

SUBIACO MEN'S SHED

Statement by Minister for Volunteering

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Volunteering) [1.18 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house that I recently visited the Subiaco Community Men's Shed, toured its facility and met with the Western Australian president of Men's Sheds of WA, Trevor Gorey, OAM, and its CEO, James Wild. As members may know, Men's Sheds of WA is a men's health charity and the peak body for men's sheds and community sheds across Western Australia. MSWA aims to expand the men's sheds movement in WA, connecting existing sheds, helping to start new ones and raising awareness of their benefits to the social, physical and emotional health of its members. It was a privilege to see the work that Subiaco Community Men's Shed is doing for men in the community and hear about the work of Men's Sheds of WA to support older people to stay connected to community. Men's sheds provide a place for men to feel included, build and share skills, feel a sense of purpose, build connections and contribute to community. This is particularly important for older men, who may become socially isolated. It is sometimes said that men find it easier to talk side by side than face to face. In providing a place where people can connect and participate, men's sheds play a significant part in promoting positive mental health outcomes for their members.

Men's sheds contribute to the wider community, with member sheds participating in a range of project-based volunteer initiatives as they arise, such as restoring benches for public spaces, building playgrounds, fixing toys for local playgroups and delivering firewood for community members. While men's sheds make a strong contribution to older members of our society, they are also moving towards more inclusion of younger men in their work. They acknowledge that mental health support is needed for all ages, in a way that men can connect and engage with each other, and support each other with friendship and without judgement. The first shed was established in 1993 at Goolwa Heritage Club in South Australia. To mark its anniversary, the Australian Men's Shed Association will acknowledge this milestone through a yearlong celebration of 30 Years of Sheds. I look forward to hearing more about the good work that men's sheds across WA are doing and commend them for the role they play in supporting our community. I sincerely thank Trevor Gorey and James Wild for the invitation to attend and visit the Subiaco shed and wish them the very best in celebrating 30 years of men's sheds at their WA state conference in November.