

He supported journalistic freedom. He took a stand for Indigenous Australians. These are all issues which are still so important today, and yet way back then in the 1970s and 1980s, when perhaps it took courage to take a stand on them, Steele Hall did that. In so many respects, he was ahead of his time on the issues that he fought so hard for.

Having entered parliament at the young age of 31 years, Steele Hall had served as a parliamentarian for 33 years at the time of his retirement in 1996. However, he was never too far away from the political fray, with his wife, Joan, serving in the state parliament between 1993 and 2006. I last saw Steele Hall at the 40th anniversary dinner of the Para Hills Community Club in the Makin electorate, which, as South Australian Premier 40 years earlier, Steele had opened. I still have the photographs of him doing that back in my office. On the night, both Steele and Joan were clearly the drawcard for the evening dinner. They came into the room, and I think everyone was so happy to see the both of them there joining with us.

To you, Joan, and to your whole family, I say thank you for the service that Steele gave our nation—not just our state, our nation. He did make a difference to our country, as others have quite rightly pointed out. To you and the family, I extend my sincere losses at his passing. I'm sorry I couldn't get to the funeral; I would have liked to. Once again, my condolences.

**Mr LEESER (Berowra) (18:41):** As the token New South Welsh person in this debate, I wanted to join others in honouring a great South Australian and to acknowledge the presence of Joan Hall here in the House today. South Australia has played an outsized role in this parliament. It's produced some of our greatest characters and our greatest contributors since Federation, and Steele Hall was one of those people.

As many members of the House know, I'm something of a Constitution nerd, and I first encountered Steele Hall because he is the great academic example of why we can never properly cater for anything in the Constitution. In 1977, we codified the way in which you replace senators when casual vacancies occur. That assumes that somebody from one party who might retire is replaced by somebody from the same party. Almost as soon as that had happened, Steele himself left the parliament, but his party had ceased to exist, and so a new convention was made. I think other speakers have covered many of his other great contributions, but I wanted to add that, and I wanted to add my condolences to Joan and all those who admired a great Australian.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Archer):** The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

### Men's Shed Week

**Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (18:42):** I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) 1 to 7 September 2024 marks Men's Shed Week led by the Australian Men's Shed Association, with this year's theme, 'Send him down to the Shed'; and

(b) the theme acknowledges that most men are introduced to a Men's Shed by someone else, and reconnects men with community;

(2) recognises:

(a) the essential service the Men's Sheds provide nationally as one of Australia's largest community development organisations with around 1,300 Men's Sheds across Australia and over 50,000 Australians participating in Men's Sheds; and

(b) that participation in Men's Sheds leads to improved mental health outcomes, with participants reporting increased self-esteem, awareness and destigmatisation of mental health, and fosters community spirit and mateship which are key to the foundations of our nation; and

(3) reiterates:

(a) the Government's ongoing support for the Australian Men's Shed Association and commitment in the 2024-25 budget to provide \$6 million over two years to support Men's Sheds; and

(b) that this provides funding for health and wellbeing events, shed improvements, tools and equipment and automated external defibrillators.

Last week was Men's Shed Week 2024, and the theme for this year's Men's Shed Week was 'send him down to the shed'. It is a message shed members across the country are hoping to be heard throughout their local communities to encourage more men to get involved and join their local shed. You don't have to have a trade or know certain skills to join a men's shed. It's not all about woodworking and welding. While these skills can be drivers of activity in shed life, so many members are there just for the social interaction, for a cuppa and a chat and some much-needed company.

Retiring can be a huge change in a man's life. There is a risk of loneliness and social isolation which can cause anxiety and depression. The loss of a partner is another life event that can isolate a man where they need the support

of others. Sheds provide a wealth of opportunity for men seeking interaction and community connection. In the 2024-25 budget, the Australian Men's Shed Association was provided with \$6 million over two years to continue to support men's sheds across the country, deliver the National Shed Development Program and support the regional coordinators program.

For more than 30 years, men's sheds have been improving the wellbeing and health of men by providing them with a shared community that they can contribute to and be supported by. In McEwen, we are spoiled with so many men's sheds that are committed to providing a place that promotes mental health and wellbeing as well as driving a strong connection with local communities. Last week, I took the opportunity to speak to quite a few of them.

The Kilmore men's shed is a great example. They have teamed up with a Melbourne university study that has been funded to provide dementia and Alzheimer's patients in a Kilmore high care facility with the possession of a trolley.

The trolley allows them to have close by their beds items, trinkets and photos that reassure them in times of awareness of their memory loss. The members of the Kilmore District Men's Shed are looking forward to working on this project and, shortly, to seeing the outcome.

The Romsey Men's Shed have been working on the restoration of a 1925 Model T Ford gifted to the shed by local businessman Doug Newnham. This vehicle was sold new in Gisborne, originally. With the generous help of the Bendigo Community Bank, Romsey members are diligently working on its refurbishment, with the vehicle to be used for community events. This project has shown the depth of skills and knowledge at the local shed, from trade skills, such as mechanics, joinery and bodywork, right through to historical research.

The Woodend Men's Shed is a hive of activity and a shed that is proactive and forward thinking. In a drive to raise funds for their proposed new shed facility, they have sourced donated offcut timber from the neighbouring Black Forest Saw Mill. They've chopped it up as kindling and are selling bags of it at the local hardware stores. Open fires are a popular heating source in the Macedon Ranges. These kindling bags are inexpensive, and the Woodend shed receives a portion of the proceeds, with all the funds going towards their facility. This shed has tapped a community need to help them continue to be a driver for community connection.

Then there's the Whittlesea Men's Shed, a powerhouse example of connecting local community. In 2022 the principal of Arthurs Creek Primary School spoke to his grade 6s about a project they could leave at school at the end of their primary years. The kids came up with the idea of a buddy bench, a place where kids who feel alone can take a seat and other kids, seeing they need a friend, can stop and check in with them. The principal took their idea to the Rotary Club of Whittlesea, who approached the men's shed to make the bench. The rest, as they say, is history. The project is encouraging social connection at a grassroots level, in school playgrounds, and showing how community organisations can come together and work to bond communities. This is an excellent idea that has now been implemented in more local schools across the community.

I also look forward to more men's sheds taking the Whittlesea approach of looking to expand and create women's sheds, as the benefits can help members of our community. The men's sheds out in McEwen, like those in Diamond Creek, Hurstbridge and St Andrews, continue to work very hard in supporting their communities and supporting people who live alone in those areas. As I said, it's not all about woodwork and metalwork. There's a whole range of things that can happen in all the men's sheds, right across the community, including at Lancefield, where they work with the local primary school kids, teaching them basic skills in using hammers and bits of wood to create and build something.

To the men's sheds of McEwan and right across the nation, we thank you for the important work you do in ensuring social connection and supporting men's health and wellbeing. Now is as good a time as any to say, 'Send him down to the shed.'

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Archer):** Is there a seconder for the motion?

**Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (18:47):** I'm happy to second the motion. I rise today to acknowledge the 2024 Men's Shed Week, a celebration of a remarkable establishment that has fostered social connection and community development and improved mental health outcomes for men all across Australia. Men's sheds have become so much more than a place to tinker or build. They are places of mateship, where men from all walks of life can come together to share skills, stories and companionship over a cup of tea or coffee, and often some very nice homemade biscuits. These men's sheds offer a sense of belonging and purpose, particularly for men who may otherwise feel isolated. Whether working with wood, metal or other materials, these shared passions build more than just creative pieces. They build confidence and a sense of self. In an era where we hear all too frequently about mental health challenges in our community, men's sheds stand as a quiet yet powerful institution to support men's mental and emotional health.

Mayo is home to nearly 20 men's sheds, including: Aldgate Men's Shed; Kingscote Men's Shed; Lobethal and District Shedmen; Macclesfield Men's Shed; Lakeside Men's Shed @ Milang; Laratinga Community Shed; Victor Harbour Men's Shed; Yankalilla and Districts Community Men's Shed; Coorong Quays Boat Shed—I was there just recently; Armfield Slip and Boatshed—they specialise in doing a lot of work around ships and boats, and they're right on the water Goolwa; the Hut Community Shed; Strathalbyn Wood Craft Group; Blackwood Hills Men's Shed; the Red Shed; the Green Shed at Gumeracha; the Aldinga Bay Community Shed; and the Kersbrook Shed.

These sheds play a vital role for many in our community but particularly for men when they navigate the transition from paid work to retirement or from farm life to town life or when they downsize to a retirement village and no longer have their own beloved shed. In my time as the member for Mayo I have been honoured to enter many of these sacred places, share a cuppa and talk to the men about what they are creating. As I said, I recently visited Coorong Quays Boat Shed, where a dedicated group of members with a shared passion for boat restoration gather weekly to work collaboratively on a range of projects. This shed is just one of so many across my community.

We must do everything we can in this place to continue to provide these groups with the financial resources to sustain their growth and development so that future generations can also experience the benefit of that supportive network. I know, talking with my men's shed, who are doing the Bunnings sausage sizzle just to cover the cost of materials and keep the lights on, that we have so many organisations in our community that are very generous with the men's sheds, donating excess stock they may have. They want to provide a quality place. They are always looking to expand. Look at the Victor Harbour men's shed. That's a massive shed. We were able to get funding for that a few years ago, but I can tell you it is full to the brim. As my husband says, you can never have a big enough shed. That is correct.

I greatly value the men's sheds in my community. They are wonderful, welcoming places and safe places for men to come together and connect and make new friendships, all the while working side by side and building positive and good mental health and connections to each other. Long live men's sheds.

**Mr PERRETT** (Moreton) (18:52): I would like to thank the member for McEwen for this motion about Men's Shed Week last week. I told him that I wouldn't mention the line 'giving them a flogging'. But I am happy to talk about something a bit more important, which is men's sheds. That's not least because I am retiring from politics at the next election and I might need to join a men's shed myself. I know my wife will definitely want me out of the house!

But, in all seriousness, last week was Men's Shed Week. I think it is an important occasion to recognise here in a great bipartisan way. Moreton has some fantastic men's sheds. There's the Yeronga men's shed. There are two right on the border at Oxley, including the St John's men's shed. All these sheds are supported by the Australian Men's Shed Association, AMSA, the umbrella organisation for more than 1,200 community sheds peppered throughout the country. More than 50,000 Aussie blokes go to a men's shed for lots of good reasons. Men's sheds are a place where men go to talk, as AMSA says, shoulder to shoulder. Men go there to work and do good for their local communities, to reconnect and to make new friendships. They give participants a sense of purpose and have a critical role in bolstering mental health. Judging from my experience when I go to men's sheds, if the government ever needs good policy advice, every MP should run their ideas past their men's shed first. They are better than a gang of prosecuting QCs; they will interrogate you about everything! They are wonderful.

Research shows us that one in five older Australians experience loneliness. A Monash University study indicated that lonely Australians aged 65 and over can feel abandoned and rejected. They also face an increased risk of dementia and cardiovascular disease, amongst other conditions. AMSA recognise that many men do not feel comfortable talking about their feelings and emotions. Many don't recognise that these things affect their wellbeing and health. They prefer to talk about the footy. AMSA lists a range of challenges that men face that may cause isolation, loneliness and depression, such as relationship breakdown, retrenchment or early retirement from a job, the loss of children or grandchildren following divorces and physical or mental illness. These are difficult to deal with on your own. Joining a men's shed assists with being productive, contributing to your community, connecting with friends and maintaining an active body and mind—all factors that help your wellbeing.

The companionship offered by men's sheds works against the detrimental effects of loneliness and significant life events, such as those just mentioned, and helps to maintain wellbeing and the overall quality of life for participants. As AMSA says:

The Men's Shed movement has become one of the most powerful tools in addressing health and wellbeing, helping men to once again become valued & productive members of our community.

AMSA is funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care and has a serious focus on men's health. They've collaborated with different stakeholders to produce a range of resources and health and wellbeing programs.

Mike, from the Sunnybank District Community Men's Shed, backed up the importance of the shed for its members. Some men, Mike said, attend to work on the tools, while others enjoy the company of other people and the comradery it offers. The Sunnybank men's shed is open for their 130 members five days a week from 8 am to noon-ish. Sunnybank, like the other sheds in my area, have impressed me with their support for men seeking assistance with mental health issues. They provide a safe and welcoming space where men can come together to talk, develop useful skills and help each other. These simple actions help prevent healthcare issues.

Men's sheds have a very positive impact on local communities. Over the years, their members have created desks, toys and furniture for residential aged care, for local kindergartens, for schools and for not-for-profit organisations. They do excellent sausage sizzles too. I've seen the community spirit and mateship in action and up close for 17 years. Men's sheds across the country vary greatly in what they offer. In addition to building furniture, they may fix machinery, offer gardening, or teach computer skills or cooking.

The Albanese Labor government recognised the many benefits of men's sheds and, in the May budget, committed \$6 million over two years to support them to continue and flourish. This builds on nearly \$27 million of federal government funding since 2011—so it's bipartisan. The latest round will support the regional coordinators program, health and wellbeing event, shed improvements and tools and equipment. Long live our men's sheds.

**Mr BOYCE** (Flynn) (18:57): I too support the member from McEwen's motion on supporting men's sheds. I would like to acknowledge the bipartisan support across all flavours of politics in support of the men's shed movement across Australia. Last week was Men's Shed Week, led by the Australian Men's Shed Association, with this year's theme being 'Send him down to the Shed'. The theme acknowledged that most men are introduced to men's sheds by somebody else, which reconnects men with community.

Men's sheds play a vital role in preventing social isolation and mental ill health. They offer thousands of men of all ages a safe and friendly environment where they can work on meaningful projects while building strong social connections. From Biggenden to Boyne-Tannum, Gayndah to Gracemere, Calliope to the Callide Valley and Moore Park Beach to Mount Morgan, there are men's sheds all over the Flynn electorate in Central Queensland that do a fantastic job in their local communities.

I've been very pleased to be able to support the men's sheds over the years with various federal government grants, including \$2,850 for the Calliope River Men's Shed for a log splitter, \$5,000 for the Gracemere Men's Shed for a spindle moulder and dust extractor, \$4,300 to the Taroom Men's Shed for a mobile evaporative cooler for the workshop and \$12,500 for the Gladstone Men's Shed for two water tanks and new fencing.

The men's shed movement has become one of the most powerful tools in addressing health and wellbeing, helping men to once again become valued and productive members of our community. The Australian Men's Shed Association perfectly describe the critical role of men's sheds and their positive impact in the communities:

Most men have learned from our culture that they don't talk about feelings and emotions and many do not take an interest in their own health and wellbeing.

[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, they 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 a divorce, and physical or mental illness are just some of the problems that men may find difficult to deal with on their own.

Good health is based on many factors, including feeling good about yourself, being productive, contributing to your community, connecting with friends and maintaining an active body and mind. Becoming a member of a men's shed provides a safe and busy environment where men 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 or a cup of tea if that's all they want and all they're looking for. Members of men's sheds come from all walks of life. The bond that unites them is that they are men with time on their hands who would like to do something meaningful with that time.

A good men's shed has a management committee that has developed a safe and happy environment where men are welcome to work on community projects, specific men's sheds projects or a project of their own choice in their own time where the only must is to observe a safe working practice in all the spirit of mateship. The men's shed movement has now become one of the most powerful tools in addressing the wellbeing and helping of men to once again become valued and productive members of our community. That exactly captures what the men's shed movement is.

While I didn't agree with much in the recent budget, I strongly agree with, support and acknowledge the federal government's ongoing support for the Australian Men's Shed Association and the commitment in the 2024-25 budget to provide \$6 million over two years to support the men's shed movement across Australia. This will provide funding

for health and wellbeing events, shed improvements, tools, equipment and automated external defibrillators. I would also like to see this funding increased and be ongoing to support men's sheds and their growth.

I wish to conclude by saying that I'm proud to support men's sheds across this country. I thank them for the invaluable work that they do in their local communities across Australia. With over 1,300 men's sheds across Australia and over 50,000 Australians participating in men's sheds, this is a terrific achievement. I look forward to seeing these numbers grow into the future.

**Ms ROBERTS** (Pearce) (19:02): I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate an initiative that is quietly but powerfully transforming the lives of many men across Australia: the men's sheds. The origin of men's sheds are deeply tied to Australian culture. The backyard shed has long been a symbol of refuge, a place for men to unwind and escape the pressures of daily life. However, as more people move into smaller homes and retirement villages, the classic backyard shed is disappearing. In response, community sheds have sprung up across Australia, providing a shared space where men can continue to do what they've always done: build things, fix things and create things, whilst forming meaningful connections with others. These grassroots community spaces provide a welcoming environment where people can come together, sharing experiences and developing friendships. They offer more than just a space to tinker with tools or work on projects; they are vital hubs for social connection, emotional wellbeing and even health promotion.

The benefits of men's sheds go beyond giving men a space to escape. They offer a unique opportunity to address several key determinants of health, such as reducing social isolation, boosting self-esteem and fostering a sense of purpose. Research has shown that these social connections are linked to improved mental and physical health outcomes. In fact, studies have demonstrated that men who maintain strong social ties live longer, healthier lives. While many sheds focus on hands-on activities, like woodworking or machinery repair, the sheds also offer opportunities for learning new skills, sharing health information and even providing direct health services. The informal peer based environment of the shed encourages men to open up about health issues in ways that they may not feel comfortable doing in traditional health settings. Here, men can discuss their experiences with health, learn from each other and even engage in programs designed to promote healthier lifestyles.

What makes men's sheds particularly effective is that they meet men where they are, both literally and figuratively. They offer a practical hands-on environment where learning is done through doing, which resonates with men who may not engage with more formal education or health promotion programs.

The shed is not just a place to fix things; it's a place to build relationships, gain knowledge and restore a sense of self-worth. As we celebrate Men's Shed Week it is essential to recognise the important role that these sheds play in addressing the broader issue of men's health in Australia. With proper support, these spaces could serve as a cornerstone for health promotion, especially for those men who are least likely to engage with traditional healthcare services.

I am pleased to know that the Albanese Labor government's ongoing support of the Australian Men's Shed Association continues to be strong, with a commitment in the 2024-25 budget to provide over \$6 million to support men's sheds across the country. This funding will go towards health and wellbeing events, shed improvements, tools and equipment, as well as automated defibrillators and ensuring that these essential community spaces are well equipped to serve their members.

In my local community of Pearce we are so fortunate to have four men's sheds: Quinns Men's Shed, Yanchep Community Men's Shed, Wanneroo Community Men's Shed and Northern Suburbs Men's Shed. These sheds are more than just workshops. They are lifelines for many men in our area, offering them a place to belong, to share and to thrive. Men's sheds have the potential to reach men who are socially isolated or who are dealing with loss of identity after retirement or struggling with their mental health. By offering them a space to reconnect with themselves and their community, we are giving them the tools and the time to build objects but also to rebuild their lives. Men's sheds are a place of transformation. They are spaces that promote not just physical activity but also mental, emotional and social wellbeing, and the Albanese Labor government is committed to ensuring that they continue to grow and thrive for future generations. We recognise that men's sheds are a vital avenue for improving men's health and wellbeing, and we will always ensure that they are always integrated into state and national health policies.

**Mr REPACHOLI** (Hunter) (19:06): This week is Men's Shed Week, and the theme of this year is 'Send him to the Shed'. Did you know that there are more men's sheds in Australia than there are Macca's restaurants? There are over 1,300 of them. Good health is based on many factors, including feeling good about yourself, being productive, contributing to your community, connecting with friends and maintaining an active body and mind. Becoming a member of a men's shed provides a safe and productive environment where men can find many of these things. It's all about being mates and doing something meaningful with your time. There are over 50,000 Australian men who are involved with a men's shed. Because of this, the men's shed movement has become one of the most powerful

tools in addressing health and wellbeing and helping men reconnect with their communities as valued and productive members. Men's sheds are important parts of our community, especially in the Hunter, and I will always support them whenever I can and however I can.

My electorate is filled with so many incredible men's sheds. We have the Aberdeen Men's Shed, Bonnells Bay Men's Shed, Branxton-Greta Men's Shed, Cardiff Edgeworth Men's Shed, Cessnock Men's Shed and Garden, Cooranbong Men's Shed, Denman and District Men's Shed, Lake Macquarie Classic Boatshed, Muswellbrook Men's Shed, Singleton Men's Shed, South Lakes Men's Shed, Toronto Men's Shed and, finally, Wangi Men's Shed.

Since becoming the member for Hunter, I've been lucky enough to visit lots of men's shed across my electorate, and it's always great to spend time with the blokes involved. The team at Cessnock Men's Shed and Garden do amazing work restoring things like old rocking horses and building new things like birds' nesting boxes. They also have an amazing garden where they grow their own fruit and veggies. The most important part of this garden is the blue tree, which serves as a reminder that it's okay to not be okay.

When I visited the Singleton Men's Shed, I picked up a jar of the famous men's shed tomato relish from Gerry. Gerry and the team at the Singleton Men's Shed make and sell tomato relish, with all the proceeds going to support local Cancer Council NSW appeals and Cancer Council Australia appeals. So far, they have raised \$4,000 and more, so well done, guys. That's an amazing effort.

The guys at the Muswellbrook Men's Shed are doing great work making a variety of local products for council and also the mine sites in the area. They also recycle all the cans and bottles from a number of local clubs, businesses and residents. When I visited, I had the pleasure of drawing the meat raffle. I didn't win anything, unfortunately, but it was a great day with the guys, always having a laugh.

The men's shed in Denman is a very valuable part of the community in Denman.

They play an important role by helping to restore the old items for the heritage village which helps to preserve some of the history of the town. They also supply habitat boxes for the mines and build garden furniture.

The Wangi Men's Shed have recently finished restoring an old fire engine that they will be using around Christmas time. I've seen the project, and it's very cool; I can tell you that. I'm sure it will bring so much joy to the community when they see it out and about. They also have an annual monster garage sale where people can go and buy some very impressive woodwork and metalwork products that the men have made. So get out there and check it out. It's on 12 October at the Wangi Men's Shed. Make sure you get out there and see them. It's great to see local community groups enjoying themselves.

Our men's sheds do so much to help the mental health of local men, and they do amazing work for so many other community organisations and charities. Whenever I visit, I enjoy the chats, I enjoy getting involved with their projects, I certainly enjoy the sausage sizzle, and I enjoy how much they generally take the piss out of me as well. So, if you're looking for a way to spend your spare time, go and join your local men's shed and get involved. You won't regret it. There's always something to do at a men's shed. There's lots to build and lots of projects to get involved with. But the best part is being able to make new mates and have a chat and a laugh.

As men, we don't always look after ourselves the way we should and we don't always talk about the things that are bothering us. But getting involved with your local men's shed, meeting people from all walks of life and having a good conversation and a good time is a perfect way to shed the load. So to all the men out there and all the partners of the blokes out there: make sure you get on to them and send them down to the shed.

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Opposition Whip) (19:11): I rise to support the motion to recognise the vital service that men's sheds provide nationally. These remarkable organisations form one of Australia's largest community development networks, with around 1,300 men's sheds across the country, engaging over 50,000 Aussie blokes. Just last week, we celebrated Men's Shed Week, led by the Australian Men's Shed Association. This year's theme, 'Send him down to the Shed', highlights a significant truth: most men are introduced to a shed by someone else.

I think we can all agree, on both sides of the House, that men's involvement in their local shed invariably leads to improved mental health outcomes. Participants report increased self-esteem, greater mental health awareness and the destigmatisation of issues that many men struggle with alone. The shed fosters a positive community outlook, reinforcing that long-cherished spirit of Aussie mateship. For many, these meetings are not just gatherings; they are, quite simply, literally lifelines.

Improving the mental health of Australian men is crucial. It is well known that men aged 85 years and older have the highest suicide rates in Australia. This is heartbreaking. This is an alarming statistic, and community organisations like men's sheds are the key to tackling challenges head on. They offer support, camaraderie and a chance to reconnect in ways that many men otherwise miss out on.

I always enjoy visiting the many men's sheds in my electorate, and I make it a priority to visit as often as I can. Recent trips have taken me to Bindoon, Cervantes, Gin Gin and Wundowie, to name a few. I applaud the Cervantes Community Men's Shed for its recent move towards inclusivity by involving women in its activities. It's a modern positive step forward, and I just want to note that the Country Women's Association recently has taken a leaf out of their book by inviting men to participate as well.

So what do they do in men's sheds? Well, we know it's about the friendship and the camaraderie, but they're also creating breadboards and upcycling used craypot rope, as they do in Cervantes, and making rocking horses et cetera. But their aim, ultimately, is to support their community and those who are in need.

Participation in men's sheds is at an all-time high, with many of them looking to expand. Of course, this is such fantastic news. However, it does come with its own challenges. More government support and funding is needed to achieve these goals, and I commend the government for its support of the men's shed movement and committing over \$6 million. I also want to acknowledge the coalition's legacy of funding men's sheds during our time, and long may we continue to support men's sheds.

Time is of the essence now, so I want to say I wholeheartedly support this motion. I encourage the continuation and expansion of support for our men's sheds. This support will ensure they have the resources they need to thrive and keep making a tangible difference to the lives of our Australian men, who matter.

**Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (19:14):** For decades, men have retreated to the sanctuary of their back sheds or man caves for some time out to tinker on their latest project or to share a few laughs with their mates. We all know that male friendships are critical to men's health and overall wellbeing, whether that's talking to a neighbour over the back fence, playing a game of footy at the park or dipping a line in with a mate. So when the first men's shed was formed 31 years ago, the concept took off around the country. Now we have more than 1,300 sheds across Australia, and I'm proud to say that 21 of these are in my electorate of Gilmore.

Over the years, I've supported my local men's sheds with numerous grants to enable members to support each other and to continue the important work they do in our communities. Since 2011, almost \$30 million in federal funding has been allocated to the Australian Men's Shed Association to provide general support, resources and activities to men's sheds around the nation and to manage the National Shed Development Program. The Australian government recognises the importance of men's sheds as places where men can find social support and friendship while being engaged in meaningful activities that help them maintain good mental and physical wellbeing.

I, too, acknowledge that men's sheds lead to increased self-esteem and improved mental health outcomes for men who may be feeling lonely, depressed or socially isolated. This is why I fully support the government's commitment in the 2024-25 budget to provide \$6 million over two years to support the association. I really enjoy popping along to my local men's sheds and seeing what they're up to. You never know what you'll find or what they're working on. One day, they'll be creating spectacular timber jewellery boxes and furniture, which they sell at markets to raise money for their programs, and the next, they'll be planting a garden or running a cooking class.

There's no end to the variety of activities that are carried out in men's sheds led by the members who bring a wealth of skills and knowledge to share with their mates. Activities aren't confined within the shed walls. The members enjoy time out together. Whether touring a local winery, a bus trip to the footy or riding the rails on a historic steam train ride, these excursions get men out of the house, increase their self-esteem and, importantly, lay the foundations for new hobbies and new friendships. Men's Shed is one of Australia's largest community development organisations, and the community spirit they foster is astounding. I love that if a local charity school or community group needs a hand, the men's shed members always have their tools at the ready. Whether it's a cubby house or an insect home for a preschool, garden furniture for an aged-care facility or a memorial seat in a local park, the members always step up with pride.

The great thing about men's sheds is they're all different. Living on the South Coast, surrounded by bushland, beaches and forests, the environment is at the top of the list for many of our local men's sheds. One group builds minor bird traps, while another makes nesting boxes for birds and possums. As well as providing a safe place for men of all ages, from all backgrounds and from all walks of life to come together, men's sheds are playing an increasingly valuable role in protecting our environment and supporting other community organisations. That's why it's so important for this government to continue to support them and to provide funding for health and wellbeing events, shed improvements, tools and equipment.

The budget funds will also provide automated external defibrillators for men's sheds. The addition of a defib could save the life of a member or visitor in the event of a cardiac arrest. These will be particularly welcomed in my electorate, where the sheds are located in villages some distance from a hospital or ambulance station. On Saturday, I bumped into my local Culburra Beach and District Men's Shed conducting a fundraising sausage sizzle. One member summed up what he loved most about the organisation. He said, 'They're a great bunch of blokes with

great ideas and a willingness to help people wherever they can.' Today, I want to give a huge shout-out to all of our men's sheds and give special thanks to the 21 awesome sheds in Gilmore.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sharkie):** There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**Rice, Ms Janet Elizabeth**

**Singey, Mr Karma**

**Australian Tibetan Council**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sharkie) (19:19):** Before I call the Clerk, I would like to welcome to the Federation Chamber former senator Janet Rice; Mr Karma Singey, representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Australia; and members of Australian Tibetan Council. Welcome to the Federation Chamber.

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

#### **Tibet**

**Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (19:19):** I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) on 6 February 2023, United Nations independent experts identified that approximately one million Tibetan children were being affected by Chinese government policies aimed at assimilating Tibetan people culturally, religiously and linguistically through a residential school system;

(b) on 14 December 2023, the European Union Parliament adopted a resolution on the abduction of Tibetan children and forced assimilation practices through Chinese boarding schools in Tibet;

(c) on 10 June 2024, the Canadian House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution in support of Tibet and the Tibetan people; and

(d) on 12 June 2024, the United States Congress passed the 'Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Act';

(2) stands in solidarity with the people of Tibet;

(3) recognises Australia is deeply concerned about reports detailing China's assimilationist policies, including:

(a) forced labour transfer programs and the coerced separation of Tibetan children from their families through state-run boarding schools;

(b) the detention of Tibetans for peaceful expression of political views;

(c) the suppression of Tibetan religious expression; and

(d) the use of excessive security measures against Tibetans;

(4) reiterates that the Tibetan people are entitled to their fundamental human rights and freedoms, including their right to self-determination;

(5) further recognises that:

(a) Tibetans should be empowered to freely choose their economic, social, cultural, and religious policies without interference; and

(b) religious and spiritual communities should be empowered to choose their own religious and spiritual leaders without government interference, and this should include the eventual successor of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama;

(6) calls on:

(a) the Chinese Government to reengage with the representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama to establish genuine autonomy for Tibetans within China, and urges the Chinese authorities to release the Panchen Lama; and

(b) China to:

(i) repeal legislation and cease practices which discriminate against Tibetans on the basis of race or religion;

(ii) cease arbitrary detention, coercive labour transfer, and family separation programs;

(iii) end restrictions on movement and on the rights of Tibetans to enjoy their own culture and language; and

(iv) allow meaningful and unfettered access to Tibet for independent human rights observers; and

(7) further notes successive Australian Governments have and should continue to raise the issue of human rights violations in China, through political dialogues with the Chinese authorities at the highest levels.

I move this motion as it appears on the *Notice Paper* because I am so proud to do so as a part of a bipartisan show of support alongside the member for Lyne and alongside the member for Macquarie and the member for Fraser. I've been here for eight years, the same as the member for Macquarie, and I don't think I've ever seen before a motion