movement, realising what it has to offer those who take part in the activities. As stated in the Shed's history, Bob is a founding member of the Shed movement in Otago. He is the main link between the King's Shed and the Taieri Shed. He actively builds relationships with new and developing Sheds in the wider region, being willing to consult, to meet and to share information. This is evident in the assistance he provided to the Alexandra and Wanaka Sheds.

Like Ian, Bob's roles in promoting the Shed movement is tied to his occupational identity both past and present. He is an active and skilled engineer having worked for the New Zealand Railways for the majority of his life. He is a problem solver and someone who appears unafraid to advocate for change or to challenge decisions. Importantly, he is also a Shed man in his spare time. He is a maker and doer and a mentor to others like his grandchildren and their friends who want to learn. He sees clear benefit in applying tacit knowledge to his own

projects as well as sharing this in a community environment. Bob and Ian are strong cultural regulators in the Taieri Bloke Shed community. They help enact change while promoting the value of the Shed to the membership and to the wider community.

Bob's more planning and I'm more day to day.

Ian Miller

#### MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL SHED ASSOCIATION

A Shed with complete local autonomy . . . we're local

Neil Buckley

The Shed membership values autonomy. The community currently has the skill set and commitment to provide effective management while responding to growth and change. This corresponds with the values of self-reliance, duty, team work and practicality that are inherent in mateship. There are strong relationships between the Shed and the local community built on past project work. There is a commitment to serving the needs of the local community as well as the needs of the members. The membership wants to stay in control of its collective destiny. Members value what they now have, and would not like to see it lost or taken over.

Following the lead of the Australian Men's Shed movement, approximately thirty New Zealand Sheds have joined together under the banner of a national body (Men's Sheds New Zealand/Aotearoa). The objectives of this national body are outlined in their constitution, the most recent version published on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (<http://mensSheds.org.nz/>).

**5.1 The objectives for which MENZSHED NZ is established are to meet the needs of its**

**member Sheds by:**

- (a) Providing support and resources for member Sheds and emerging groups aiming to establish a Shed.
- (b) Providing a central contact point for all member Sheds.
- (c) Maintaining a national register of Sheds in New Zealand.
- (d) Providing benefits to member Sheds, such as discounted group insurance rates.
- (e) Assisting member Sheds to keep their members safe through quality health and safety information.
- (f) Developing strategic alliances with key organisations.
- (g) Supporting member Sheds to be accessible to all men, regardless of ability, background, or culture.
- (h) Organising national conferences and facilitating regional and local networking opportunities.
- (i) Providing guidance regarding Shed responsibilities, structure and operations.
- (j) Providing information and guidance to enable member Sheds to establish opportunities for effective and continuous learning where appropriate for skill transference and tangible outcomes.

There are a number of views within the Taieri Blokes Shed about joining a national association. The majority are opposed at present. This is a view based on the current health of the community, what a national body would offer and the degree to which a national body would impose controls and governance from afar. Some members are also concerned about the cost implications and whether the expense would justify the return. A number of members have spent their working lives as employees where they worked under imposed controls and governances. Within this community they have control and are self-reliant and do not want to cede this to others:

Totally against it (national body membership) if it means having a paid, distant governing body . . . . We want to look after our own grants and our own paddock. I don't mind being a social member with any, or all of them (Sheds) for that matter. Why have a national group when we (Taieri Blokes Shed) don't need that?

Don Spittle

All Shed members are also, by default, members of the Taieri Aero Club. Given this strong relationship and the benefits it offers as far as insurance coverage and property management, many members do not see the need for assistance outside of their local area. There is a perception that the Shed is thriving with the consistent demand for membership and project work:

From our Shed's point of view I don't think there are many advantages, with us sitting under the Aero club. There would be advantages if we were a standalone Shed.

Ian Miller

The view against national body membership is not universal. Some members argue that if the Shed Movement has benefits it should be promoted to meet the needs of others who are currently missing out. The Taieri Shed has a lot of valuable experience that can be shared with others. From their past work experience and community experience some members believe there is value in the strength of numbers:

The membership is pretty adamant they don't want to be part of a national group . . . and that surprises me . . . in my experience there is always solidarity in numbers . . . . In terms of wanting to promote something and in terms of wanting to get stuff out of the council and local community an isolated group hasn't got the same strength as someone who's linked with a national group. The more people you have the more knowledge you have.

The membership think they're doing quite nicely in their own right and can't accept paying for something they can't see value in.

Governance by group agreement . . . that's working OK now but sooner or later that may have to change, we are still a relatively small group of people. If it starts getting much bigger and they put in formal governance I'm not sure all members would like it.

Mike O'Cain

The Shed governance is reliant on the efforts of key members and the time they commit to the Shed. Ian Miller and Bob Biggart are notable for their long-term contributions alongside others like Don Spittle who have held respected committee roles. There is a realisation about the need to foster leadership roles at the Shed.

I've got a strong personal view that I hate seeing organisations meandering through life. They've got to have a direction . . . and they've also got to have a reasonable level of governance so they don't go belly-up. If we were to lose Ian and Bob it would become unstable.

Mike O'Cain

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TAIERI AERO CLUB TO SELF-GOVERNANCE

There is potential for the self-governance of the Taieri Blokes Shed to be challenged in the future, more so if they lose their relationship with the Aero Club. A change in this relationship could force a rethink on membership of a national association:

We couldn't exist without them (Aero Club).

Don Spittle

There is awareness amongst the members of the potential for change and their dependence on the Aero Club:

We know darn well the aero club can change.

Neil Buckley

Over the course of the Shed's development there have been tensions in the relationship with the Aero Club. Not all members of the Aero Club are accepting of the Shed's presence in the setting. There have been incidences where anonymous complains have been made about members use of the building and surrounding areas even though the spaces the Shed use were previously vacant and have been renovated by the Shed. As a shared area there appear to be concerns held by some Aero Club members about encroachment on their activities and the potential damage to their property. It is recognised in the Shed community that both sides need to work at this relationship and mistakes have been made by Shed members regarding their use of space, particularly vehicle access.

There is past evidence of belligerence from some member (of the Shed) and you can't do that if you're in a relationship.

Neil Buckley

There are regular reminders during monthly meetings about the responsibilities of Shed members in using the space they have. Ian and Bob have an excellent relationship with Mark Healy (Aero Club coordinator) and have looked to meet with representatives of the Aero Club on a regular basis to work through concerns and problems:

The Aero Club battles because it's another voluntary group not a business group . . . . overall they have been very good to us. We can improve this by meeting them once or twice a year . . . . we've benefited them as well as them benefiting us.

Ian Miller

Given the ethos of the Shed there is a drive to give back to the Aero Club through productive work. The members see this as their way of reciprocating in the relationship. The membership has taken on a number of projects including runway markers, flag boxes and flag pole renovation for the Aero Club. They also feel they have made a substantial contribution to the restoration of the main hangar which had suffered from years of deferred maintenance.

#### FUNDING AND RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Shed has a number of relationships with other communities, businesses, services and governing authorities in the local area. Although not still formally in operation, representatives of bodies from the original Shed Steering Committee still attend monthly committee meetings when able. Representatives from the Dunedin City Council and the Royal New Zealand Navy attended while I was a participant observer. Their presence not only signals support for the Shed it also provides another (outside) perspective to the operations and governance of the Shed with advice on funding sources and avenues of support.

The Shed has been successful in a number of funding applications, seeking advice when needed on the structuring and wording of applications. I feel this demonstrates not only the skills of the group in gaining funding but also the willingness to ask for assistance and acceptance of worth in the Sheds activities.

Bunnings Warehouse (hardware store) has had a relationship with the Shed for a number of years. This is a two-way relationship where the Shed, and its members, receive discounts on purchased products and are donated returned or damaged goods to either utilise at the Shed or auction to raise funds. In return, the Shed members help Bunnings in their stocktaking

activities. This contribution fits with the expectation that Shed members contribute to the collective and, in turn, receive benefits:

Part of active membership is contributing to the joint benefit of the Shed . . . the stock take at Bunnings is an example . . . . The Shed relies on its income being raised by community projects, and through fundraising. If you're going to have the benefit of the machinery, and you don't want to pay a sub to do it . . . or you pay a minimal sub . . . you should participate in raising money, you know that's the tradeoff.

Mike O'Cain

## RECORD KEEPING

Formal committee and financial records are kept by the Shed. Care is taken in the balancing of project budgets and accounting for expenditures. Major projects are pre-costed by designated members with records kept and estimates provided in writing to the relevant parties.

As previously noted, Colin Lyall has developed into the role of Shed record-keeper and archivist. He has collected articles about the Shed and its members, photographs of projects, newsletters, and records of significant events in the growth and development of the Shed. Colin talked about how he came to record-keeping in his interview and the meaning and purpose he attributes to the activity:

My wife is behind me with these things, she said you should keep a record . . . in the first four or five years in a lot of organisations there's no records and in twenty or thirty years' time and somebody will come and say 'oh what happened in those first few years' or 'what was involved' . . . . gradually I got more and more interested in it (record keeping) and now I'm not the only one that sort of collects photos.

Colin Lyall

As Colin notes he is not the only member to keep records. I observed a number of the Shed members record events and projects that are seen as having significance. This was often in the form of photographs. Don Spittle is another member who took a number of the early photos of the Shed, subsequently passing copies to Colin.

Colin has an unassuming nature but the enthusiasm and the commitment he brings to his roles at the Shed are recognised and appreciated by the membership. Like Ian's role of president, Colin's contribution is valued by the wider membership:

I would say it's Colin's Shed because he's the absolute enthusiast and he has the records of everything.

Bob Biggart

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

It is often stated amongst the members that theirs is not a commercial venture. It is a nonprofit organisation and, as such, members are aware of not taking business away from local agencies. They want to be of use to groups and individuals in the local area who have specific needs that cannot be met by local business due to the one-off nature of the project and/or the associated costs. They realize that, given the resources the Shed can draw on, they need to set limits around projects they agree to:

This is a community where things get done and people know what you do. We can get confused as a service organisation. We're happy to take on community projects within our ability. It should never be an intention to do things to make money.

Neil Buckley

From the Shed's inception there has been a steady growth in community projects along with membership. It is recognised that the Shed has to promote itself and its services since the continuation of community projects is vital to the Shed's purpose.

The underlying ethos of the Shed is to take on work which meets a real need, and this, coupled with the members' willingness to complete projects at, or near, cost, is in keeping with an ethos of altruism.

It is the completion of projects that are affordable, well-constructed and visually appealing that is accepted as the best promotional tool the Shed has:

Community connections come with the project work.

Neil Buckley

Question: Why does repeat business happen?

We're cheap (laughter) . . . and we get the job done quickly. The quality of craftsmanship is also reflected in return custom.

Don Spittle

A number of members actively promote the Shed's activities by wearing their name badges when they're on Shed business.

I always when I'm outside the Shed and getting something I have my name badge on. I don't wear it at the Shed much because everyone knows me . . . and you know . . . you squeeze them if it's to get a bit of a discount but it's promoting the Shed as well. The people out there who say 'Oh the Taieri Blokes Shed we've heard about you' . . . the interest out there is very good as far as the community is concerned. If they don't know a lot they ask a lot of questions . . . we've got to keep our name and image out in the community through projects, that way we get the feedback as well and it also opens up the door to get more projects as well if people hear about you they say 'Oh they might be able to help us out', that's why they ring up.

Ian Miller

The Shed has put labels on a number of projects in order to draw in more project work. This was the case with flower planters that were produced to adorn the main street of Mosgiel. Small plaques were professionally manufactured at a cost to the Shed. This was seen as an investment in advertising.



*Figure 71 - Image: Planter boxes. Mosgiel Gordon Road*



*Figure 72 - Image: Planter boxes. At Shed prior to painting*

The Shed is conscious it needs to be visible in the local community. It makes itself available to local media and has had regular stories published in local and regional newspapers and magazines. This helps the generation of new members and projects. The Taieri Blokes Shed has run a number of open days so members of the public can visit the premise and meet the members:

. . . you go anywhere (within the Mosgiel area) and ask people if they know the Taieri blokes Shed and they do . . . ‘we’ve heard of you jokers’.

Don Spittle

It was not uncommon during my time at the Shed for recipients of the Shed’s services to visit and give something back to the Shed like materials and tools or a morning tea. Letters and cards were often received in thanks. Members also make a conscious effort to visit the communities and organisations for which they complete projects. The images below show Eddie Christiansen completing a pet cage for Reid Park Kindergarten and a delegation visiting the kindergarten to deliver the cage and meet the community. It is not uncommon for these meetings to make the local paper.



*Figure 73 - Image: Eddie Christiansen completing a pet cage for Reid Park Kindergarten*



*Figure 74 - Image: Shed delegation visiting Reid Park kindergarten to deliver pet cage*

In order to keep realising the true purpose of the shed, the steady demand for community projects needs to be maintained. At the moment the demand for project work is good, but as membership grows more energy will need to be put into promotion:

Increase in size has meant trying to find tasks to keep people busy. In the beginning, when numbers were lower, members were all over new projects like bees.

Don Spittle

You need someone who's looking for projects to do . . . . you've got to get the marketing up so you get the work . . . publicity is what any organisation needs if it's going to create community work . . . they're the sort of issues if you were going to put full governance in place you'd have to address . . . . Who's going to be our project seeker?

Mike O'Cain

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER OTAGO SHEDS**

The Taieri Blokes Shed is very open to sharing information with other Sheds in the Otago region. As the first Shed in Otago members have been approached by a number of groups and individuals wanting to get a Shed 'off the ground' in their local area. Initial approaches are usually met by Ian or Bob who welcome enquirers to visit the Taieri Shed and spend time with the members.

As previously noted, Bob is very active in promoting the Shed movement and has visited and consulted with a number of fledgling Sheds in Otago and throughout New Zealand. It is evident that he and other members believe in what the Shed has to offer others. Although they don't subscribe to the national association they do believe the Shed Movement has a part to play in many communities:

I'd like to think that even though the other Sheds in the Otago region have been named differently . . . we can all work and assist each other . . . . With this (Taieri) Shed up and running as it is new Sheds can look our way for guidance on how to set up.

Ian Miller

Other Sheds in Otago have chosen to join the national association. This is not criticized by the Taieri Shed membership and positive relationships still exist. But, regarding the national association, the Taieri Shed members believe that giving priority to the needs of their local community will enhance the developing character of the Shed. This view opposes following a set-up guide. Ultimately the belief is that Sheds will work if they respond to a present need:

Those Sheds (others in the local area) have to look after themselves because they are attached to their own area.

Neil Buckley

## **rites of passage**

The following section looks at the processes and rituals of joining the Shed.

### **HOW POTENTIAL MEMBERS APPROACH THE SHED**

A number of the current Shed membership joined through word of mouth or through seeing the Shed in the local media. A potential member's introduction to the Shed normally comes in one of two ways. Firstly, by making direct contact with a member of the Shed by phone or by meeting them in person (normally in the local community). A number of the local media articles about the Shed give contact details for prospective members to call. Contact persons have normally been Ian Miller, Bob Biggart or Don Spittle. Secondly, potential members can visit the Shed during opening times. Some may just pop into the workshop and enquire, while

others may arrange to come at smoko time. From my observations and through talking with members, there appears to be a unanimous openness to visitors to the Shed and to prospective members. There is a willingness to talk about the benefits of Shed membership, about what they do and what they get out of it.

### HAVING A CUPPA FIRST

Smoko time is when visitors to the Shed and potential members are introduced to the wider group. In many ways the smoko room is the ‘front of shop’ for the Shed. This is the place to talk and meet potential members before they tour the workshop and make decisions about joining. From my experience as a new member you are certainly made to feel welcome.

Ian Miller and Don Spittle, in particular, were willing to answer all my questions, provide information about Shed activities and introduce me to the other members. Providing a ‘cuppa’ fits with the common cultural elements of hospitality:

When anybody new comes along we always invite them in for a cup of tea  
. . . conscious effort to welcome people, putting morning tea on for people  
. . . everything revolves around the lounge room . . . it’s quiet, no machines  
there.

Don Spittle

### FINDING A FIT

After the initial contact, a potential member is welcome to attend as long as he is able to access the Shed independently and is willing to abide by the ethos of the Shed. A decision about full membership is often made after a period of approximately six weeks, or ten attendances. By this time it is anticipated that the prospective member will have had opportunities to know the Shed members and will have been involved in at least one community project or maintenance task. There is no stated formality to this arrangement but

from my observations it allows prospective members to make a decision while also allowing the membership to form an opinion of the individual:

A minimum of 10 visits is a way of helping ensure people are involved in Shed and not purely using it for their own purposes.

Don Spittle

There is an expectation that a new member show a willingness to contribute to the community. I did observe comments being passed if a prospective member only used the Shed for individual projects and appeared unwilling to engage with the other activities of the Shed. This initial period appears to be effective in screening new Shed members. If a decision is made by an individual to take up membership after this time it is unlikely they will then leave the Shed. This community experiences a very high rate of retention which, in turn, impacts on space, resources and available work.

#### REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Although not formalised in the governance structure, there are views around what practices strengthen the core membership of the Shed community. Regular attendance is seen as necessary for completing projects and maintaining links between members. Over the data collection period I gauged a core membership of between 20 and 30 members who attended a Wednesday or Saturday session or both. In addition to this there are intermittent attenders and peripheral attenders. A number of the peripheral members still choose to renew their membership each year and, according to reports from the Shed secretary, do so because they either want to be associated with the Shed now or be involved in the future, or else they consider it a way of supporting a community that is of value.

In gauging the importance of regular attendance there is an understanding within the group that due to the older average age of membership, health issues will have an intermittent, and at times, prolonged effect on attendance:

Attendance . . . regular attending . . . . Health comes into that and personal issues can come into that but yeah involvement and attendance would be the two words I would use there.

Don Spittle

I did note some variation in attendance at the Shed in relation to the weather. It was noted by some members that others will decide not to attend on a certain day if the weather is fine and they want to make the most of it by engaging in other occupations:

Isn't that the advantage of the Shed, you know it's there, you're a member, if you can't come today doesn't matter.

Neil Buckley

#### PAYING SUBSCRIPTIONS, NAME BADGES AND KEYS

Subscriptions to the Shed are paid on a yearly basis and are set at ten dollars. This price is seen as affordable, allowing individuals to make a contribution while not imposing a financial barrier. In addition to subscriptions, members make a gold coin donation during smoko time. This covers the cost of the morning tea with the remainder being put into the Shed's social fund to subsidise outings.

It has been proposed that some membership privileges such as name badges be granted only after there has been a history of sustained attendance. This is to ensure there is a correct fit between what the Shed offers and what the individual is willing to provide. It is a way of gauging reciprocity. Don Spittle, the original Shed treasurer, was responsible for producing and handing out temporary membership badges for individuals who chose to take up membership. This temporary badge is in lieu of professionally manufactured badges which come at an approximate cost of ten dollars (a sum that is now passed on to members).

There is a view held by a number of members that name badges should be worn when attending the Shed, to aid members in remembering each other's names (both old and new), and when in the local community on Shed business:

Should emphasise for people to wear their name tags.

Colin Lyall

Keys were originally given to key founding members with a record of this allocation kept by (Don Spittle). Keys are seen as valuable and not to be freely distributed. It has been debated at monthly meetings that, as a way of monitoring who has access to the Shed outside of opening hours, no more keys should be issued:

You've got to qualify for a key.

Neil Buckley

The limit to keys is another way of ensuring that members rely on each other for access to the Shed outside of set hours. This in turn helps maintain health and safety considerations such as having more than one member present when machinery is being used.

I now shift focus from description of what I have seen in the Taieri Blokes Shed community to sense making. The next two sections present my interpretation of individual benefits derived from membership, and the future implications for the maintenance and growth of the Shed community.

## **MEMBERS RECOGNITION OF BENEFITS FOR SELF**

This section looks at the findings from this study in relation to the benefits members feel they gain from the Shed. Links are made to occupational therapy concepts and to wellness in ageing literature outlined in Chapter Two.

## ACCESS TO EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS

For many members the initial attraction of the Shed was in the access to tools they didn't have at home. This may have been due to downsizing or to discontinued access to workplace tools and equipment:

I like pottering around and making things, since moving to this new house I'm limited in what I'm allowed to change in the house. The Shed provided a good opportunity to get access to tools I didn't have.

Don Spittle

While the accessing of tools may be the initial attraction and a continuing benefit, the realisation of all that the Shed offers appears to be what sustains a member's true involvement and ongoing participation. It is essential to healthy membership that the focus moves beyond individual gain to reciprocity.

## OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY AND SATISFACTION

The findings from this research strongly indicate Shed membership is a recognised part of individual occupational identities. For some, like Ian Miller and Bob Biggart, their identity, along with their commitment, goes beyond just attending the Shed for productive and social reasons. They have found a community, or movement, that fits with their sense of purpose. A place where they can help build community and support not only their own needs but, importantly, those of the wider membership. Earlier in this chapter I talked about Ian's role as the President of the Shed and Bob's long involvement in growing the Shed movement in Otago. I think involvement with the Shed represents a vocation for both men and helps them to find a new equilibrium after retirement from paid employment.

In talking about his *initiation to the Shed*, Ian stated in his interview:

*Well the first time I heard I think it was in the paper an article about starting a Shed up in the paper. And being fairly new to Mosgiel at that stage I wasn't involved in much in the community I thought it would be a great way to meet people. So I went along to the Shed opening and virtually signed up on the day to become a member. About six months went by (after the initial meeting and signing up) and I hadn't heard any word of whats going on so I actually drove around there one day to see if there's anything happening and some of the boys were working there then painting and cleaning the Shed so . . . it was from that point I thought, righto it's going, so I started to get involved from that point on.*

Ian Miller

In his interview Ian talked about his previous life-history in farming and his upbringing. Being a self-employed farmer has shaped his commitment to the Shed, farming being “a 24/7” job.

He notes that some members have been employed all their lives and are used to doing their time and ‘clocking off’. Ian remains committed to the Shed because he sees benefit for himself and others:

You wouldn't continue if you weren't getting the results.

Ian Miller

A common theme amongst members is the recognition that membership allows them to build and retain friendships while also being of use to others at the Shed, and in the local community

Question: Why do you choose to be an active member?

I enjoy it for the friendship, the company and hopefully being seen as being useful.

Neil Buckley

## OCCUPATIONAL TRANSITION

Engagement in meaningful occupation is a way of finding a new equilibrium as part of the transition process. For many members the common transition has been from paid work to retirement, with Shed membership providing social inclusion, ‘real work’, productive use of time, and a fit with place.

### *Social Inclusion*

For the majority of members the value of Shed membership is not just in being productive. Many are more than capable of undertaking constructive work at home. What the Shed provides are multiple reasons to apply their skills and knowledge in the company of others. It is the acceptance into a community of like-minded individuals and the gaining of social capital that is attributed worth. For those who don’t come with particular skills and knowledge but have a willingness to learn, a place can be found. Members value being part of something larger than themselves. For many it provides an antidote to the social isolation they may have been previously experiencing:

Some members have downsized and lost access to tools and workspaces they may have had at home or at their places of prior employment. Many still have workshops at home (often smaller than what they have previously had) however they seek support, companionship and the sharing of knowledge.

Ian Miller

It’s the company that I enjoy . . . . I was in the grocery trade my entire working career being in retail and wholesale and I was always dealing with people. When I retired for a few years I didn’t sort of mix and meet so many people and this was a chance to communicate with people.

Colin Lyall

I've been farming all my life and basically worked on my own all my life out in the country so moving to town in retirement . . . yeah I struggled with it so you were looking for openings to umm get away from your four walls meet people and I am a community minded person so if I can help the community in any way . . . umm I enjoy that. Dad was a great community man yeah as soon as I left school and come back onto the farm we got involved with the Young Farmers . . . . and being a small farming community you get involved in activities that go on in the district . . . . if you're not running it yourself you support the ones who are running it.

Ian Miller

In his interview Bob provided an excellent summary of what the Shed Movement has to offer members in relation to productive use of their skills while addressing social isolation.

We've got a lot of people with a lot of experience and they're living in their little corners. I live in my Shed, you live in your flat, and you do your crossword puzzle in the morning and you walk down to the shop and you walk back and you're really just decaying away health wise and mentally, and all this resource knowledge you have is not being disseminated.

Bob Biggart

### ***Transition to New Community***

Alongside social inclusion, Shed membership offers a way of finding a fit in a new place. As previously outlined, a number of members have moved to Mosgiel in their retirement, an adaptation that a number of them found challenging. In Don's case, the Shed helped him find a wider comfort in the Mosgiel community.

The Shed provided a chance to make new friends as we've recently moved to Mosgiel . . . . Mosgiel, particularly in the new regions, all have high fences and the only time you see your neighbor is when you go in the street . . . we came from the place where you had low fences and were in constant communication with our neighbors so we found it quite a struggle when we moved here.

Don Spittle

Transition in place is not only about moving to a new town or region. A number of members have always lived locally but have down-sized their houses and lost access to a workshop space or moved to a house that requires less maintenance:

A lot of people the biggest thing with it that I can see is there are a lot of people who live in a house and then they downgrade to a town house and they haven't got a workshop and they're still quite keen to do things and they do things at home and they go to get a tool and "ahh I haven't got that anymore and I can't do that and they're quite keen to come over to the Shed and do something that contributes to their own work but also helps with a major project (community project).

Colin Lyall

### ***Productive Use of Time***

With the transition from paid employment to retirement a number of members talked about finding ways of productively using their time as opposed to just passing time:

When you work over 40 hours per week for over 40 years of your life it can come as a bit of a shock to the system that when that finishes and you find yourself with a lot of time on your hands.

John King

Attendance at the Shed helps provide structure and order to member's weeks. For some members the weekly sessions at the Shed and its social events are a highlight in their weeks, while for others, the Shed is one component in a well-organised set of 'retirement' activities:

Put it this way it fills in two half days a week very comfortable . . . living on my own . . . sometimes time can hang and I like doing things but not necessarily house work!

Neil Buckley

One disadvantage of being retired is not having regular activities, by becoming a member of a club it gave me two activities each week to go to.

Don Spittle

In the case of Ian who has a significant role in the governance of the Shed his commitment goes beyond attendance at set session or at social events. However, as noted previously, this is a chosen obligation and one he recognises as beneficial to himself. The following extract comes from his interview.

Question: How does the Shed fit within the rest of your weekly routine?

Full time (laughter) . . . almost, no its building up to umm . . . no when I first started it was only two mornings a week but at this point in time now in the position perhaps I've gotten myself in with the Shed it's almost full time.

Question: Are you happy with this?

I'm reasonable comfortable because I'm a busy person and can't sit around and it is filling my days . . . . no I'm comfortable but I do have some concerns as the Shed grows . . . it could get too much and we may need to get some others in to help . . . . Up to this time it's been good because you've got your finger on the pulse all the time.

Ian Miller

Ian's comment about being happy with his current level of involvement is an indication of the growth of the community and the roles of governance. He recognises that there is potential for Shed activities to become a burden as requirements increase. Having control over the level of commitment to the Shed is necessary for all members.

***Making Choices About Involvement (Control)***

As part of the transitional process a number of members have made choices about how they will commit to the Shed. Some, like Ian, Bob and Don, have used their knowledge and skills in governance to contribute to the community and enable them to find personal satisfaction. Other members have made conscious choices about what they choose not to do in the community. One member spoke to me about being happy to lead projects and share his skills but had no interest in a formal governance role stating he had had enough of management in his previous job and didn't need the hassle.

**FUTURE IMPLICATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE AND GROWTH OF THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

Throughout my participant observation time and during member interviews I had a number of discussions with members about how they see the Shed developing and the problems that may need to be addressed. The following section captures the commonly held concerns of the membership.

**SIZE AND PROFILE OF THE MEMBERSHIP**

In many ways the Shed may be required to address its membership as a symptom of its success. At the time of writing, membership was still growing and it had reached a point where there were concerns about available space and safety:

Do we want it to get any bigger? We're tripping over each other now.

Neil Buckley

A number of ideas, like expanding opening hours and opening times, have been proposed to accommodate a growing membership. This may alleviate the concerns around space but it does have implications for increased governance requirements.

There is a reluctance to cap membership within the community. Two reasons are given here. Firstly, a number of members do not want to deny others the opportunities they have had. The Shed is commonly viewed as an inclusive, not exclusive, community.

Secondly, it is recognised that new membership is vital to the flourishing of the Shed. New members bring new skills, connections and relationships that benefit the Shed collective.

Some members expressed concern about the average age of the Shed demographic and whether other younger men might benefit from the environment, especially in respect to being taught and mentored by older tradesmen.

#### MAINTAINING THE CULTURE OF THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED

Members are aware that challenges come with a growing membership and they do not want to lose the ethos and values of the Shed. At the time of writing, the Shed has drafted a constitution that outlines its purpose and structure. This is intended to assist in guiding future developments.

#### GROWING THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED'S PROFILE

With an increasing membership there will need to be an increase in promotional work and project acquisition. It may be that money needs to be put into advertising the Shed and its services. There are implications here for members, and for continuing to be seen as a non-commercial entity that doesn't take business away from local tradespeople or industry.

## SPACE

During busy Shed sessions, space in the workshop can be at a premium, particularly in the woodworking shop. Members voiced minor resentment at how space is limited and some areas underutilised:

(In relation to use of space. Metal versus woodwork spaces) - Small niggles here, have to keep an eye on this as membership grows.

Don Spittle

Use of space is a problem and it's going to be an ongoing problem where we are.

Neil Buckley

Ian noted the potential to open the Shed spaces up to other groups by negotiation. There is a realisation that spaces are underutilised currently, with the Shed only being open two mornings a week. It is accepted that any use of the space by other groups would require a set agreement and the Aero Club would need to be informed:

The whole Shed concept has a huge potential (to be opened up to other groups to use the spaces offered by the Shed). This is a way of keeping our own identity under the Shed banner while opening the space to others.

Ian Miller

A number of members see the benefits of working in a combined space rather than being in a number of separate areas:

I think I'd prefer one large Shed so all units can be in together . . . so we're more integrated.

Neil Buckley

At the time of writing (June 2013), the Taieri Shed has acquired access to a large open plan building just outside the hangar area. This is also the property of the Taieri Aero Club. The members see this as having a number of benefits.

- They will be able to design and fit out this workshop before transferring from the current premises, allowing for infrastructure to be brought up to building code (electrics, plumbing, extraction). This will help address some of the current concerns around health and safety.
- The Aero Club will benefit in the long run by having another of their buildings renovated.
- The new workshop will provide projects for a number of members and the larger space will be more accommodating of higher numbers, thus allowing growth in the community.
- The new space is away from the hangar and will provide separation from the activities of the Aero Club and the Shed. This was initially seen as a source of unaddressed conflict.
- The new area retains a separate smoko lounge of approximately the same size as the present one with kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- The Shed members will have twelve months to renovate and fit out the new area before shifting from the current premises.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the findings from my research. It draws on my observations of the Shed's structure and culture as a participant observer. These observations and the formation of my findings were augmented and substantiated through consulting the Shed's cultural records and artifacts, secondary sources, and through qualitative interviews with selected members.

In categorising findings to provide a context to the Shed and the nature of the community at the time of data collection, hence my inclusion of a social history of the Taieri Blokes Shed. This enabled me to present an informed enquiry of the profile of Shed membership, alongside the roles and rituals of the Shed and the cultural practices of the community. The use of photos, cultural records, and member quotes is intended to emphasise and validate my own summaries.

The purpose of this research is to understand and analyse the culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed as viewed through an occupational lens, understanding the meaning and purpose attributed to occupation/s in the setting. In understanding the culture and occupational structure of the Shed, subsequent understandings have been gained about the wellbeing benefits from membership, benefits to the wider community, and implications for the Taieri Blokes Sheds sustainability. I chose an ethnographic methodology for this research that embedded me in the community as a participant observer. This enabled me to view and interpret data from both an emic and etic standpoint. Following participant observation I selected key members of the Shed to participate in qualitative theme checking interviews. In coming to understand this particular community, inferences have been made to the wider Men's Shed movement.

Previous research on the Men's Shed movement has concentrated on the vocational, learning, health and wellbeing outcomes that result from participation in Men's Sheds. The majority of research on the Men's Shed movement has been conducted in Australia with only limited study in a New Zealand context. In Australia, the Men's Shed movement has a strong profile, serving the needs of individual members and communities. A number of States have acknowledged the movement in health policy and have provided funding support. In New Zealand although the profile of the movement is growing, and seemingly well accepted in

wider society, official support in terms of government policy and funding has yet to be realised.

Results from this research indicate membership of The Taieri Blokes Shed is valued by men who have invested their time and energy in the occupations of the Shed. The responses to my questions about membership and the functions of the Shed were overwhelmingly positive. Members described the Shed as a place of productivity and a place where what they do matters to themselves and others. Members have a choice of joining and remaining active in this community. Although the main occupational focus of the Shed is constructive work just being someone who enjoys, or is competent in, constructive work is not enough to be accepted into this culture. Prospective members need to identify with the collective values of the Shed including willingness to work and socialise with others for both their own benefit and the benefit of others. This is a community that is based on equality, where all members have the ability to contribute and have control over their actions and involvement. Retention of membership is extremely high.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is first and foremost a place of production. Constructive work is the key occupation and the reason why members join and remain involved. The appeal is in the construction of utilitarian artefacts, teaching and learning, while being in the company of men with whom they can relate as equals. Constructive work includes individual and community projects but it is the work for others in the wider community that is vital for the Shed's sustainability and for the members to realise collective and individual benefits. Without a continued demand for community project work the Shed's purpose will not be realised.

In this community there are a number of occupations associated with the facilitation and support of constructive work. These occupations provide the systems and structures that enable the efficient conduct of work. Associated occupations include governance, promotional work, community liaison, creation and maintenance of Shed spaces, record keeping and project coordination. Each of these associated occupations requires the commitment of members, working together, utilising the skills within the collective. There is value (social capital) bestowed on those who are able to apply specific trade's skills as well as those who have the ability to meet the requirements of associated occupations.

This togetherness and commitment to a common cause is associated with the qualities of mateship. A member who is willing to contribute, in a practical sense, is seen as a good bloke. Throughout the literature on the Men's Shed movement there is reference to the values of mateship.

The focus on the occupations of constructive work at the Taieri Blokes Shed has enabled men of a practical disposition to come together. There is meaning bestowed on both the opportunity to work as well as socialise with 'likeminded' men. Although construction work is the principal reason for the continued existence of the Taieri Shed community, the social connections at, and outside, the Shed are equally valued by the membership. The social component of the Shed complements the construction component. The Taieri Blokes Shed is not a replacement for paid employment. This is a community that members choose to be involved in. Although many bring skills, knowledge and attitudes from their previous vocations, here they can make choices about how they contribute. This community is not suitable for all retired men. It is not a 'silver bullet' for everyone who is isolated and occupationally deprived in their retirement. Members need to find meaning in the work and social occupations of this community, they need to see a positive match to their own occupational identity. As with constructive work, the social activities of the Shed require members to share. These are men who care about one another, who give reciprocal support and assistance. These men are Mates not work colleagues.

A common characteristic of mateship is masculinity. The Men who join the Taieri Blokes Shed are predominantly of a generation where a good bloke made and fixed things himself. A good bloke was practical and willing to give his Mates a hand. The Taieri Blokes Shed is a place where things get made and problems get solved, it is not a place of consumption or distribution, or a place to just sit around and talk. It is a place to do. The Taieri Blokes Shed reflects how 'we Kiwis' see ourselves and our national identity. Although not explicitly stated, the Taieri Blokes Shed is a male domain. This gender focus is crucial to realising the culture of the setting.

The social side of the Shed requires that morning smoko is central to members staying connected with one another. Having a separate place for smoko away from the noise and

requirements of the workshop is valued as are the roles of members who organise smoko. Outside of Shed sessions members connect informally and formally. There are regular social events that include partners and wives and require organisation.

Like the support roles for construction work, the support roles and organisation of social events are valued in this community.

There are wellbeing benefits too that result from active membership of the Taieri Blokes Shed. These benefits are only realised if an individual's values, skills and attitudes are consistent with those of the Shed. Benefits include recognition of social connectedness and social contribution, an easier transition to retirement from paid work, smoother transition to a new area, and the opportunity to exercise autonomy and self-determination. Membership of the Taieri Blokes Shed adds to members' quality of life. It allows for structured and meaningful use of time. These factors are recognised in literature related to enhancing wellbeing in ageing (Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007). The Taieri Shed does not specifically target health delivery to its members. It is a productive shed focused on real work and social activity but benefits to personal health and wellbeing flow on from engagement in these occupations.

For the Men's Shed movement to remain relevant there are a number of points that need to be addressed. These issues are relevant to the Taieri Blokes Shed as well as the Men's Shed Movement in general. Men's Sheds cannot operate in isolation, they are dependent on local communities recognising their value and supporting them through commissioned work, funding, governance assistance support while, most importantly, supplying new membership. Men's Sheds work because they respond to the needs of the membership as well as the needs of their local community. Men's Sheds need to be visible in their interactions with locals, and having a presence in local media is also important. The Taieri Blokes Shed is very active in both respects. Community project work needs to be produced to a required standard, products must meet needs while being cost effective. Having enough work to support a growing membership is vital. Sheds are not charities nor are they businesses. Men's Sheds have to serve real needs and promote themselves while being careful not to take custom from commercial services.

As the Shed movement grows and becomes more widely recognised, the Taieri Shed, along with other Sheds, is likely to come under increased external scrutiny. This has implications for how Sheds are structured, the requirements of health and safety, insurance and governance. New Zealand has followed Australia's lead in establishing a National Association of Men's Sheds. The Taieri Shed is not affiliated with this association but will need to weigh up the benefits of future national association membership as a way of addressing increased growth, external scrutiny and the resource limit of their Shed.

Maintaining work and social spaces is a concern for the Taieri Shed as membership increases. Planning and consideration of the size, practicality, safety and affordance of spaces is currently happening in the community. Movement to a larger predesigned workshop space is part of these plans.

With the growth of the Taieri Shed, consideration is needed as to whom the Shed serves and the potential for a changing membership profile. In the future the range of practical skills within the group is liable to change and there may be a requirement to mentor younger members or those without specific trades skills. There is potential for current members to choose to leave or disassociate with the Shed as the profile and nature of the community changes.

## **DISCUSSION**

Of all the clubs I've ever been in my life, and they are quite a few, this is easily the most united in its members and its aims, without doubt.

Don Spittle (Taieri Blokes Shed Member)

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a concern across the developed world with regards to meeting the needs of an ageing population. The number of older people is dramatically increasing and they are also remaining more active. The Men's Shed movement has been found to provide benefit for some, but not all, ageing males. It should not be seen as a 'fix-all' for health care delivery. The benefits derived from Shed membership are reliant on the sustainment of 'real' constructive work and the ability of members to make choices about their involvement and have input and control over their actions and over the organisation of the Shed. This research contributes to the growing evidence of the benefits of the Shed movement.

This discussion presents recommendations for the Taieri Blokes Shed and the wider movement based on this research and Men's Shed literature. It provides a detailed discussion of the findings of this study drawing on previous literature, research and key concepts outlined in Chapter Two. Points of discussion address the aims of this research. The aims of the research investigated the following questions. How are occupations structured within the Taieri Blokes Shed? How is the culture of mateship evident in the occupational roles, routines and relationships of the Taieri Blokes Shed? What are the wellbeing benefits that individuals derive from active occupational engagement at the Taieri Blokes Shed? How is the Shed perceived in the wider Otago community? Are the activities of the Taieri Blokes Shed of mutual benefit to the membership and the wider community? What are the implications for future sustainability of the Taieri Blokes Shed community? What inferences can be made from this research to the wider men's shed movement?

## **THE NECESSITY OF MEANINGFUL CONSTRUCTIVE WORK**

Constructive work is the central occupation of the Taieri Blokes Shed. It is essential to realising the meaning and purpose of the community and is the basis around which supporting occupations are structured. Meaningful constructive work in a collective environment provides the platform for social relationships at the Shed and is the point from which wellbeing benefits stem.

Constructive work is work that requires self-investment, skill, craft and personal judgement (Green, 1968). Constructive work provides the foundation for attracting and retaining members. Individuals who investigate membership have an interest in constructive work. Constructive work helps members define who they are and how they wish to be viewed by others (Keilhofner, 2002). For many members, constructive work holds meaning as it directly links to their history of occupational participation as tradesmen, farmers or home handymen. A number have had, or continue to maintain, back yard Sheds. They are productive men by nature and experience. Constructive work provides a test and challenge to them and enables them to realise their skills and knowledge through application to project work. For some members, constructive work is the medium to participate in and contribute to society while finding a fit with compatible individuals. Constructive work is an occupation that defines humans. Humans are transformed by their work and invest themselves in objects. Through work we discover ourselves and reveal ourselves to others (Kojève, 1989).

The majority of previous Men's Shed research has focused on the health, wellbeing, vocational and educational outcomes resulting from Shed membership, while acknowledging meaningful work. This study first and foremost acknowledges the core occupation of this community, constructive work. This is what holds together the Taieri Blokes Shed and other Men's Sheds. Constructive work is the common occupation valued by all members. Meaningful constructive work is the source from which individual benefits are realised. The importance of occupation as an enabler of health and wellbeing is a key construct underpinning occupational therapy and occupational science. Occupational Science and therapy articles about the Shed movement have previously made this link (Thomson, 2008, Martin and Wicks, 2008). Unpublished work by Molan et al (2011) also emphasises the

purpose provided by work at Men's Sheds. All of these studies were based in an Australian context.

A recurring finding in this research is the rewards individuals get from the completion of works, particularly community projects. The acknowledgement of rewards to self and the Shed, although not always openly stated, are clearly evident to me, having observed the actions and reactions of the membership. Social capital is bestowed on those who can exhibit agency and competence in progressing and completing work. Those who have specific skills, however, are not ranked in a hierarchical nature at the Shed. Their skills are valued and most definitely utilised yet these members are not treated any differently by the membership or afforded any extra privileges. As opposed to paid employment, acceptance into this community is based on a willingness to contribute. The acceptance of equality is vital here as is loyalty to other Shed members and dedication to the duties of constructive work, all values of mateship. It is the willingness to 'do' together that cements this community and provides a sense of belonging (Wilcock, 1998a; Wilcock, 1998b; Hammell, 2004; Rowels, 1991; Rebeiro, 2001). Meaningful occupation provides humans with a sense of satisfaction and a positive occupational identity (Christensen, 1999, 2000, 2004; Howie, Coulter and Feldman, 2004).

Appreciation is based on what is not said as much as what is said. A job well done is approved without being expounded or fulsomely praised. Workmanship, invention, problem solving and practicality are expected in the processes of work. There is a realist rather than romantic view towards workmanship fitting the values of a good bloke who is practical and does not waste words. These attributes are embedded in New Zealand's history through the creative and constructive occupations of pioneers (Māori and European), farmers and backyard inventors. Originally a requirement of necessity, being able to make and problem solve is still valued in New Zealand Society, although not as widely practiced as in the past.

With constructive work at the Shed, the importance is in the 'doing' not the critiquing. The meaning and purpose of the work is known but not discussed in depth. Members of the Taieri Shed just get on with it. Meaning is found in the process and 'fit to purpose' of the work not just the aesthetic properties (Crawford, 2009). The worth of involvement in the means of

constructive work is often overlooked when focusing on the end product or the value work exhibits (Rose, 2005). Real work at the Shed allows members to realise themselves as well as how they relate to others. It provides a familiarity with the world (Arendt, 1958). Having control over the processes of work or their contribution is vital to an individual's association with the Shed and their acceptance into the community.

For members, value is attributed to projects that present a challenge be this in the skills of workmanship, the sourcing of material, working to a budget or solving problems anew, fitting Green's (1968) definition of work. The majority of projects at the Shed rely on judgement and skill. They align with Pye's descriptions of workmanship of risk where the project outcome depends, wholly or largely, on the worker's care, judgment and dexterity (1968). Work that presents a challenge helps members realise previous skills and knowledge or requires them to learn and adapt. There is care taken in the planning and execution of projects where tacit knowledge is required to guide, direct or implement the means of production to achieve a satisfactory end (Collingwood, 1958). Knowledge of tool use, fabrication techniques and materials is evident within the membership, with the teaching and exchange of knowledge a requirement of success in work.

Without the demand for community projects the Shed would not be able to realise its purpose. Constructive community projects are the foundation of the Shed's culture and community. Meaningful work facilitates social activity. Although the initial premise of the Taieri Blokes Shed was to balance individual projects with community work it is evident that community work takes up the majority of members work time. This is not something that is begrudged by most of the members. Although a number of members commented that it would be nice to have more time to spend on their own projects, community work realises the true purpose of the Shed, enabling contribution to the wider community. Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave (2007), propose that participation in society is one of the keys to enhanced wellness in retirement. Community projects are real work. If meaningful constructive work is the point of difference between this community and other sports, social, business and community groups, then it is vital that the supply of community projects meets demand, especially if the Taieri Blokes Shed continues to grow at its current rate. At present the Shed is experiencing a

high demand for community work but the membership realises that continued acquisition of projects is necessary for this Shed's survival.

The founding members of the Taieri Shed elected to join, and remain members of, the Taieri Blokes Shed because they see value in the work the Shed can do for the local community as well as for themselves. Strong cultural moderators like Bob Biggart and Phil Bradshaw set out a vision for the Shed and helped drive the message of working shoulder to shoulder on constructive work for the benefit of self and others. This resulted in a simultaneous demand for membership and community work.

Although governance and organisational structures were considered important in the early stages of the Shed's development, there was a view that individuals joined the Shed to be productive so this should happen as soon as possible if the demand for work existed. It is important that people don't overlook the value of meaningful constructive work when exploring, developing and working with Men's Sheds. Anyone working with, or intending to work with, a Men's Shed needs to recognize these communities are places of constructive work, and this should not be marginalised. Targeted social or health programs have the potential to disrupt the core activities of the Shed, or overwhelm the membership if not well managed.

## MAKING AND MAINTAINING A PLACE FOR CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

The ability to conduct constructive work is dependent on place, that is, place that enables constructive work, particularly trades based work including metal and woodwork.

The demand for work early in the Taieri Blokes Shed's development meant work areas evolved in line with the requirements of project work and the availability of space and resources. The choice to take on projects early in the Shed's history indicated a desire to 'get on with things', to realise the true purpose of the Shed rather than spending too much time setting up, planning and organising themselves.

Spaces at the Taieri Aerodrome were acquired through promotion of the Shed vision and connecting and consulting with the wider community. The spaces offered by the Aero Club were not pre-fitted workshops, they required development to afford purpose. Spaces have been established over time to service, not only the work, but also the social needs of the community. The members have labored, renovated and worked on the space to create place. This effort in seizing and constructing place in itself met the requirements of the membership to be productive, strengthening attachment to the community through collective energies expended in pursuit of a collective goal. Although not perfect, the workshop spaces are functional and meet the majority of requirements for project work. Workshop areas not only afford work processes (Gibson, 1950), they also hold value in relation to the investment of time, energy and shared experience (Relph, 1976).

The workshop areas are geared towards ease of function. Tools, materials, workbenches and machinery are ordered in the setting. Considerations have been, and continue to be, made around the improvements of function of the spaces as new projects and machinery are introduced and membership grows with a mixture of skills and abilities within the group. Division of workshop space has occurred in line with defined trades focus (woodwork, metal work, welding) and the requirements of storing materials, fixtures, and fittings.

Building place is an important and necessary element of occupation (Hamilton, 2010). Members value control and self-reliance in constructing place. The Taieri Blokes Shed members continue to make decisions about how space is utilised and developed. They are appreciative of the Aero Club making the spaces available to them while being fully aware that through their own actions they have made them into productive and welcoming places. The Taieri Blokes Shed has become a place because of the availability of space, the attributes of the members and the ongoing occupation of constructive work (Hamilton, 2010).

The community is at a point now where workshop space is limited. Crowding of workshop areas is affecting productivity and has potential implications for health and safety. The membership is well aware of these issues. The Taieri Blokes Shed has acquired access to a significantly larger space adjacent to the main hangar and current workshop. This is owned by the Aero Club and has been recently vacated by a tenant. The Shed has attained funding to

design, renovate and fit out this space while also maintaining their current area. This will allow the community to cater for more members and larger quantities of project work, while providing members with purposeful work as they develop the new space. At the time of writing, the Shed membership had voted unanimously to accept the move to the new space and had started planning the fit out and renovation of the larger area. Acquisition of this larger space will, in time, ease current pressures on workspaces and a planned fit out will help address current health and safety concerns. Although some members are attached to current areas there is a realistic approach about the need to move. The making of the place itself has been important in the development of relationships and effectiveness of the Taieri Blokes Shed. The building, renovation, maintenance, design and fit out of spaces have required significant work, providing purpose and experiences that have helped construct this community. There is a lack of research in occupational therapy and occupational science that investigates the role of constructive occupation in creating place.

## **SUPPORTING CONSTRUCTIVE WORK**

Making the Taieri Blokes Shed a reality has required a good deal of time and effort. Continued effort is required to support the core occupation of constructive work. There are a number of key occupational roles that have enabled the Taieri Blokes Shed to prosper. These roles include governance, promotion, record keeping and community liaison.

Although the concept of the Men's Shed movement was introduced to Otago by Phil Bradshaw it was never instigated in a prescriptive manner. From the inception, the movement involved the local community be this municipal, social, government funded groups or individuals. Phil spoke widely to a number of groups and to the public about the ethos behind the movement and his experiences of seeing it in action in Australia. Phil's initial work resulted in a number of groups and individuals buying into the concept and committing to making it happen. In an official sense a steering committee was formed to add weight to the proposal and help with logistics.

Founding members like Bob Biggart worked to find facilities, work projects and those individuals who were interested in membership or preliminary development. The establishment of the Taieri Shed and Kings High Shed was a result of local interest and 'grass roots' involvement. Although both Sheds have the same origins they have developed separate governance and support structures which enable constructive work. Bob Biggart remains the common link between the two Sheds in the Dunedin region.

The current membership of the Taieri Blokes Shed continues to make the Shed work as a productive entity. They work with the local community to build relationships, acquiring project work and funding. The Shed has self-governance structures. In line with the values of mateship this is a culture that values self-determination, although this does not mean they will not work with others or seek advice or support in the local area. Equality of membership is a core value. This is reflected in the shared governance structure of the Shed, the decision and consultation processes around project work and social activities. Members are recognised for their ability and willingness to contribute to the whole and no-one is seen to have a higher status than another. Equality of membership assists in moderating and acknowledging differences of opinion. Members can choose who they work with and decisions about matters affecting the whole are openly discussed. Compromise is often sought when planning tasks, and at times members might forgo their opinion for the good of the collective. This fits with the code of mateship, team work and collective purpose.

For particular members, like Ian Miller, involvement in the governance and support structures of the Shed provide the occupations which have most meaning and reward. Ian is very committed to the Taieri Blokes Shed and contributes a large part of his week to managing Shed projects, governance and relationships, along with social activities. Ian is happy with the purpose this provides for him in his weekly routine but is aware that, as the Shed grows, these tasks may become a burden. Although the membership appreciates Ian contribution not all are aware of the amount of time and energy he gives. Despite the focus on constructive work, other roles and functions are valued and necessary to ensure the key occupations are maintained. There is acceptance of a diverse range of contributions which build and sustain this community. The acceptance of diversity when working towards a common goal is a characteristic of successful communities (Hamilton, 2010; Rubin, 1983),

## **SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS**

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a community and not a workshop used by a collection of individuals. Social inclusion and connectedness is as important as meaningful work in realising the purpose of the Shed and benefits to individuals. Those who commit and identify with the ethos of the Shed and the culture of mateship will find a sense of belonging (Rebeiro, 2001). The humour and conversation amongst the members indicates time spent in each other's company both inside and outside the Shed where they know each other's personalities and how to relate in a way which acknowledges and appreciates what each individual contributes.

Although not specifically stated, the Taieri Blokes Shed is a male only domain. It is important to recognise the value placed on a masculine culture at the Shed. A number of members talked with me about the value they place on male company and how female membership would have an effect on the culture of the Shed. Mateship is strongly representative of masculine traits and Sheds are traditionally male domains. Male-only membership is part of the existing culture and is a key unifier of the membership. It helps establish relationships between members. The researcher recognises differing views exist as to the merits of the Men's Shed movement. Rachel Stewart wrote on the Men's Shed movement in her comment piece for the Taranaki Daily Times.

Bottom line, the thing that really sticks in my craw is the fact that men, particularly white ones, are seldom aware of just how easy their life really is, and has been, by sheer virtue of the fact that they have dangly bits. The world has been their oyster but yet some of them still want their subsidised man cave to hole up in. Poor babies.

(Stewart, 2012)

Having reviewed a range of media articles about the Shed this viewpoint is in the minority. The majority of articles accept Men's Sheds as worthwhile male domains, places that meet the legitimate needs of older men and their wider communities. I firmly believe there is nothing wrong with openly labeling the Taieri Blokes Shed as a male-only domain. As pointed out by

a number of members there are numerous examples of other community groups being restricted by gender, religion, disability or ethnicity. The Taieri Blokes Shed works for particular men, not all men. It clearly meets their needs. The men of the Taieri Blokes Shed, like other men of their generation, experience increased health issues as they age. These are men who have faced a change in their status, power and influence once retired from paid employment. Paid employment often constituted a large portion of their occupational identity.

Togetherness and working shoulder to shoulder is vital to members getting to know each other and share in each other's lives. An individual that buys into the Shed's ethos is likely to be welcomed and included. There are identified rites of passage related to induction into the Shed, expectations that membership involves working with others, not in isolation, participating in constructive work, governance, and the social activities of the Shed. The focus on togetherness and building community means members have a broader interest in each other's lives and activities outside of Shed attendance. The members of the Taieri Blokes Shed are in contact with one another and if they are dealing with health issues or family issues, members will take an interest and help out as they can. This assistance comes from a genuine compassion and a dedication to look after each other, values of mateship.

Social connectedness occurs outside the normal routines of the Shed through regular social events and reciprocal arrangements with community groups and businesses. These events emphasise the willingness to do for the greater good of the Shed and the willingness to mix with each and with partners and wives. The attendance and support of social activities indicates a group of men who enjoy, and choose to spend time in, each other's company. They value the relationships they have at the Shed. As quoted in the findings, members like Don Spittle can see relationships they have built at the Shed continuing even if the Shed does not. The Shed and its structure has enabled relationships to form but the investment that members have made means these relationships now exist independent of its requirements or facilitation.

#### MAKING AND MAINTAINING A PLACE FOR SOCIALISING AT THE SHED

As with the construction of the workshop spaces, the physical separation of the smoko room sets boundaries around work and socialising at the Taieri Blokes Shed. The smoko room,

along with the set roles and routines around morning tea, provide a structure for members to get to know one another outside the distractions of the workshop. It is a time and place where they can celebrate, share information, plan, consult, induct members, host the wider community and comfort one another.

Although not a set rule, discussion of project work is predominantly kept separate from morning tea discussions. The smoko room and what happens there is attributed a great deal of value in building and binding the community. Colin Lyall's role as smoko facilitator is widely appreciated amongst the membership.

The newly acquired space also has a separate area for meetings and for smoko. This separation of social activity from work is a strength of the Shed. This is a view backed up by the membership. The current smoko room not only meets the requirements of meetings, and serving and consuming food, it has been renovated and decorated to provide ambience and comfort. It is bright, easily accessible, and its walls have been decorated with many of the Shed's cultural artefacts including opening plaques, photos of social events, project information and advertisements for upcoming events. It is a place for members to mix and share in each other's lives away from the noise and work processes. It is a place to pass on information and welcome new members and interested parties. The smoko room is as essential as the workshop in realising the Taieri Blokes Shed's culture. Different occupations require different spaces with variations in affordance, adaptation and ambience (Mamilton, 2010).

## **BENEFITS TO THE INDIVIDUAL SHED MEMBERS**

Members of the Taieri Blokes Shed are able to identify a number of wellness benefits resulting from active membership. Benefit comes from engagement in meaningful work, social inclusion, and societal contribution. Benefits for members of the Taieri Shed have stronger association to wellness than to physical health. Unlike Australian Sheds, in New Zealand there is a less explicit focus on Sheds being a point of access for health services. The Men's Shed movement has documented health, wellbeing and social benefits to individual

members (Golding, Brown, Foley, Harvey, and Gleeson, 2007). Although a number of these benefits have been documented in previous parts of this thesis, this section explicitly frames benefits under concepts of meaningful work, social inclusion, social contribution, occupational transition, and occupational deprivation.

## MEANINGFUL WORK

Active members are able to recognise a fit for themselves in the Shed community. Attribution of meaning comes from constructive work, through teaching and learning, and contribution in various governance, social, or promotional roles. Meaning comes from work being real and for the benefit of self and others, where members can make choices, exert control, and set priorities (Townsend, 1997). Occupational satisfaction is gained from realising meaning and members' ability to be active agents (Howie, Coulter, and Feldman, 2004). There is an awareness of self and capabilities through involvement in meaningful work. For many, this contributes to their sense of selfhood and an acceptable occupational identity (Christiansen 1999; Keilhofner; 2002). Within the fields of occupational therapy and science there are a significant number of studies that recognize the promotion of wellbeing through engagement in occupations that promote meaning and independence (Molineux and Whiteford, 1999; Hammell, 2009).

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social connectedness and just participation is enabled within the Shed and through contribution to the wider community (Keeling, 1999; Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2005). Value is attributed to the Shed by not only the membership but also the wider community and via local media. The link between wellness and social connectedness is known by the membership (Dwyer et al., 2000; Te Pumanawa Hauora, 1997).

The men who identify with the Shed community are those who understand the match between their own needs and worldview and what the Shed culture has to offer. Constructive work and

community involvement allow them to be the way they envisage themselves. These are men who have a history of either trades work or an upbringing which placed value on practical skills. Potential members need to be people who are willing to 'give it a go' even though they might not have all the skills required. If they buy into being part of a collective where there is a range of skills and experiences they can fulfill their desire to be productive while learning off others, teaching and attaining social inclusion. The drive to be productive and to use their abilities to contribute to others allows for beneficence and team work. These attributes are common amongst the membership.

Membership of this community is valued because of the unity of vision and team work. This is a culture where the membership has control and a sense of independence, a recognised requirement of wellness in ageing (Keeling, 1999). The Taieri Blokes Shed provides a place where members are both wanted and needed. Members care for one another and this is shown in informal and organised ways.

Wives and partners of members agree the Taieri Blokes Shed has benefited their spouses. Their accounts back up the benefits noted by members: having regular meaningful activity and spending time with 'good men', while being recognised and valued for their contribution to the community they believe is good for them.

## SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Membership is valued for the meaningful contribution Shed activities can make towards the wider good of the local community. Shed membership allows individuals to retain a productive role in society. This just utility has been linked, in literature on aging, to an individual's welfare or wellbeing (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2005; Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007; Dwyer et al., 2000; Te Pumanawa Hauora, 1997). Membership of the Taieri Shed fits with the findings of the Mosgiel Longitudinal study where friendship, reciprocity, and a sense of independence in place contributed to well-being (Keeling, 1999). The works of the Taieri Blokes Shed are seen and talked about in the local community.

## OCCUPATIONAL TRANSITION

Within the Men's Shed literature there is a general recognition of the centrality of meaningful work to productive involvement of Shed members, many of whom are making life transitions (Golding 2009; Martin and Wicks, 2008).

Involvement in the activities of the Shed has helped address occupational deprivation for some members. Occupational deprivation is a state in which they were unable to disseminate, or use, the practical skills they have and were restricted from doing with others (Whiteford, 2000). For some members, restrictions came from not having access to a workshop environment and tools, from not having a reason to make and create, or from moving to a new area where knowledge of services, supports and social connections are diminished. Retiring from paid employment or moving from known communities affected the social, cultural, and personal relevance of some members. This is not to say individuals were doing nothing before Shed membership. However, active involvement at the Taieri Blokes Shed provided a structure to access social support, and to do meaningful work in which they can identify. For some, Shed membership has added to already active lives. For others it filled a large gap in their weekly routine.

The Shed provides a community where members reconnect, or remain connected to, a history of constructive work and community work, where engagement provides autonomy and recognition. These are known factors in enabling wellbeing in retirement and wellness in ageing (Koopman-Boyden and Wadegrave, 2007). For a number of members, joining the Taieri Blokes Shed has linked them to the Mosgiel community. In both cases the Shed supports the transition process.

Members commented on utilising skills and knowledge from their previous employment or lives, maintaining a link between pre- and post-retirement life. The Shed provides continued engagement in work-based activities, a factor Blair (2000) recognises as an essential element in transition. The Shed provides the opportunity to connect, not only with their previous occupational experiences but also to people with similar interests, skills and knowledge. These connections are instrumental in preserving and growing occupational participation following transition/retirement (Klinger, 2005). The Shed offers regular occupation that is set

in place and routine, a requirement of orchestrating the transition to retirement (Wiseman and Whiteford, 2009).

## **THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED SITUATED IN A COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL CONTEXT**

Secondary published sources about the Taieri Shed, alongside conversations with Shed customers, wives and members of the general public, clearly indicate an overwhelmingly positive external perception of the Taieri Blokes Shed and what it offers. There have been a number of articles printed in local newspapers and magazines about the Taieri Shed (selected articles are included in the social history of the Shed). In reviewing these articles there is a history of support for this community and what it provides. The Shed is active in contacting and responding to media. They realise they need to be seen and heard in the wider community.

For the Taieri Blokes Shed to be supported it needs to be accepted by the wider community. The perception of what the Shed does for the local community and its members is vital to its growth and health. The appeal of the Taieri Blokes Shed to the wider Otago community is not just based on an appreciation of the services of the men and what they can achieve for others and themselves. The Taieri Blokes Shed is affordable and prompt in its project work. The wider community values their skills but would not employ them if their works were not value for money. Products need to be well made and fit for purpose. The key here is not only the ability to 'do' the work but to meet all the needs of the patrons. The Shed gives back to the community but is also reliant on the community for support. The Shed receives a lot of repeat business and referrals for work.

Gaining and sustaining community work requires promotion of the Shed's services as well as regular consultation and communication with customers. The membership is aware of these requirements and has effective systems in place for promotion and liaison. 'Doing a good job' is inherent in the values of the culture. There is an openness to consider the potential of new and different projects. A 'can do' attitude is at play.

An open and reciprocal relationship with the Taieri Aero club is a crucial enabler for the Taieri Blokes Shed continuing in its current location. The Aero Club have not only provided premises and work projects they have also provided the requirements for regulatory and governance structures, reducing the liability on the Shed through dual membership of the Shed and the Aero Club. The Shed is aware that this relationship needs to be fostered and lines of communication need to remain open.

This is evident in regular meetings between the two groups and the on-going work the Shed has done for the benefit of the Aero Club including the renovation and maintenance of building areas and the completion of projects.

In a number of ways the Taieri Blokes Shed provides a leadership example for the wider community. Leadership in the sense that the ambition of their involvement is directed towards the wellbeing of the Shed and the community they live in. This has been referred to as Zeus energy in the Men's Movement (Biddulph, 1995).

In talking with a number of Mosgiel locals about my study I faced one of two reactions. The first was an enthusiasm to know more if they were unaware of the Shed and the second was a pride in the Shed being part of the local community if they had prior knowledge. There is romanticism in how some outsiders view the Taieri Blokes Sheds. For some, the Shed and the Men's Shed movement is representative of how many New Zealanders wish to perceive the national character. New Zealanders still value what a good bloke has to offer. Blokes who can fix, build, design and problem-solve, are part of New Zealand's history of inventiveness and practicality born out of necessity. The Shed represents a number of positive traits 'we' still value, even if fewer of us are able to practice them through lack of experience and knowledge. Admiration exists for those who can do and are willing to do for. The member of the Shed may remind others of their fathers and grandfathers who were themselves good blokes.

The ability to create and mend may no longer be a requirement for many individuals as we move further into a consumer-based society but it still holds attraction for many. Building and renovating shows are popular on television and advertisements tell us we should be a 'do it yourself' person rather than 'a pay someone to do for you' person. There is a growing desire

for younger generations to reengage or learn the skills familiar to older generations. There is an interest in connecting with what we've made, baked, grown, or crafted. This is evident in the resurgence in gardening, hand crafts, DIY and the reframing of historical normative occupational requirements under the banner of 'sustainability'. Humans are occupational beings and are driven to engaging in making and doing. There is spiritual value, knowledge, challenge, reward and independence to be found in constructive work. This is a view echoed in literature that examines the value of work (Hannah Arendt, 1958; Green, 1968; Osborne, 1977; Kojève, 1989; Crawford, 2009).

## **RECOGNITIONS**

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE TAIERI BLOKES SHED**

The Taieri Blokes Shed is developing as a community and will have to address issues related to its popularity and growth. As the profile of the Shed grows, space, governance and project needs will have to be addressed. There is awareness within the community about this and structures have, or are being put in place to plan for growth. Decisions may change the nature of the setting and possibly cause some original members to leave if the community no longer meets their needs.

The core purpose of the Shed is recognised through the ongoing completion of community work. With a growing membership there will be added pressure to find enough work to keep the membership active. Additional energies may be required in promotion, advertising and consulting with the public. At the same time, the Shed will have to remain conscious of not poaching work from local businesses.

The Taieri Blokes Shed could choose to specialise in certain trades areas or project work dependent on the expertise of the membership. For example, the Shed has a proven record of supplying schools with playground equipment and teaching facilities.

Growing membership is placing pressure on workshop spaces. This has implications for effective production and the health and safety of members, visitors to the Shed, and the Aero Club which shares the surrounding space. The acquisition of the larger work space will address many of these issues. The Shed has a twelve month period in which to make this transition without paying additional rent. There is a good deal of work involved in this fit out and it is a challenge the members have unanimously accepted. As with the currently occupied areas, place will be created anew by the actions and work of the membership.

As the Shed grows it will inevitably come under external scrutiny from a number of areas. Questions may be asked about work practices, public liability and health and safety procedures, especially if an accident were to occur. Currently, the Shed is covered in some regards via membership to the Aero Club, and by being a non-profit organisation. I think the formal constitution the Shed is currently working on, and the move towards becoming an Incorporated Society, are steps in the right direction. Other considerations might include having external parties assisting with governance.

Joining the New Zealand Men's Shed Association is a decision that will need to be viewed carefully. The membership does not want to burden itself with more governance and requirements as a result of this, since it values being in control of its own community. Affiliating with a national association could have implications for some individuals' continued membership if the balance of rules and governance gets in the way of the core activities of the Shed. It is recommended that open dialogue be sought between the national association and the Taieri Shed so both parties are informed of each other's position. The burden of increased governance and administration pressures on the membership could be the incentive for change. There is a consciousness of the need to foster more leadership and governance structures as the Shed grows. Currently, the Shed is dependent on the time and energy of Ian Miller and the other members with formalised roles. As noted, Ian is comfortable with his current commitment to the Shed but faces the potential of burn-out if the role grows any further. Although the membership appreciates what Ian does for the Shed they may not truly realize the extent of his roles and the time required. Bob and Ian are extremely important to the Shed, not only as cultural regulators but also as the members who hold and promote

relationships with others. Loss of one or both of these members to the community would be unsettling and require adjustment with other members stepping in to fill their multiple roles.

Given the positive image of the Taieri Blokes Shed in the local community, coupled with the desire for others within the local community to learn trades skills, opening sessions for groups outside the membership may be a viable option. These sessions have the potential to provide meaningful mentoring roles for members, passing on valued skills and knowledge. Additional groups could be determined by gender, age, and or experience. Opening the Shed areas to other groups could counteract potential allegations, or perceptions, of the Shed being exclusive. If external groups were to use the Shed it would require monitoring so as not to interfere with the activities of the membership.

In relation to potential membership it is worth considering changing requirements. As outlined, the current Shed profile comes from a generation with an occupational history of constructive work as vocation or as expectation. Given changes experienced by New Zealand society in the past fifty years, new members may come with less experience and fewer skills. This could involve a shift towards more structured delivery of Shed services, with key members driving projects and teaching skills. Opportunities currently exist to attract and mentor younger men into the Shed.

The members have demonstrated a willingness to take on mentoring in accepting a secondary school student into the community

## WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY TO THE MEN'S SHED MOVEMENT

This study adds to current published research about the Men's Shed movement. It is the first in-depth analysis I am aware of that looks at the experience of membership from an embedded viewpoint in a New Zealand context. This research has been underpinned by key beliefs of occupational therapy and occupational science. Previous research has been situated in the fields of adult education, sociology and health. As Barry Golding stated, the view of the Men's Shed movement is dependent on who describes them (Tolerton, 2011). The findings from this study concur with previous research findings where positive health and wellbeing

benefits are attributed to the Shed membership, adding weight to the value of this movement and the potential advocacy for funding and policy support of Men's Sheds in New Zealand. The Men's Shed movement has gained official recognition and governmental support in states of Australia. Men's Sheds are recognised in their health policies and through the promotion of men's health and wellbeing in ageing.

As highlighted in the literature review, New Zealand, along with the rest of the developed world is faced with the dilemma of increasing life expectancy, because of a growing number of people who are active and healthy in retirement. With this increase comes a need to support and promote services and communities that find ways to promote meaningful activity for this demographic, which in turn helps prevent the psychological and biological consequences of lonely or inactive lifestyles (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). This study and previous research on the Men's Shed movement indicates that the movement provides social connectedness, social contribution, meaningful activity, and personal autonomy. The Shed movement does not meet the needs of all males in retirement but it holds significant appeal and potential benefit for many. The preeminent researcher of the Men's Shed movement, Golding (2009), foresees a growth in Men's Sheds to help meet these demands, with the recognition that societal, governmental and private funding and support are essential. Individual New Zealand Men's Sheds have received funding on a local level but as yet there is no formal recognition of the movement in health policy.

Given the way health systems and government policy work, potential funding and policy support is likely to be dependent on a united voice from the movement as well as a body of research.

The New Zealand national body may provide this voice. A national association could have implications for the governance and requirements of local Sheds hence impacting on perceptions of independence and ownership. Care is needed in any policy and funding actions made on behalf of the whole Men's Shed movement. Individual Sheds need to retain a focus on constructive work, social connectedness and self-governance. Sheds should not be overloaded with externally imposed motives or seen as a 'cure-all'. Health and wellness benefits come as a result of the Shed being first and foremost a Shed. If this focus is retained

and evident then the possibility exists for access and interaction with healthcare providers. This approach may present challenges to services embedded in a medical model of healthcare delivery. Golding, in a quote provided for the NZ Listener magazine article, ‘Sawdust and Solutions’, makes the point that how we label Men’s Sheds is all important. “If you call them a men’s learning center, health care or anti suicide center, men won’t come. But because it’s a Shed, that gives license to do whatever men need. It’s their space” (Tolerton, 2011). Most Men’s Sheds are places for occupational engagement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MEN’S SHED MOVEMENT

These recommendations are based on my learning from this study. They draw on my understanding of the Taieri Blokes Shed, a Shed community that is meeting the needs of its membership and the needs of its local community.

### ***Recommendations for setting up a Shed:***

1. An individual or group is needed to initiate and promote the Men’s Shed idea in specific communities. These persons must be informed about the movement and believe in its benefits. They are likely to act as cultural moderators in the Shed’s development and need both enthusiasm and endurance to get a Shed up and running. From this research I have found that existing Sheds are more than willing to assist the development of new communities. National associations in New Zealand and Australia have numerous support mechanisms and resources available.
2. Locally, community agencies need to be involved early in the development process. Existing groups can advise on need, assist with resources, access funding, and give weight to the initiative. Developing some form of steering group is recommended.
3. Public consultation is required to ascertain if there is a desire for membership. Understanding who wants to join is important. There needs to be a common ground in the prospective membership. Sheds cannot be all things to all people. Alongside

potential members there needs to be a want/need for work projects in the local area. Community support is vital.

4. Access to space is essential. Member driven development of spaces into places enables ownership and connection of the community as well as addressing affordance of work and social requirements. Obtaining long term lease/ownership of a suitable site is desirable.
5. Any individuals who wish to join a Shed need to be willing to buy into a culture of constructive work. They need to have a desire to make for themselves and for others, to work and socialise with other members, while also contributing to the governance, maintenance and promotion of the Shed.

***Recommendations for maintenance and growth of Sheds and the Shed Movement:***

1. A Shed community needs to be immediately identifiable as a place of work and productivity. If work is meaningful to members and serves a purpose, wellbeing benefits will follow. Targeted health delivery at Sheds should not interfere with or blur the core activities of the Shed. Health services should not unduly burden the members or make them feel uncomfortable. These are community Sheds, places valued by members because of productivity, social connectedness with likeminded individuals, and contribution to the community. They should not be seen as a captive population. The perception of the Shed being a Shed with all that that entails, is paramount.
2. There needs to be a constant demand for work that is ‘real’ and not manufactured for the sole benefit of a Shed. There needs to be a balance of work done for others and work done for self or for the benefit of the Shed. Sheds serve communities therefore work needs to be affordable, well-constructed and fit for purpose. A job well done is the best advertisement for more work.
3. Work needs to present a cognitive and physical challenge to the membership in the execution of means and meeting of ends. This allows members to learn, teach and draw on tacit knowledge.

4. Work projects need to be achievable for a Shed. They need to match the capabilities of the membership, availability to resources, materials and machinery and be financially viable. Work should not be seen as a burden.
5. Men's Shed spaces need to be adaptable and enable a variety of projects as well as the ability to socialise. Spaces may need to be adapted and developed as needs change and membership grows.
6. Spaces need to be safe for the membership and for visitors. Health and Safety (including insurance cover) should be an ongoing concern of all Sheds given the potential for external scrutiny and liability. Learning off other Sheds and sharing information will assist here. National shed associations are active on these fronts.
7. Sheds need to remain active and visible in the local community, engaged in relationships of reciprocal benefit. Project work needs to be promoted alongside openness to new members. The physical settings and the members need to be open to visitors, be this informal or by arrangement.
8. Sheds need to be open groups practicing inclusive rather than exclusive mateship. There are strong associations to a culture of mateship in the Shed movement. Equality, reciprocity and common goals are essential elements of successful Sheds.
9. The membership needs to have governance over their Shed. There needs to be equality in decision making where all members can have a say. This is not to say external supports and relationship are not of value. Relationships with other Sheds, community groups and national associations have a lot to offer. There are accounts of Shed communities suffering as factions struggle for control and direction.
10. If Sheds choose to be male-only domains they should be open and transparent about this. There are benefits found in male-only communities as there are in other communities that target specific demographics. Articulating and researching the benefits of Men's Sheds is needed to dispel the notion of Sheds being privileged groups. Men's Sheds are meeting legitimate needs.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Given occupational therapy's stated belief in the link between meaningful occupation and wellness, the profession has a role in advocating for the Men's Shed movement. However, this does not mean that occupational therapists should be involved in the day to day activities of Shed communities, given the findings on the importance of control and self-governance. Occupational therapy can offer support in the form of research (such as this study), advocacy for funding and policy inclusion, and practical support and involvement on a local level.

Support of the Men's Shed movement is in line with the World Federation of Occupational Therapies positioning on human and occupational rights. Their position states that all people have the right to access and participate in occupations that enable them to be involved in the community and find satisfaction in occupations that have educative, productive, social and restorative benefit (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2006).

Practical occupational therapy support may be evident in specific negotiated projects such as the ones completed by students of the Otago Polytechnic, or support could come through relationship building with local Sheds as a way of referring persons who might benefit from membership. Sheds relationships have the potential to be reciprocal. For example, given the body of knowledge and skills at the Taieri Blokes Shed there is an ability to make aids, devices and products for groups and individuals that occupational therapists work with. The Taieri Shed has already completed a number of projects for disability communities such as CCS and Riding for the Disabled. Men's Sheds have the potential to take on some of the project work traditionally conducted by occupational therapy workshops, especially if a need cannot be addressed by commercial equipment. The Taieri Blokes Shed's ability in problem solving designs would be an asset. Occupational therapy's support of Sheds at a local level, along with research, is the most valuable support the profession can provide for the Men's Shed movement.

Men's Sheds are valuable resources of skills and knowledge. They have the ability, if willing, to teach groups and individuals outside the membership. This includes person with special needs for whom constructive work appeals but Shed membership is unrealistic given their support requirements. There is potential for Shed members to teach, mentor and advise

people with special needs. This may involve use of the Shed facilities outside of normal hours of use, or members working in other settings. Any commitment here would be dependent on the willingness of the membership, available resources, funding, and health and safety. A relationship between the Shed and any individual or group would potentially involve the input of a health specialist, such as an occupational therapist, who could coordinate between groups to ensure the needs of both parties were met.

#### ADDITIONS TO OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE

This study adds to the current body of occupational science knowledge. It documents the occupations of importance in a Men's Shed community as a social grouping. It examines the occupation of constructive work as an end rather than a health means. It highlights the gender link between males and the occupations of the Men's Shed movement.

#### **SUMMARY**

It is important to remember that Men's Sheds need to be identified first and foremost as places where things are made and problems are solved. Men's Sheds work because of the meaning realised through purposeful constructive work. Constructive work is the occupational foundation on which Men's Shed communities are built. Men's Sheds are not sheltered workshops. The product of their industry serves local communities. Men's Sheds are not places to hide; they are not refuges from the outside world. Men's Sheds need to be open to new projects, new members and their local community. Sheds attract men who want to be productive in the company of others, supporting one another and working towards common goals. There is a strong association to the values and attributes of mateship within the movement. Shed communities do not just happen, nor can they be manufactured from a plan. Men's Sheds are shaped by the communities they are situated in. They required commitment, energy, support and hard graft to come into being and to remain sustainable. Although Men's Sheds have proven benefits these are not realised if work does not exist, if work is fabricated, or if Men's Sheds is seen as anything other than a Shed. Sheds, and what they represent, are familiar to New Zealanders. They are representative of the nation's history of making do,

invention and ‘know-how’. Those who can construct are still valued in contemporary New Zealand society. This is evident in the overwhelmingly positive public and media reception of Men’s Sheds.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a prospering community which is valued by its membership. Benefits are recognised as flowing from meaningful occupation.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a place that provides occupational satisfaction, structured routine; social connectedness, self-determination and social contribution. Benefits are dependent on individuals finding a match between their own needs and the ethos of the Taieri Blokes Shed. Membership means associating on a social level where men value each other’s company, care for one another, and can tolerate difference. Constructive work provides the reason for individuals to come together as a social collective. Constructive work and social connection is dependent on place, on places that have been built to afford and support these activities.

Although social capital is attributed to those with specific trade skills and those who fill support and governance roles, equality is an overriding virtue. The strength of the Taieri Blokes Shed community is the unity of its membership.

It has clear and effective governance and cultural moderators who ensure relationships within and external to the community remain productive. The Taieri Blokes Shed is well perceived in the local and wider communities of Mosgiel and Otago. It is dependent on its relationships within the local municipality for work, assistance with funding and governance, and attracting new members. A steady demand for community work is required to meet the dual needs of local customers and Shed members.

Potential implications for the Shed have been highlighted. It is acknowledged that this community is developing. Due to its growth and popularity, issues around space, governance, the profile of Shed membership and the services offered by the Shed are being, or will need to be, addressed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Men's Shed movement has its origins in Australia and has grown rapidly over the past ten years, becoming established in New Zealand around 2007. The movement has been found to provide health, wellbeing, educational and vocational benefits for men, particularly older men. Research conducted on the movement, predominantly in an Australian context, indicates clear benefits to mental and physical health for members when measured against non-members in an equivalent age bracket. The focus on health is not as overt in the Sheds developed in a New Zealand context, however there is evidence of wellbeing benefits in this research that are congruent with Australian research.

Men's Sheds are centred on constructive work, work that is grounded in trades' skills. Sheds are located in physical workshop spaces within local communities. Sheds balance member's individual work with work projects that are of benefit to the Shed and the local area. There is a strong ethos of working shoulder to shoulder on tasks as well as socialising together and supporting each other. The Shed movement has strong cultural ties to the perceived values of mateship.

This study was based on my experience and perception of a Men's Shed, the Taieri Blokes Shed located in Mosgiel, New Zealand. In conducting this research I wanted to understand the culture of this Taieri Blokes Shed from an emic and etic viewpoint. An ethnographic methodology was adopted in this research to enable this understanding. The interpretation of my findings was underpinned by occupational therapy and occupational science beliefs about the link between meaningful occupation, health and wellbeing. This chapter concludes the research by examining study limitations, proposing future research directions, and reflecting on my learning as a result of conducting this research.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There are a number of limitations to this study. Firstly this research is only representative of one Shed community which is part of a wider movement. Although the findings of this study

complement those found in other Shed research, and add to the body of knowledge, further investigation of the Men's Shed movement is required, especially in a New Zealand context.

Only six members were interviewed to theme check my observations as a participant observer. Shed artefacts and secondary sources helped with additional theme checking and the development of results. Surveying a wider section of the membership might have been valuable but time and resource requirements were beyond the expectations of this research, and my student enrolment.

Interviews were only conducted with members who remain active in the community. Although this community has a very low attrition rate there was no interview data collected on why individuals chose to leave the Shed.

Quantitative data was not collected on the profile of the membership. Capturing this data may have strengthened the findings and implications of this research. Quantitative data may have provided detail about the characteristics of current and potential Shed members.

Although I was an active and welcomed participant within the community, my role as a researcher was known to all members as was the timeframe of my data collection. I am of a different age to the average membership and my life circumstances mean I cannot truly commit to membership beyond this research, even though I identify with the culture. Since the completion of my data collection I have remained in touch with the Shed through phone and email contact and by attending irregular monthly meetings and social events. It is my intention to share the findings of this research with the Shed membership once it has been marked. I believe the findings of this research and the documentation of the culture will provide a useful point of reflection for the Shed community as well as a record of development and current status. In line with the nature of constructive work I intend to have a copy of this research hand-bound for the Taieri Blokes Shed.

In my capacity as researcher I acknowledge I am also an occupational therapist and the core beliefs of my profession have influenced the interpretation of research. I viewed this research through an occupational lens with an additional interest in understanding the health and

wellbeing benefits of membership and the wider implications. A traditional anthropological ethnography would focus solely on description and interpretation of culture.

Despite the limitations of my research I firmly believe it provides a robust and accurate account of the occupational structure of the Taieri Blokes Shed, benefits of membership, and implications for its growth and development. Researching this community has allowed inferences to be made about the wider Men's Shed movement.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

There are a number of opportunities researching the Men's Shed movement in New Zealand. As stated, this study looked at one particular Shed community. A larger study that looked at the benefits of Shed membership across a number of communities would have greater application in contextualising benefits and understanding the supports and requirements of the Shed movement in New Zealand. It would also support policy formation for older men.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is situated in Mosgiel, an area that has strong rural ties and is a place of retirement for a number of Shed members with farming backgrounds and a history of living in small communities. Future research could examine regional differences between Shed communities, understanding rural and urban variation, differences in the nature of work, and relationship to local communities.

This study was grounded in qualitative research. A longitudinal mixed methods approach on a national scale would provide demographic details and a profile of New Zealand's Men's Shed membership. This could indicate who the movement appeals to and who it benefits.

There is scope for further research on the role Shed participation plays in assisting transition from paid employment to meaningful retirement. As outlined in this study, given the ageing demographic in New Zealand society, there is a need to address the health, social and vocational needs of a growing and active retired population. A life history research methodology could be used to document the occupational narratives of Shed members. This has the potential to capture rich description data about the sociocultural and environmental

contexts of individuals over their lifespan and the role Shed membership plays in transition to retirement. This methodology would help us understand those who flourish in Men's Shed environments. In the field of occupational science, Wiseman and Whiteford (2007), have promoted this research approach in looking at the experiences of retirement for older men in rural Australia.

On June the 27<sup>th</sup> 2013 the National Association MenzShed Aotearoa and colleagues announced they had secured funding to undertake a twelve month study into the mental and physical health benefits derived from participating in a Men's Shed environment (New Zealand Association of Gerontology, 2013). This will build on the work conducted in an Australian context by Barry Golding and colleagues. I have made contact with the researchers for this study and have started to engage in a dialogue that is hoped to be of mutual benefit.

Future research on the Men's Shed movement needs to acknowledge the interconnectivity of means and ends. Benefits to individuals can only be realised if the means are in place. As this study concludes, individual benefits are only realised if constructive work has meaning and purpose and is supported by local communities.

The Men's Shed movement offers reciprocal benefits for the local communities in which they are active. Potential research could look at these benefits alongside the community's perceptions of the Shed movement and its activities. This would involve capturing the views of a number of local constituents in differing geographic areas. Perception of the men's Shed movement may be linked to cultural understanding, discernment of constructive work, and views on social connectedness and contribution.

This research captured firmly stated views about the importance of self-governance and control of the Taieri Blokes Shed. Research could examine the importance of self-governance and self-determination of Shed communities and the implication of ceded governance to a third party on membership profile and retention.

The Taieri Blokes Shed is a strong and active Shed community. Although learning has resulted from the success of this Shed, research on Sheds that struggle or fail will emphasise factors that negate growth or success. Alongside this, an understanding of why individuals

leave Shed communities will highlight who the movement appeals to and the factors that contravene involvement.

The Men's Shed movement has health and wellbeing benefit for an ageing male population. From a targeted health perspective, research into the adaptation of Men's Sheds activities, philosophies and structures to those with specific social, health and disability needs may be warranted. In conjunction with this, research could look at whether persons with specific needs are able to be accepted into already functioning Men's Sheds' communities and if this burdens or affects the culture of these communities.

Any future research of the Men's Shed movement cannot exclusively focus on health and learning outcomes. There needs to be due acknowledgement of the core occupations of Men's Sheds.

## **UNDERSTANDINGS ANEW**

In concluding this thesis I would like to outline the personal understandings that have resulted from conducting this research. I realise that my personal history and my professional beliefs have enabled this research and have influenced the interpretation of data. This setting, and involvement in constructive work, was familiar to me prior to commencing the study and has shaped the conclusions that I have presented.

This research has enabled me to understand my own values and professional beliefs. It has strengthened my conviction in the link between wellness and engagement in occupation that has meaning and purpose. I appreciate the worth I attribute to constructive work, to crafted objects, and to the processes of design, engineering and invention. Constructive work provides a great deal of challenge and reward in my own life. It enables me to feel effective while being valued and connected to others, as I saw happen for the men of the Taieri Blokes Shed.

This study has grown my understanding of the inter-reliance of human beings, where what is valued within a community is reflected in what is done, where it is done and with whom it is

done. Through this study I have more appreciation of how culture influences our perception of self in relation to others.

There is great worth and potential in the Men's Shed movement. Its success and growth reflects a connection for many men who have found a meaningful way to be occupied with others while actively serving the needs of local communities. There is true worth in constructive work that enables men to relate to the world around them, as both participants and active contributors.

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**APPENDIX A – TABLE OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION ATTENDANCE**

<b>Day and Date</b>	<b>Session Number</b>	<b>Session Description</b>
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	Prior to participant observation	Visit to meet membership and orientation Shed location
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Prior to participant observation	Presentation to membership of study proposal
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> July	1	First session at Shed as a subscribed member
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> August	2	Meeting with Shed Treasurer, at his residence, about Blog development for the Shed
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> August	3	Shed session
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> August	4	Shed session
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> August	5	Shed session
Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> August	6	Bunning's Stocktake with Shed members
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	7	Shed session (including monthly membership meeting).
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> September	8	Shed session (First attendance on a Saturday)
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> September	9	Shed session
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	10	Shed session
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> October	11	Shed session
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> October	12	Annual General Meeting of the Shed
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	13	Tool Auction at the Shed
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> October	14	Shed session
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> November	15	Shed session (worked on individual project)
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> November	16	Shed session
Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> November	17	Shed session
Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	18	Shed session
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	19	Shed session
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	20	Shed Christmas function and bus tour

**APPENDIX B – STUDY INFORMATION SHEET**

*'The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study'*<sup>3</sup>

Participant Information

**Project title** *'The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study'*

**General Introduction**

The Men's Shed movement has spread rapidly throughout Australia with more recent adoption in New Zealand. Men's Sheds are communal spaces where a predominantly older male population engage in both individual and community projects traditionally associated with backyard sheds and practical trades.

The researcher has an interest in this movement as he values working with his hands, to make, create, renovate and generally tinker. As part of his completion of a post graduate diploma he undertook a negotiated topic which reviewed the origins of the shed movement and the proposed benefits for those who attend. He is interested in investigating what fosters place and community, and in the case of the Taieri Blokes Shed, how health, social, and occupational benefits are observed, and expressed by those who attend. An ethnographical structure has been chosen for the collection and interpretation of relevant data.

As this research is based on observation not intervention there is no potential harm perceived for individuals or the community as a whole.

**What is the aim of the research?**

The primary aim of this study is to understand culture of the Taieri Blokes Shed as viewed through an occupational lens. In understanding the culture and occupational structure of the Taieri Blokes Shed it is hoped subsequent understanding about wellbeing benefits for

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<sup>3</sup> Dated: July 2011

individual members is gained. The findings from this research will be discussed and implications made to the wider Men's Shed movement.

**What will my participation involve?**

The researcher will join the shed for a period of six months as an active member and participant observer. He will work alongside other members and through his involvement and informal discussions look to identify common themes as to why people attend, how they benefit from attendance and if there are issues related to the environment (social or physical) which might aid or restrict people's engagement.

The researcher will take photographs as part of his study. Members will be made aware of this and they will have the option of not having their images captured. Consent for any images used in the final study will be sort from all members portrayed in images.

Towards the completion of the researcher's time at the Shed five or six members will be approached to be involved in a one on one interview. The purpose of these interviews is to check the themes the researcher has identified. These interviews will be recorded and quotes maybe used in the research findings. Any material taken from these interviews will be attributed to the interviewed member.

**What data or information will be collected and how will it be used?**

Results of this project may be published and presented at conferences. The researcher will present and discuss his findings with the Taieri Blokes Shed prior to submission of his thesis.

**Data Storage**

The data collected, photographs and field notes, will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and/or password protected computer hard drive. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed, any raw data on which the results are based will be retained in secure storage for a period of five years, after which it will be destroyed.

**Can participants change their minds and withdraw from the project?**

Participants will have the right to refuse use of their image in the research findings.

Participation in interviews will be by informed consent where they acknowledge their comments will be duly attributed

All shed members have the right to choose not to engage with the researcher as a participant observer.

**Schedule for study completion**

- Proposal Approved: June 2011
- Ethics Approval: July 2011
- Data Collection: July 2011 to December 2011
- Data Analysis and Writing: 2012-2013

**What if participants have any questions?**

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor:

James Sunderland

School of Occupational Therapy

Direct Dial [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Supervisor

[REDACTED]

School of Occupational Therapy

Direct Dial [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

**APPENDIX C – INFORMED CONSENT FORM<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> Dated: July 2011

### Sample Consent Form

Project title

*'The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study'*

I have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

- My participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
- I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without any disadvantage.
- The data (including audio files) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any quoted data on which the results of the project depend will be contained within the body of the report. Quoted material will be attributed by name.
- The results of the project may be published

I agree to take part in this project under the conditions set out in the study information sheet.

..... (signature of participant)

.....(date)

.....(signature of researcher)

**This project has been reviewed and approved by the Otago Polytechnic Research Ethics Committee.**

**APPENDIX D – BLOG SCREEN CAPTURE** <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Screen Capture Dated August 20<sup>th</sup> 2013.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Blogger page. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://taierishedmasters.blogspot.co.nz/>. The page title is "The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study". The author's name, "James Sunderland", is visible in the top right corner. The main content area features a large title "The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study" and a quote: "Men don't talk face to face; they talk shoulder to shoulder" "A SHED IS TO A MAN WHAT A HANDBAG IS TO A WOMAN – BOTH CONTAIN ALL THE ESSENTIALS FOR SURVIVING IN THE MODERN WORLD". Below the quote, the date "Thursday, December 15, 2011" is displayed. A section titled "Christmas Do" includes a photo of a wooden archway and a note: "Photos and notes to be added when I can figure out how to take them off iPhone". A sidebar on the right contains sections for "Taieri Shed Links" (with a link to a Channel Nine TV report) and "Shed Links" (with links to articles about sheds after floods, sheds in Aotearoa, sheds in Ireland, research articles, and New Zealand Men's Sheds). A printer's preview window is overlaid on the page, showing the document's URL, printer name, and time.

http://taierishedmasters.blogspot.co.nz/

Blogger: Occupational ... Blogger: Blogger Dash... Blogger: The Taieri Blo... The Taieri Blokes Sh...

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

3+ Share 0 More Next Blog>

James Sunderland [james.sunderland@oop.ac.nz](mailto:james.sunderland@oop.ac.nz) New Post Design Sign Out

# The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study

"Men don't talk face to face; they talk shoulder to shoulder" "A SHED IS TO A MAN WHAT A HANDBAG IS TO A WOMAN – BOTH CONTAIN ALL THE ESSENTIALS FOR SURVIVING IN THE MODERN WORLD"

Thursday, December 15, 2011

## Christmas Do

Photos and notes to be added when I can figure out how to take them off iPhone



This document was sent to the printer  
Document: http://taierishedmasters.blog...  
Printer: G217\_MF4470 on fthpc01  
Time: 11:35:15 a.m. 30/07/2013  
Total pages: 10

### Taieri Shed Links

[Channel Nine TV report](#)

### Shed Links

- [Sheds after the floods](#)
- [Menz Shed Aotearoa](#)
- [Mens shed Ireland](#)
- [Research articles linked to the shed movement](#)
- [New Zealand Men's Sheds](#)
- [Men's Shed Australia Ltd](#)
- [Australian Men's Shed Association](#)

**APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW GUIDE**

This interview guide was not a prescriptive set of questions which were asked in order. The order use and wording of questions was dependant on the development of the conversation between me and the interviewed Shed member. This guide provided a list of topics and associated questions that were based on identified themes following my time as a participant observer at the Taieri Blokes Shed. The application of this guide had enough flexibility to allow discussion of other topics and explore details around themes dependant on the response of particular members. Some of the questions below are similar in nature and were asked to extend or develop more detail in member's responses.

### Ethnographical Questions for Blokes Shed

How did you become involved with the shed?

- How did you hear about the shed?
- How were you introduced to the setting and membership?

Why do you choose to continue to be an active member?

- How does it fit with the rest of your weekly occupations?
- What do you value about membership?
- Why do you think others attend?
- What are the benefits of being involved?

How would you describe a typical member of the Blokes shed?

- What attributes are important?

- Are there ways of judging what constitutes active membership?
- What are the common bonds between members?
- Do you think the culture of the group would dissuade some people's participation?
- Why might people choose to leave the shed?

How would you describe a typical day at the shed?

- What roles and routines are evident?
- Have individual members got clearly defined responsibilities?
- Are there seasonal variations?

Are there shared views within the membership in relation to?

- Resources
- Maintenance of equipment
- Use of space

How do you view the governance of the shed?

- Are there shared responsibilities
- Are there the skills within the membership to be an independent entity
- What are your thoughts on being part of a regional or national association?

What external relationships are important to the sheds continuance (formal and informal)?

The Taieri Blokes Shed: An Ethnographic Study

- Aero Club
- Community projects
- Funding authorities
- Other sheds in the area
- Local community connections
- Wives and partners

How are/have these relationships been built and maintained?

- Have there been any issues with these relationships?

How would you describe the current health of the community?

What are the potential threats and obstacles to the sheds continued growth and security?

Do you have any other thoughts and comments?

**APPENDIX F – DATES, TIMES AND VENUES OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS**

<b>Day, Date and Time</b>	<b>Interview Participant</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2012 10am	Don Spittle	Mosgiel Private Residence
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2012 4pm	Bob Biggart	Dunedin (Abbotsford) Private Residence
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2012 9am	Ian Miller	Mosgiel Private Residence
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2012 11am	Mike O’Cain	Dunedin (Fairfield) Private Residence
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2012 7pm	Colin Lyall	Mosgiel Private Residence
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 10am	Neil Buckley	Mosgiel Private Residence

**APPENDIX G – SAMPLE OF CODING OF FIELD JOURNAL**

Date: 16th November 2011

Wednesday Session

- Discussed my plans to officially finish with I, thanks for involvement
- Started approaching members about interviews
- Being taught about sharpening chisels
- Reconditioning plane
- Visit from local childcare center to thank shed for recent trolley project. Morning tea provided
- Further plans for Christmas Do at Smoko (cost issues)

This was the first Wednesday session I had attended for a few weeks. Numbers at the shed were reasonable today (approx. 20 members). As the woodshed and loft project were at an end or being worked on by someone else I had brought along a plane of mine that needed to be reconditioned as well as my set of chisels that needed to be sharpened. These are chisels that had been passed on to me by my late father in law and from his father in law in turn. I'd always wanted to get them sharpened but was reluctant to do this myself as I did feel I had the knowledge skill and experience. I was hoping to get one of the experienced tradesmen at the shed to help me/ teach me.

Comment [OP1]: CWP

Comment [OP2]: CWT

At the beginning of the session I talked with I about when I would finish up my data collection. This would officially be on the day of the sheds Christmas trip. I also discussed with him the people I had in mind to do theme checking interviews with, himself being one of these people. We talked about my taking more photos as well as getting permission to use some of the sheds photos and records which include the community project work and newspaper clippings. My interviews as well as theme checking would also look to record an accurate account of the sheds history and development. I informed I that I planned to interview BB as one of the official members of the steering committee. I thought this was a good idea.

Comment [OP3]: GMAK

Comment [OP4]: GMCM

I talked with J as a. J voiced some frustration about ongoing projects and the multiple views of members which got in the way of things progressing. This has been commented upon on numerous occasions by J.

Comment [OP5]: SRCO

I talked with some of the other members about what they had planned for the day John was going to mow the parking area. I noticed he also got precise instructions from I about this. Colin was starting work on a woodworking bench for a local *kindy* and other members were working on individual projects. I then started to recondition the plane I'd brought along this involved dismantling it and using a fine sand paper to remove the surface rust. After completing this I planned to oil all parts and reassemble the plane. I checked this plan with Peter a retired joiner with many years of experience and he agreed. Peter was sharpening some of the sheds chisels so I showed him my set and asked him if he could help me sharpen them after smoko. He agreed and also offered to sharpen the plane blade as well. I observed him working on the shed chisels and he talked me through the processes involved in cooling the blade in water, removing any chips from the cutting edge and grinding to a straight and even angle. All of this required skill which was obvious in his work. Other members later noted that this isn't an easy job but it would be easier if the shed had wider grinding stones or fixed guides on the grinders.

Comment [OP6]: CWCP

Comment [OP7]: CWIP

After smoko Peter sharpened all my chisels and the plane blade. Originally I was keen to have a go at this myself but realizing the skill involved and the preciousness of the chisels I was happy for Peter to take charge here. He showed me how to smooth off the gowned edges on the soak stone so I took on this role and tidied up all chisels and the plane blade. I then reconstructed my plane using one of the shed planes as a guide. Peter assisted me at the end to set the height of the cutting blade.

After working with Peter I thanked him for all his help. He told me to practice on older blades at home. He said that the steel in my chisels was of high quality and they should be looked after. I was impressed that he could make this distinction. We then got talking about old woodblock planes he used to work with and I told him about my great great grandfather who was the builder and coffin maker in Akaroa. Peter said that this was common practice in the small villages of Holland where he came from. Where builders and joiners were expected to 'lend their hands' to a number of tasks. He then told me an amusing story about one builder who got the coffin dimensions wrong and the lid would not shut properly when the body was inside. He had me

laughing at his account of the men trying to force the lid shut which resulted in the body dropping through the bottom of the coffin. I talked with I and C about how much I appreciated P help. They were both quick to note that this was one of the functions of the shed. Something I duly acknowledged. |

Comment (OP8): CWTJ

Just before smoko I introduced a lady from the local childcare centre. She had come to thank the shed for a trolley they had built for the center and I was giving her a tour of the workshop. At smoko we found she had also shouted baking as a thank you for the shed members. Talking with the members it was evident that this was not an out of the norm event and had happened before. To me it further evidenced the strong ties the shed has with groups in the local community and how these are of reciprocal benefit. Colin noted that he vary rarely gets complains about the cost of projects with the vast majority of groups being extremely thankful. |

Comment (OP9): CRPR IBSC CWPFW

At smoko I raised the ongoing plans for the Christmas ho. He explained the costs of the mine tour and the bus hire. Both were more than originally expected. The bus costing \$500, the meal \$27 and the mine tour \$25 per person. This would not be covered by the social fund

Comment (OP10): CSOS

**APPENDIX H – SAMPLE CODING OF INTERVIEW**

Ian Miller

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012

9.00 am

1.03 Involvement with the shed: 'well the first time I heard I think it was in the paper an article about starting a shed up in the paper. And being fairly new to Mosgiel at that stage I wasn't involved in much in the community I thought it would be a great way to meet people. So I went along to the shed opening and virtually signed up on the day to become a member'

Comment [OP1]: JBSL-JBSG

Comment [OP2]: RPI

2.15 'I've been farming all my life and basically worked on my own all my life out in the country so moving to town in retirement... yeah I struggled with it so you were looking for openings to umm get away from your four walls meet people and I am a community minded person so if I can help the community in any way... umm I enjoy that'. 'Dad was a great community man yeah as soon as I left school and come back onto the farm we got involved with the Young Farmers... and being a small farming community you get involved in activities that go on in the district... if you're not running it yourself you support the one who are running it'

Comment [OP3]: JBT-JBSG

3.35 'about six months went by (after the initial meeting and signing up) and I hadn't heard any word of what going on so I actually drove around there one day to see if there's anything happening and some of the boys were working there then painting and cleaning the shed so... it was from that point I thought right o it's going so I started to get involved from that point on'

Comment [OP4]: RPI

4.40 marker boards and walk ways for the eco sanctuary the first hands on projects completed by the shed'

Comment [OP5]: CWCP

5.20 why do you choose to remain an active member of the shed 'it's the people involved in the shed you enjoy their company (umm)... it's something to look forward to... the opening days each week and helping out working shoulder to shoulder with other members'. 'Sharing problems... a problem shared is a problem solved'

Comment [OP6]: SR

Comment [OP7]: SRC

6.30 Some members have downsized and lost access to tools and workspaces they may have had a home or at their places of prior employment. May still have workshops at home (often smaller than what they have previously had) however they seek support, companionship and the sharing of knowledge'

Comment [OP8]: IBAP

Comment [OP9]: SRE-CWTL

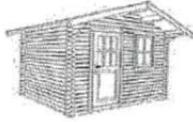
7.20 How does the shed fit within the rest of your weekly routine? 'Full time (laughter)... almost, no its building up to umm... no when I first started it was only two momings a week but at this point in time now in the position perhaps I've gotten myself in with the shed it's almost full time are you happy with this? 'I'm reasonable comfortable because I'm a busy person a can't sit around and it is filling my day, days... no I'm comfortable but I do have some concerns as the shed grows... it could get to much and we may need to get some others in to help... Up to this time it's been good because you've got your finger on the pulse all the time'. 'It's something the shed is going to have to look at and share more responsibilities'

Comment [OP10]: IBST

Comment [OP11]: JBSL-JGG

**APPENDIX I – SAMPLE CODING OF CULTURAL ARTEFACTS**

H.



The Dunedin  
Blokes' Shed

### NEWSLETTER JUNE 2008

#### Introduction

Some people are beginning to wonder whether the Blokes' Shed has quietly died a death over the past couple of months, due to there not being a newsletter for a wee while and the newspapers not running any stories.

Well, actually the complete reverse is the case. There has been a lot of progress on a number of fronts; in fact things have been so busy we haven't had the opportunity until now to get another newsletter together. So, here is an update on the current state of play and a bit of a recap.

#### Bereavement

✓ SRC



#### Blokes' Sheds NZ

Currently there are three Shed organisations at play in Dunedin. Blokes' Sheds NZ is the working title for the overall steering group containing representation from Age Concern, Dunedin City Council, Methodist Connect, Navy and the Dunedin RSA. The steering group's primary role is to facilitate the establishment of the individual sheds and help out as required until the individual sheds are on their own feet. We are currently setting up two individual sheds: The Taieri Blokes' Shed and The Dunedin Blokes' Shed. More on these shortly.

SHD. →  
SHSC

#### Lottery Grant

Breaking news is that our application to the NZ Lottery Grants Board for a \$10,000 Community Grant to assist in establishing the first two sheds has been successful. The intent is to broadly split the money evenly between the two sheds with the emphasis being on getting The Taieri Blokes' Shed operational and The Dunedin Blokes' Shed fully enclosed and lined out. The provision of adequate power supplies features highly on the wish list for both sheds.

← SHF

#### Shed Association?

CROS

We have also been contacted by the Hamilton MenShed, with a view to possibly forming a NZ Shed Association. We are now aware of a number of other shed groups around the country, and can see the merit in sharing ideas. Conversely, things seem to be progressing quite nicely as they are and we see little reason to deviate from the path we are currently on. We will see how this progresses.

**APPENDIX J – SAMPLE CODING SECONDARY SOURCE**

18.1.11 Taieri

FRONT PAGE STORY

# A shed for the 'boys'

CR LP

Taieri Blokes Shed to opens its doors, writes Michael Beaumont.



## Open shed

**What:** Taieri Open Day  
**When:** January 27, 9.30am  
**Where:** Old NAC Hangar at the Taieri Aero Club grounds  
**Why:** To highlight two years of Blokes Shed achievements and open the new metal workshop. For more information call Taieri Blokes Shed president Bob Biggart on 488 2647 or secretary Ian Miller on 489 3666.

**Helping hand:** Taieri Blokes Shed member Colin Lyall helps Bob Biggart feed a piece of timber through a saw.

IT'S a place "where men can do what men do best" and it will open its doors to the public this month. The Taieri Blokes Shed is holding an open day on January 27 and shed president Bob Biggart wants the public to see what the club had achieved and their upcoming projects.

Taieri Blokes Shed founder Phil Bradshaw would officially open the new metal work area at 10am, followed by morning tea.

The Blokes Shed concept was to create a communal place where members could take part in community projects, as well as work on their own projects. "The idea of the open day is to show people what we're doing and to let people know that we're available to help various community projects." Since opening, the Blokes Shed had built walkway bridges for the Orokoni Ecosanctuary, Taieri Airfield markers, stilts for Outram School, Harold Giraffes for Life Education Trust New Zealand, steps for St Mary's School, windmill repairs for Brooklands Retirement Village as well as various tool sheds, bookshelves, chocolate wheels and playground equipment. The effort the men in the shed have gone to is clearly reflected in all the thank you cards and letters filling their scrapbook.

The shed had about 30 members but more were welcome, he said. "I think the people who come along will probably see for themselves and think, 'I'd like to join and come have a go at this'. "There's a lot of people who retire and move into an ownership flat and then suddenly realise they've no longer got a workshop to play in, so this gives them somewhere to come, a kind of senior's kindergarten."

- IBT

CP  
IW  
CR  
PS  
CW  
CP  
GM  
RC  
CRPS  
CPFI

**APPENDIX K – THEMATIC CHART SAMPLE (QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS  
CONSTRUCTIVE WORK)**

**Constructive Work**

*Stated times indicate specific quotes in record of interviews.*

	Productivity and Workmanship	Cognitive Application	Material Use	Work Hierarchy	Teaching and Learning	Individual Work	Community projects
Don Spittle	16.00		5.39 8.30 29.30	19.00	9.45 11.00	42.00	42.30
Bob Biggart	2.30 8.15	3.45	22.10 23.16	31.00	11.30	15.43	5.58 43.27
Ian Miller		18.00	6.30	26.00 29.00			4.40 16.30
Mike O' Cain					7.50	12.00	21.00
Colin Lyall	8.30				11.00		
Neil Buckley	4.10	4.10	14.30	7.00			2.30 18.30

**APPENDIX L – KEY TO CODING**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Code</b>
Constructive Work	CW	Productivity and Workmanship	CWPW
		Cognitive Application	CWCA
		Material Use	CWMU
		Work Hierarchy	CWWH
		Teaching and Learning	CWTL
		Individual Work	CWIW
		Community projects	CWCP
Workshop Place	WP	Building and Maintaining	WPBM
		Shed Layout	WPSL
		Health and Safety	WPHS
Social Relationships	SR	Equality	SRE
		Compassion	SRC
		Conflict and Difference	SRCD
		Smoko Fellowship	SRSF
		Smoko Place	SRSP
		Smoko Structure	SRSS
		Relations Outside Shed	SROS
		Organised Social Events	SRSE
Governance and Management	GM	Governance Roles	GMGR
		Cultural Mediation	GMCM
		National Association	GMNA
		Self-Governance	GMSG
		Funding and Support	GMFS
		Record Keeping	GMRK
Community Relationships	CR	Project Relationships	CRPR
		Relations with Other Sheds	CROS
		Local Perception	CRLP
		Promotion of Services	CRPS

		Aero Club Relationship	CRAC
Rites of Passage	RP	Initiation	RPI
		Fitting in	RPFI
		Attendance	RPA
		Recognition of Membership	RPRM
Individual Benefits	IB	Access to Place and Equipment	IBAP
		Occupational Satisfaction	IBOS
		Structuring Time	IBST
		Social Inclusion	IBSI
		Social Contribution	IBSC
		Transition	IBT
		Role and Routine	IBRR
		Self-determination	IBSD
Future Implications	FI	Membership growth	FIMG
		Membership Profile	FIMP
		Maintaining Culture	FIMC
		Work	FIW
		Space	FIP
		Profile in Community	FIPC
		Governance	FIG
Taieri Blokes Shed History	SH	Development	SHD
		Promotion	SHP
		Funding	SHF
		Steering Committee	SHSC
Issues and Concerns	IC	Membership	ICM
		Space	ICS
		Governance	ICG

**APPENDIX M – ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER**



James Sutherland  
Occupational Therapy  
Otago Polytechnic  
Private Bag 1910  
Dunedin



Dear James

**Ethics 496 "The Taieri Blokes Shed, An Ethnographic Study "**

Thank you for your clear and careful response to our requirements. We feel that you have addressed our concerns and we wish you success as you proceed with this project.

Sincerely,

Bridie Lonie  
For Otago Polytechnic Ethics Committee



