



What makes a thriving Men's Shed?

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Acknowledgement of Country





Project Aims

1. What are the perceptions of Men's Shed leaders and members regarding resources, governance, support, and the physical structure of Sheds required for **a thriving shed**?
2. What shed-related, interpersonal, and individual factors are associated with **better mental health and wellbeing, and lower levels of loneliness**?

What do you think makes a thriving Shed?



What do you think?



Methods



Wave 1

April-July 2022

Survey: 333 members



Interviews: 14 Shed leaders



Actigraphs: 45 members



Wave 2

November-Jan 2022/23

Survey: 168 members



Wave 3

June-July 2023

Survey: 129 members



Informal Yarns

Throughout the project with members and leaders

Wave 1 Survey

April-July 2022

- **Wellbeing**
- **Quality of Life**
- **Loneliness**
- Shed factors
- Member factors
- Behavioural Activation
- Physical activity (self-report & actigraphy)
- Alcohol use
- Help-seeking
- Meaning in life
- Social supports (within and outside of sheds)
- Psychological safety
- Satisfaction with shed

Wave 2 Survey

November-Jan 2022/23

- **Wellbeing**
- **Quality of Life**
- **Loneliness**
- **Depression**
- **Social anxiety**
- New skills
- Changes in relationship status, living situation, health problems
- Importance of different shed activities
- How members discovered their shed
- Difficulties experienced when joining the shed
- Social identity
- Social support
- Leadership
- Group connection

Wave 3 Survey

June-July 2023

- **Wellbeing**
- **Quality of Life**
- **Loneliness**
- **Depression**
- **Social anxiety**
- Meaning in life
- Social supports (within and outside of sheds)
- Psychological safety
- Social identity
- Support giving/receiving
- Group connections
- Leadership
- Examples of:
 - leadership
 - group cohesion
 - Support giving
 - Inclusion
 - Governance
 - Connections
 - Diversity



Wave 1 Interviews

Sample

- 14 Shed Leaders
- Location
 - ✓ Metropolitan: 7
 - ✓ Large regional towns: 2
 - ✓ Small regional towns: 5
- Size: 25-250 members
- Age of Shed: 2-16 years

Topics

- Physical constraints of buildings
- Recruiting more members to help and volunteer
- Succession planning
- Networks
- Entrepreneurship
- Community Centres
- Supporting members
- Inclusivity

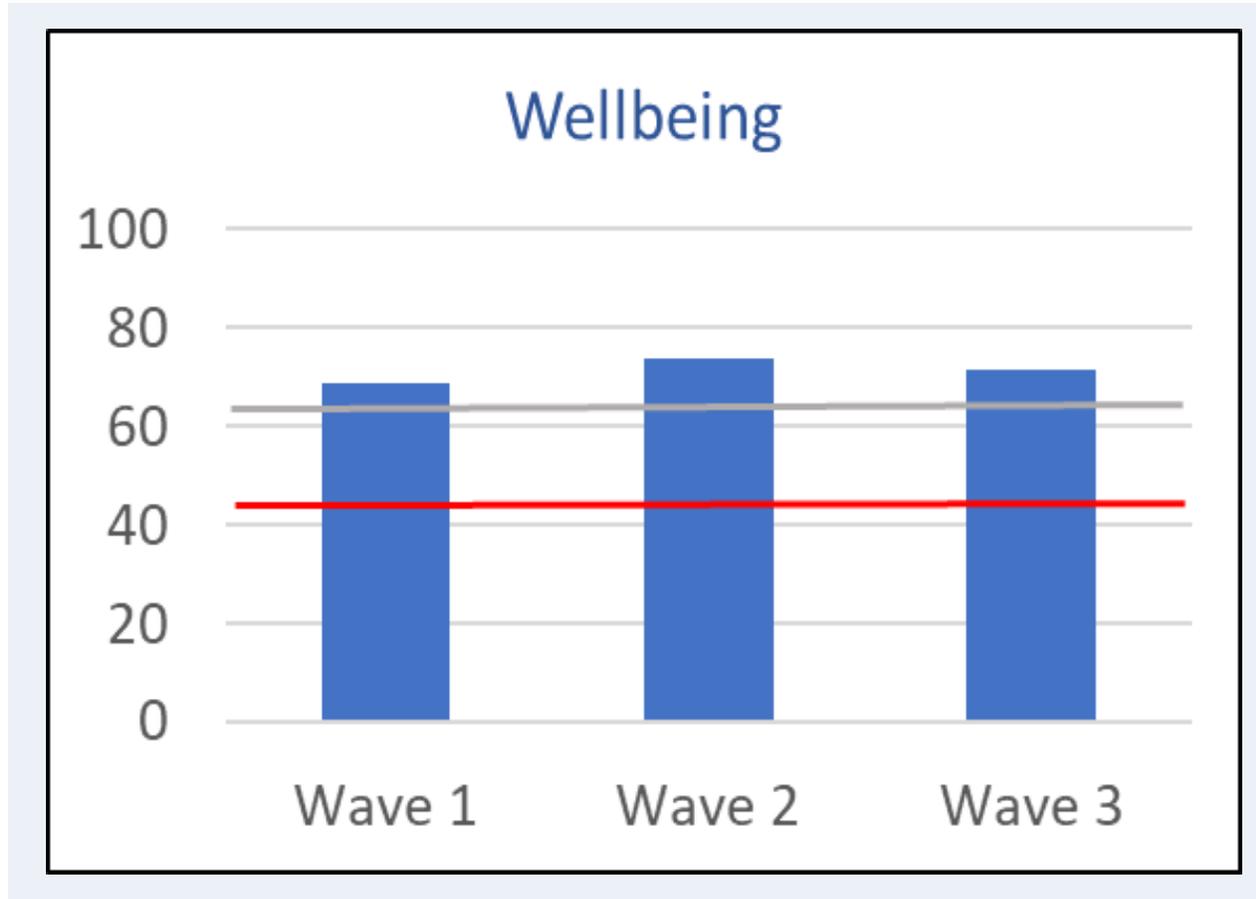




Are Shedders Thriving?

- Wellbeing
- Quality of Life
- Loneliness
- Social anxiety
- Depression

- Cheerful and in good spirits
- Calm and relaxed
- Active and vigorous
- Fresh and rested
- Days are filled with things of interest

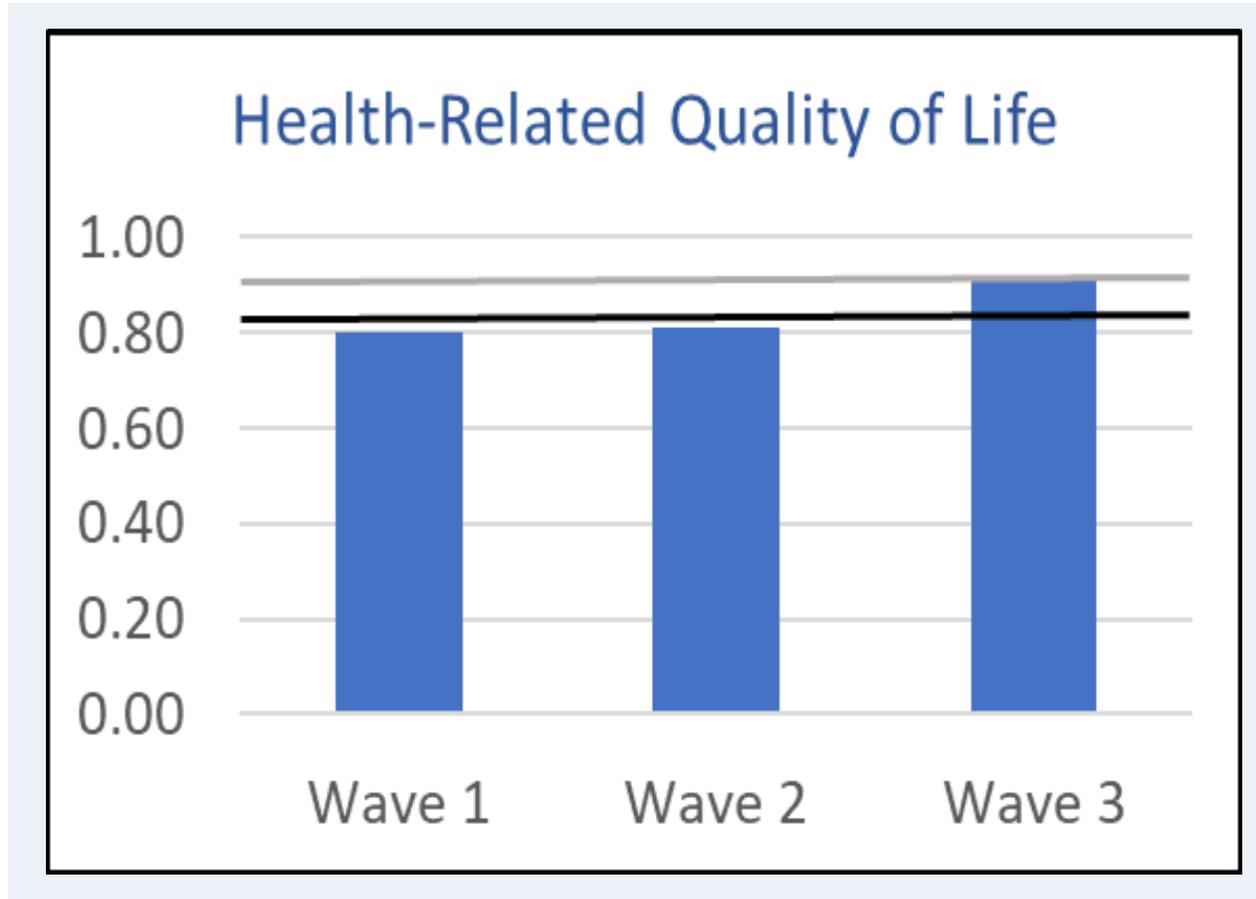


Blue bars: Men's Sheds of WA

Grey line: General Population Average

Red line: Depression might be present

- Difficulties with
- Mobility
 - Self-care
 - Usual activities
 - Pain/discomfort
 - Anxiety/depression

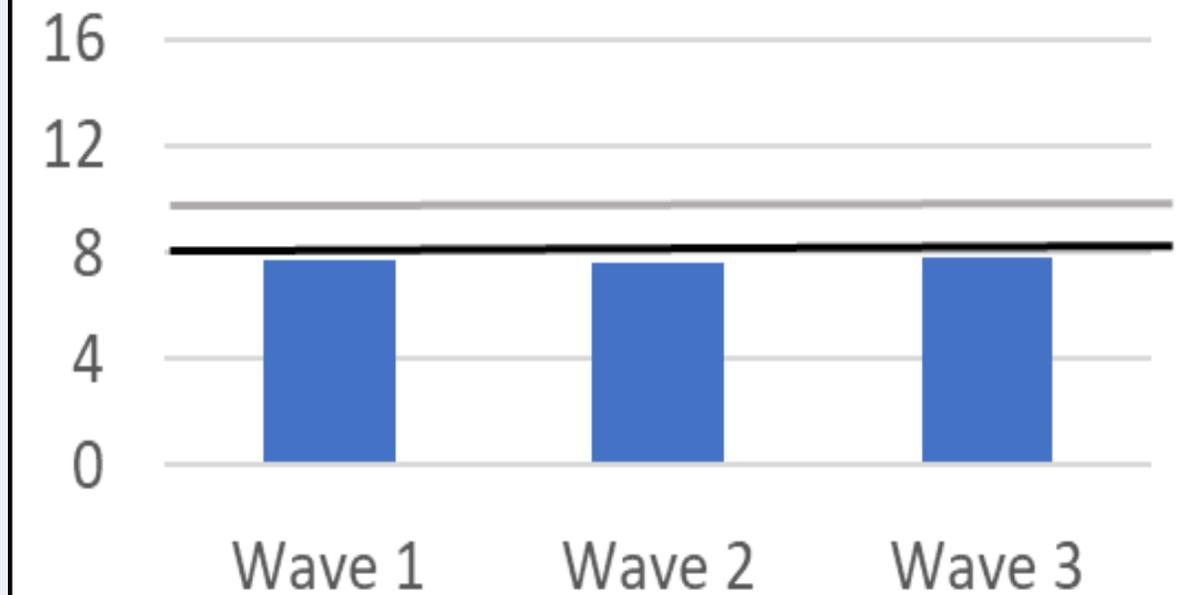


Blue bars: Men's Sheds of WA

Grey line: General Population (65-74 years)

Black line: General Population (75+ years)

Loneliness

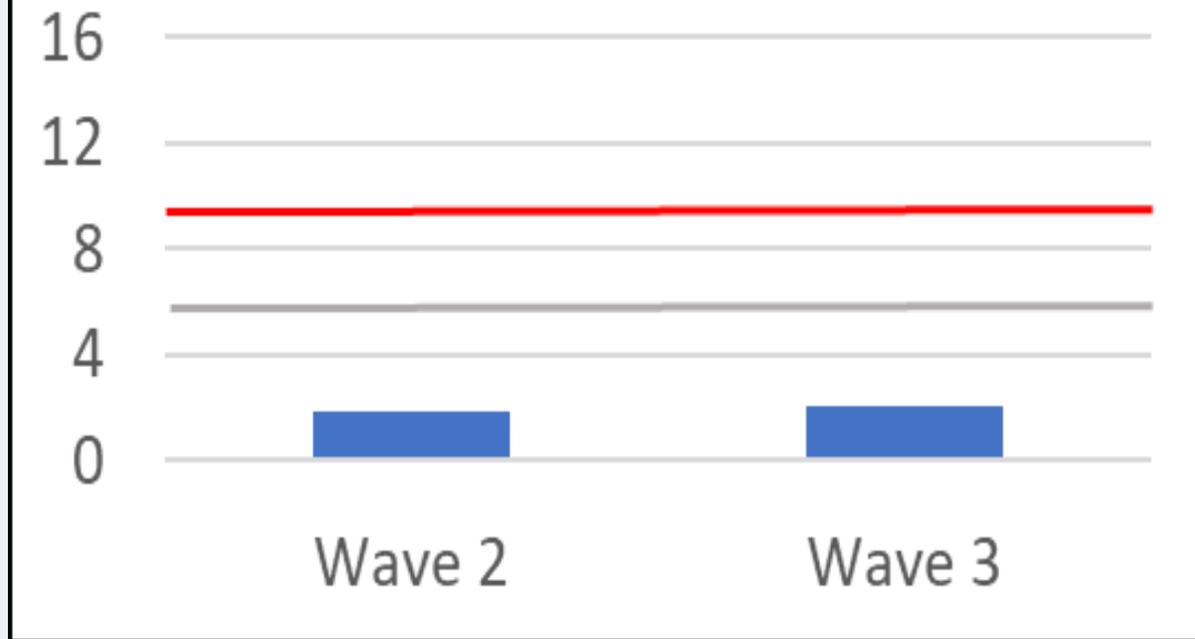


12.8%

of Shedders feel lonely 'some of the time' or 'often/always'

Grey line: General Population (20-29 years)
Black line: General Population (60-65 years)
Blue bars: Men's Sheds of WA

Social Anxiety



4.7-6.0%

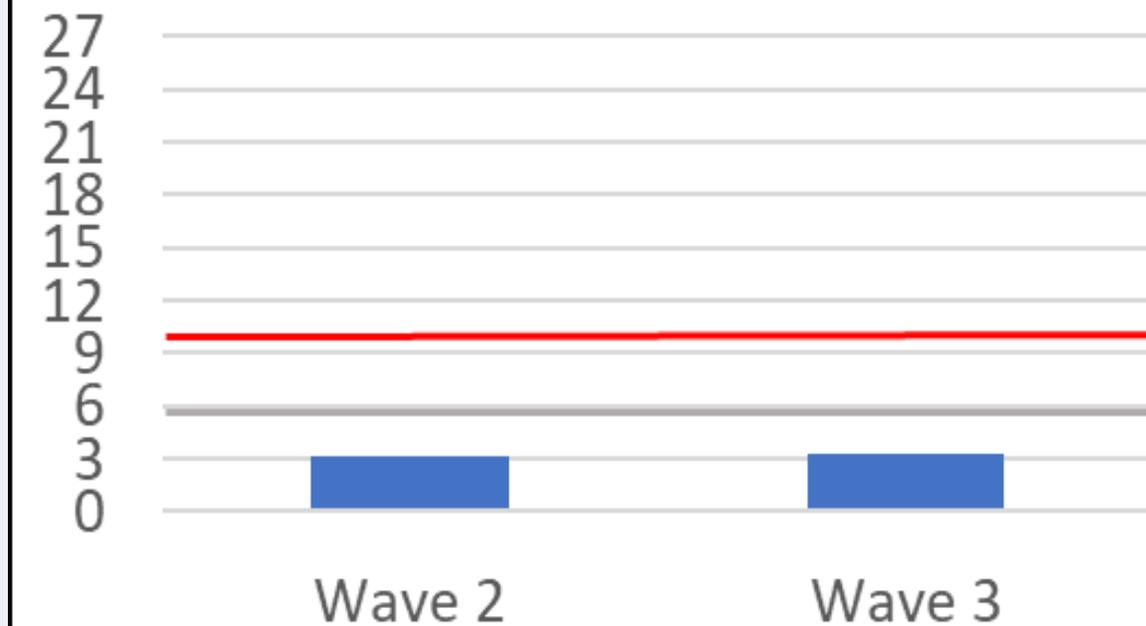
of Shedders scored in the socially anxious range

Red line: Problematic

Grey line: General Population

Blue bars: Men's Sheds of WA

Depression



6.0-7.2%

of Shedders scored in the depressed range

Red line: Problematic

Grey line: General Population

Blue bars: Men's Sheds of WA



Are Shedders Thriving?

Yes!*

***on average**



Curtin University

What Factors Help Sheddars to Thrive?



The Thriving Shed Model



1. Mateship

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



- 'What is the most important reason for being a Men's Shed member?'
 1. Mateship
 2. Shed activities
 3. Supporting others
 4. Contributing to the community



Larger network of close friends within the shed



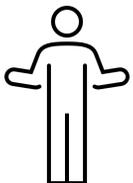
Attend more regularly & for longer
Higher support giving & receiving
Higher wellbeing
Lower loneliness
Lower depression



Greater involvement in Sheds



Higher meaning in life (clear and satisfying purpose)



Shed membership core to who I am (social identity)



Stronger social connections
More support giving & receiving

1. Mateship

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Opportunities



Social anxiety can be a barrier (activities, social identity, loneliness):
✓ Additional supports & attention to psychological safety may be required.



Most common way of finding out about sheds is through friends: missing more isolated people?



Only 6% reported being at capacity: there is capacity to grow.



1. Mateship

What Does This Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Quality of Relationships is paramount, particularly for those living alone and with small social networks outside of the Shed.



Members appreciate leaders and members showing interest and listening to them.



Implement strategies for identifying and engaging isolated community members.



Members should be encouraged to get involved in as many activities as possible to build connections.



Socially anxious members might need more support, particularly early on.



Higher support for new members may increase engagement and retention.

2. Team Psychological Safety

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



- ✓ If you make a mistake, it is not held against you by other shed members.
- ✓ Shed members accept people's differences.
- ✓ It is easy to ask shed members for help.
- ✓ Shed members feel able to bring up problems and tough issues.
- ✓ It is safe to take risks in the shed (e.g., by trying something new).
- ✓ No-one in the shed deliberately acts in a way that undermines others.
- ✓ When working with other shed members, members' unique skills and talents are utilised.



Higher Psychological Safety



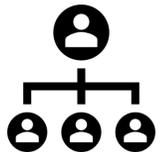
Attend more regularly

Engage in more Shed activities

More close Men's Shed friends

Higher meaning in life, wellbeing, and quality of life

Lower loneliness



Leaders play a key role in ensuring psychological safety, but *all* members play a role



Members with greater access to health and wellbeing information have happier sheds



2. Team Psychological Safety

What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



- **Leaders and members** of thriving sheds promote a psychologically safe environment by:
 - ✓ Encouraging members to learn and try new activities.
 - ✓ Expecting and accepting mistakes as part of learning.
 - ✓ Encouraging help-seeking and providing positive and encouraging feedback.
 - ✓ Ensuring friendly and welcome banter does not turn into perceived bullying.
 - ✓ Ensuring differences between members are respected and appreciated.
 - ✓ Encouraging members to raise difficult issues with leaders and/or members in safe and supportive ways.
 - ✓ Encouraging all members to contribute their unique skills and talents to the Shed.



Sheds need clear policies around respectful behaviour and strategies for conflict resolution.



Members who feel valued and supported will be more highly engaged in Shed activities



Thriving sheds make use of the Wellbeing and Health Officer Program



Mental health challenges sometimes masquerade as irritable behaviour (e.g., depression, cognitive decline)

3. Shed Factors (Location, Size, Functionality)

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Most sheds owned by council/shire, some co-located, and some owned by Men's Shed



Sheds open, on average, 4 days/week and 23+ hours/week

Constraints on activities and growing membership:



Shed Size



Space shared with other organisations (limits times/days)



Storage space

Now this Shed is getting too small again and now we have now sought funding from Lotterywest and help from the Shire, and we are going to build another Shed.



3. Shed Factors

What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Thriving Sheds have facilities that can accommodate a range of diverse activities



Workshop spaces



Presentation spaces

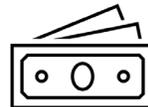


Storage spaces



Meal sharing

Improving Shed space and facilities



Fundraising



Relationships with Councils & other funders



4. Strong Partnerships

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Many sheds report strong partnerships with Council (e.g., grants, land and building lease), other sheds, & community organisations

60% of members are involved in other community organisations



Some sheds work together and support each other

I think that's the most important part for a Shed, is being integrated in that community, known, and if people have a problem they come.



4. Strong Partnerships

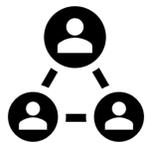
What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Close partnerships with community organisations ensure sustainability and potential for growth



Funding typically comes from government grants and fund-raising. Sheds may need support to develop diverse sources of funding (e.g., philanthropy, grant writing).



Resources may be able to be pooled or shared with other community organisations.



5. Good & Supported Leadership

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Identity Leadership:

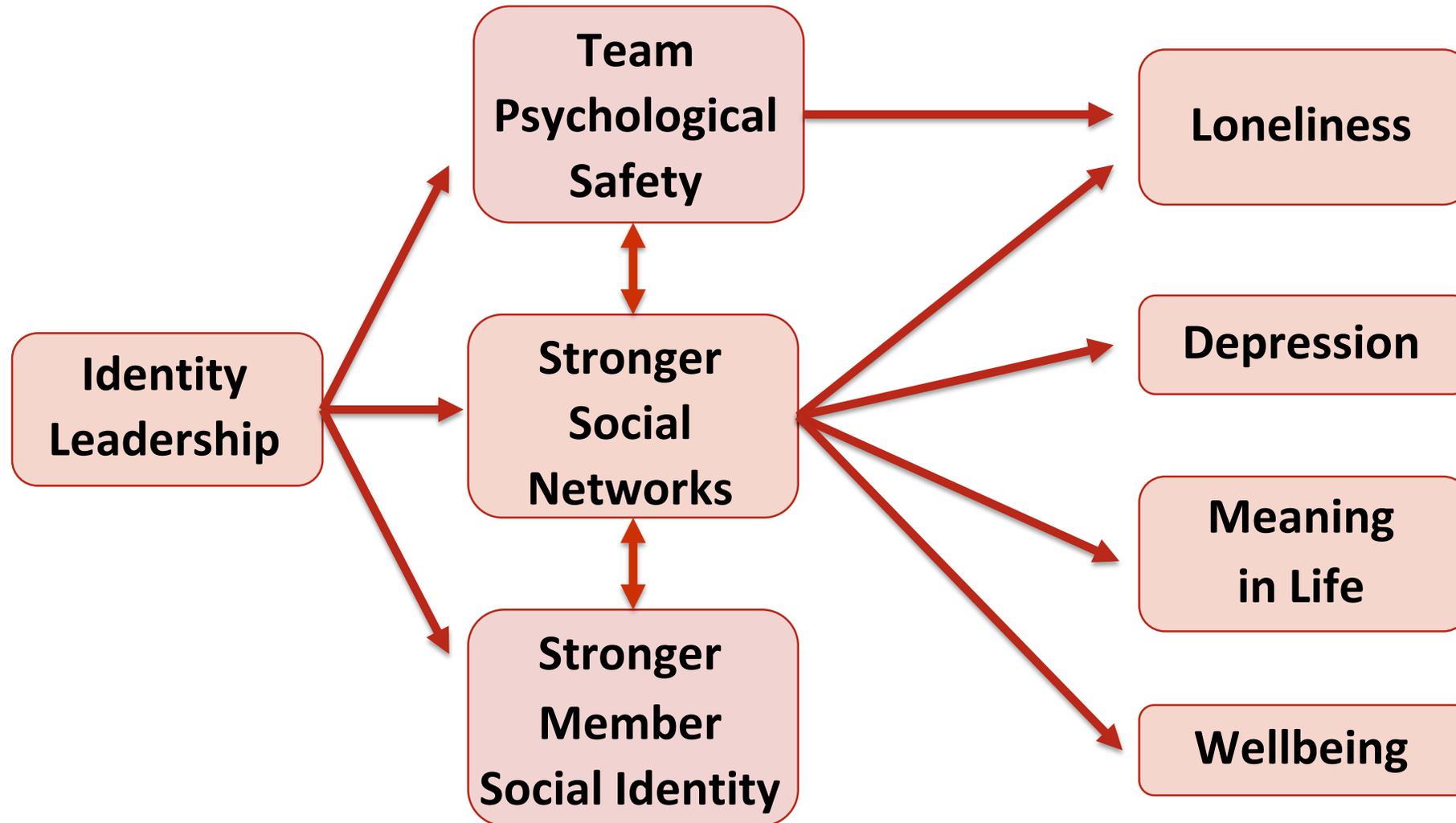
“How well leaders embody and cultivate group identity”

Not about leadership styles, but rather how well leaders promote and affirm a shared group identity among members (Haslam & Reicher, 2016).

- The leaders of my Men’s Shed
 - are **model members** of the group
 - are **champions** for the group
 - **create a sense of cohesion** within the group
 - **create structures and activities that are useful** for the group

5. Good & Supported Leadership

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



5. Good & Supported Leadership

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Volunteer Leaders' Roles

- ✓ **Model the values** of the Shed and promote a cohesive network.
- ✓ **Pastoral role:** facilitate and provide emotional and social support for members.
- ✓ **Primary liaison** with external groups, other sheds, the general public, the Council and other stakeholders and report back to the Shed.
- ✓ **Seek and lead** community projects.
- ✓ **Promote** the shed.
- ✓ **Actively seek** new members.
- ✓ **Encourage** member involvement.
- ✓ **Source funding** for shed activities and ensure financial viability.
- ✓ **Plan and organise** activities (e.g., talks) on technical and wellbeing matters and encourage participation.
- ✓ **Mentor** new members.
- ✓ **Ensure safe practices.**
- ✓ **Keep the membership informed** of activities and opportunities.
- ✓ **Shed governance**
- ✓ **Resolve Disputes**
- ✓ **Express appreciation**
- ✓ **Support a fun and enjoyable experience...and the list goes on!**



5. Good & Supported Leadership

What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Members' Roles in Supporting Their Leaders

- ✓ **Recognise** their leaders for their dedication to the operational and interpersonal responsibilities.
- ✓ **Express appreciation** to the leaders for their contributions.
- ✓ **Offer to help** with Shed activities to 'lighten the load.'
- ✓ **Behave respectfully** towards leaders and other members **at all times.**
- ✓ **Strive to minimise conflict** and the need for leaders to mediate.
- ✓ **Comply with all Shed policies and procedures.**
- ✓ **Recognise** that the more positive contributions you make to your Shed, the more you get out of your Shed.



We're all equal members and we all should know how the shed runs and how a new member is created and where you take them and show them what we're all about.

*It's a glasshouse,
everybody knows
what's going on,
everything.*

6. Good Governance

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



80% of members are 'somewhat' to 'very' satisfied with their Shed's governance (i.e., how policies and procedures are used)



Members who **felt they had a say** in the running, activities, and governance of their sheds, reported that their **Shed was happier**.



Finding committee members among the membership is challenging for many sheds; succession planning is another challenge, particularly in small communities.



Administrative and operational responsibilities are often **carried by a small proportion of the membership**



Governance tasks are extensive (maintaining records, project management, rostering, maximising income, chairing meetings, minuting, ensuring policies and procedures are followed, managing accommodation, coordinating member supports, ensuring safety and first aid are in place, mediation and sanctioning).

6. Good Governance

What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Shared decision-making that involves the membership, but the membership need to be willing to engage and contribute.

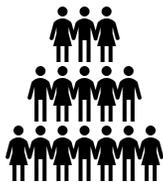


Sheds benefit from **clear and comprehensive policies** about behaviours that demonstrate respectful and consultative leadership and member behaviour.



Sheds benefit from **policies about respectful behaviour and strategies for conflict resolution** (and sanctions) amongst members.

Members need to consent to these policies being applied as a condition of membership.



Strategies for **increasing the proportion of the membership willing to volunteer** time for leadership or support roles.



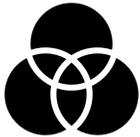
Consider the costs/benefits of relatively flat governance structures: burden vs. decision-making

7. Diverse Membership

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Members report inclusiveness is an important value within their Shed.



Members are diverse in age, partner status, past/current profession



Members report diversity in their Shed

- ✓ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members (41%)
- ✓ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse members (54%)
- ✓ Members with disabilities (97%)
- ✓ LGBTQIA+ members (21%)
- ✓ Female members (31%)



Most common languages (after English)

- ✓ Italian (23%)
- ✓ Afrikaans (15%)
- ✓ Spanish (9%)
- ✓ Greek (8%)



7. Diverse Membership

What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Members diversity offers many benefits

- ✓ Membership growth
- ✓ New skills and activities
- ✓ New ideas
- ✓ Breaking down of stereotypes and increasing social cohesion
- ✓ Opportunities for mentorship (e.g., older members mentoring younger)
- ✓ Membership benefits a broader cross-section of the community



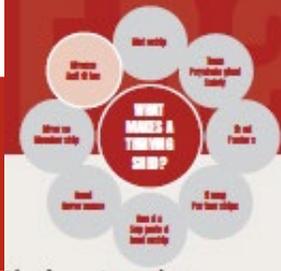
Level of inclusiveness best determined at the local level: costs/benefits

- ✓ Exclusively male
- ✓ Specific times/days for broader inclusiveness
- ✓ Specific training activities with specific groups
- ✓ Completely open

What is a successful shed?
One that's inclusive. And can cater to the differing needs of its members. And give support to the members as they inevitably go through whatever life changes.

8. Diverse Activities

What Did 'The Thriving Shed Project' Discover?



Shedders engage in a diverse array of activities and make a substantial positive contribution to their communities.



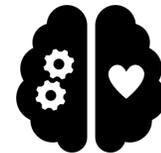
Dedicated physical exercise - only 23%, but on shed days:

- ✓ 1,193 extra steps
- ✓ 34 extra minutes of light physical exercise
- ✓ 6 more interruptions in sedentary behaviour



Most common activities:

- ✓ Woodwork
- ✓ Repairs for local community
- ✓ Metal work
- ✓ Projects requested by council or community
- ✓ Social



Mental health activities (55%)



Most Sheds fundraise (95%) and many are involved in charity work (36%)



Members who engage in more Shed activities:

- ✓ Higher wellbeing
- ✓ Lower loneliness
- ✓ Longer membership
- ✓ More frequent attendance
- ✓ Stronger social identity as a Shedder

8. Diverse Activities

What Does this Mean for a Thriving Shed?



Engaging in Shed activities is a major contributor to wellbeing outcomes



Sheds should strive to maximise the breadth of activities where possible

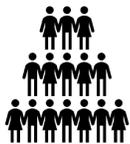
- ✓ Diversify membership (chicken and egg!)
- ✓ Encourage members to use their skills and talents to lead new activities



Social activities are highly valued and need to be a high priority



Different members benefit from different aspects of Shed life: technical skills and social

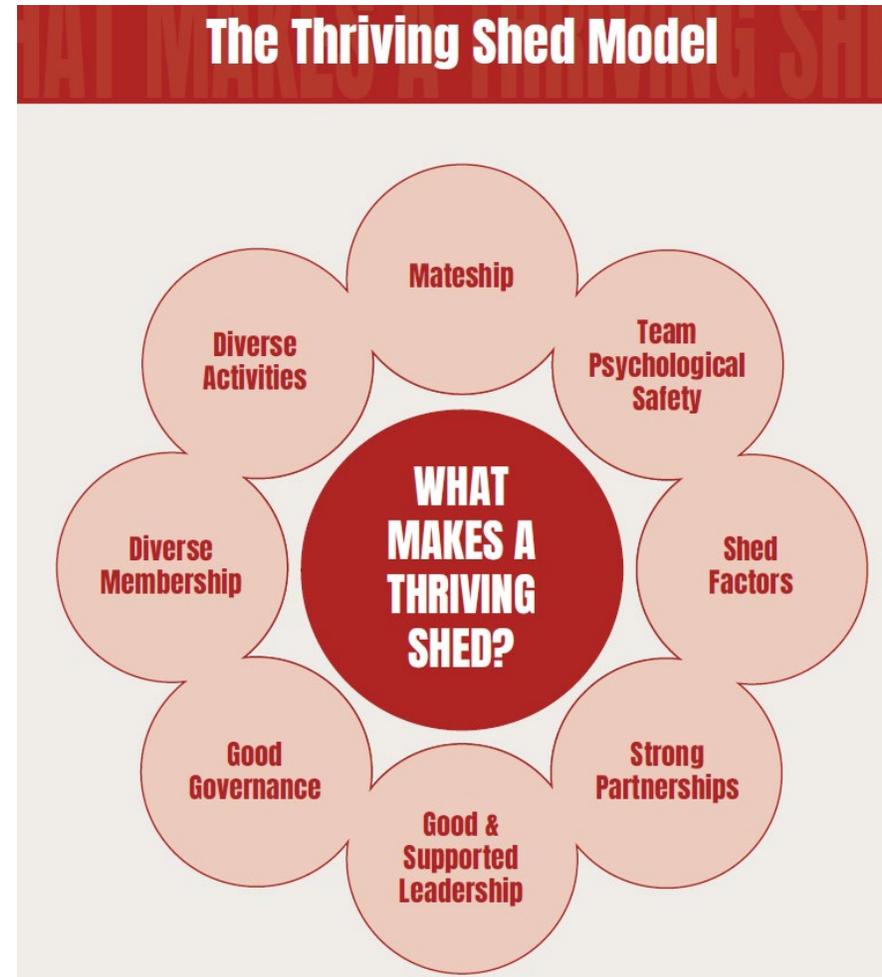


Advertising the diversity of activities across Sheds to the public may grow membership



Summary

We now know what makes a thriving shed!



Keeping Sheds thriving



What does your Shed do well?



Think about 1 'thing' that your Shed does well and share that with the person sat next to you.



To which part of the Thriving Sheds model does this 'thing' relate?



Be prepared to share with the group!!

Helping Sheds thrive more



What could your Shed do better?



Now think about 1 'thing' that your Shed could do better and please share this with the person sat next to you.



To which part of the Thriving Sheds model does this 'thing' relate?



Be prepared to share this with the group as well!!

Workshop takeaways



What 1 action can you take back to your Shed to address?



Please share with the group!!

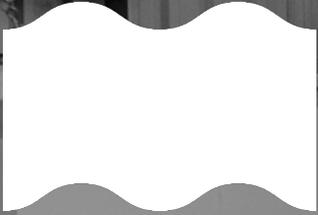


Next Steps



1. Sheds using the report to advocate
2. New sheds use the report as a guide
3. Research
 - ✓ Use the **Thriving Shed Model** to develop a self-evaluation website with traffic light system.
 - ✓ Provide practical recommendations for bolstering the 8 factors.
 - ✓ Monitor initiatives and impacts on **Thriving Shed Model** factors and member wellbeing over time – promote an even higher level of thriving!
 - ✓ Evaluate the model in other mutual-aid community organisations.





**MEN'S
SHEDS
OF WA**



Curtin University

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, FEEDBACK?

QR Code for
Full Report

