

MenzShed National Conference 2014



The MenzShed Kapiti Incorporated had the privilege of hosting the 2014 National Conference for MenzSheds in New Zealand over the weekend 14 to 16 March 2014.

The El Rancho Christian Holiday Park in Waikanae was chosen as the Conference venue and this proved to be an excellent choice with a very good conference hall, accommodation immediately adjacent for the out-of-towner's, and excellent catering for our lunches and the conference dinner.

Around 45 blokes from 17 MenzSheds around the country, from Whangarei to Christchurch, attended the conference with about a dozen womenfolk coming along for the partner's programme although a number of the women also found the various conference presentations very interesting.

The theme for the conference was "**MenzSheds in the Community**". The programme was designed to cover two components of this theme – the first took a look at how a MenzShed can benefit the Community by way of the things that a Shed can do for the Community and also how the Community can help (benefit) the Shed.

The second component of this theme was to look at the health and wellbeing benefits that a MenzShed can provide for the individual men in the community and that in turn feeds back into the Community.

The conference commenced about 2pm on the Friday afternoon with a very interesting and thought provoking opening address by the Rt Honourable Jim Bolger.



A panel of four speakers then looked mainly at how a MenzShed can benefit the Community.

Deputy Mayor for Kapiti, Mr Mike Cardiff led the charge with some key pointers from a Local Authority perspective. Former Mayor Jenny Rowan followed on with further comments and challenges gained from her vast knowledge and experience of being involved with the Community at all levels. Scott Dray from the Kapiti Coast District Council Civil Defence (Emergency Response) group then put forward some thoughts and suggestions as to how a MenzShed could assist the Community with their preparedness for an emergency situation. And finally Lisa Clapcott from the Department of Conservation put forward some ideas on how a MenzShed could establish partnerships with DoC to help preserve and enhance the conservation estate.

Women and MenzSheds is a topic that comes to the fore from time to time – some women are very keen to also have access to a workshop and get their hands on the tools – become part of or invade the men's sanctuary of a shed. Susie Mills and Trish Amour-Davy from Best Practice Law Limited in Waikanae provided a light hearted view on this subject – raised a few comments from the blokes.

Steven Tomlinson from The Law Connection and Steve Banks from Rothbury Insurance Brokers then covered some aspects on insurance matters and the need for Sheds to have appropriate Liability Insurance.

Rob Brise from Worksafe New Zealand rounded off the afternoon with some very appropriate comments and advice regarding the statutory requirements and responsibilities associated with safety in the Shed.

The Friday programme was rounded off with a very enjoyable social evening at the MenzShed Kapiti Shed in Rangihiroa Street in Waikanae.



The weather gods turned on a very mild evening and the Waikanae Fire Brigade came along with a fire truck and provided some very useful advice and a demonstration about fire safety in the home and in the Shed.

“BRASSO” an ensemble of 8 players affiliated with the Kapiti Brass Band played a variety of very pleasant tunes in the background until it became too dark for them to read their music – or that was their excuse anyway.



The Saturday part of the conference programme was mainly taken up with visits to three very interesting "SHEDS" on the Kapiti Coast.

First stop was to Jeff Fox in Manakau to be exposed to a very knowledgeable and skilled self taught person who has become an expert in making wooden propellers for vintage aeroplanes. The blokes were fascinated by the work that Jeff undertakes, not only with his propeller making, but he is also a very skilled restorer of vintage motorcycles and vehicles. ([Dominion Post article](#))

Our second stop was at the Southwards workshops out the back of the museum. Manager Stan Bellamore showed us through the workshop and the storage area that is packed with all those "round too" projects. All those interesting vintage and veteran vehicles and bits that are awaiting restoration when they can get round to it.



The third stop was at the Steam Incorporated workshop at Paekakariki. Again a very interesting place to look the behind scenes and get an appreciation of the work and dedication that goes into restoring our old heritage steam and diesel rail locomotives and carriages.

Prior to setting off on the SHED crawl, John Bush organised the delegates into groups to identify the main issues that the Member Sheds wanted the National Executive of MENZSHED New Zealand to look at in the coming year.

John also gave a short presentation on a First Aid course that he has developed with The Order of St John for Sheds to consider. More details on that later from the National Executive.

Saturday evening saw everyone back at El Rancho for the Conference dinner. A superb spread put on by the catering staff at El Rancho.

Our 2012 Wellingtonian of the year, entrepreneur, and adventurer, Mr Neville Jordan captured the diners attention with a very interesting insight to his own experiences of "tinkering in a shed" starting with some of his early childhood experiments which would make mother's hair stand on end these days, and how these learning experiences can come to the fore in later life as he recounted some of his adventures around the world.



The Saturday evening was rounded off with some entertainment from the very talented local group, the "Andrew London Trio" who captured the audience attention with a great variety of their satirical and whimsical songs about society obsessions and taboos. Well worth a visit to Andrew's website: www.andrewlondon.co.nz.

The Sunday component of the Conference focussed on the health and well being aspects of the benefit of a MenzShed in the Community. Dr Herman van Krandenburg and Dr Andrew Edwards from the Waikanae Health Centre provided a very informative commentary on men's health issues.

Peter Corin from The Law Connection provided some very useful information on "Powers of Attorney" and Jenni Moore from Whangarei who has nursing qualifications and aged care backgrounds provided some information on the research she is undertaking on MenzSheds as part of her Masters studies.

Ray Hall, our National Web Master, gave a short presentation on the MENZSHED New Zealand national web site and asked that all sheds keep their page on the national site up to date. He also encouraged all sheds to develop their own web site providing more comprehensive shed information, the web site being linked from the National web site. Anyone needing further advice or assistance about managing their national shed page or establishing a shed web site can contact Ray.

Neil Bruce, the National Executive member for Region 2 gave a presentation on the development of MenzSheds in New Zealand and world wide.

AGM

The weekend concluded mid Sunday afternoon with the Annual General Meeting for MENZSHED New Zealand which is the National Body for MenzSheds in New Zealand. The following persons were elected for the National Executive committee:

Ray Hall	New Brighton Shed	Chairman and Web Master
John Renor	Featherston Shed	Secretary
Peter Blackler	Kapiti Shed	Treasurer
John Bush	Henley Shed	Officer at Large
Ross McEwan	North Shore Shed	Region 1
Neil Bruce	Hamilton Shed	Region 2
Gary Cameron	Dannevirke Shed	Region 3
Alan Kissell	Waimea Shed	Region 4
Neil McArthur	Alexandra Shed	Region 5

The next National Conference for MenzSheds in New Zealand will be held in the Christchurch area in 2016.

Conclusion

The feedback from the people who attended this 2014 Conference in Waikanae is that it was a *"stimulating and friendly conference with a wide variety of knowledgeable speakers"* and that attendees have *"gone home re-energised"*. Some commenting that *"it will be a hard act to follow."*

Overall a very enjoyable and successful weekend for the Kapiti Coast, MenzShed Kapiti who hosted the Conference, and for the MenzShed movement in New Zealand.

Acknowledgements need to go to:

- the various people who freely gave their time to participate in the Conference with very interesting and thought provoking presentations; and
- the Waikanae Community Board, Kapiti Coast District Council, El Rancho Christian Holiday Park, and the various business organisations who provided support and sponsorship for the Conference.

For more information visit the MenzShed Kapiti website: www.menzshedkapiti.org.nz
or the MENZSHED New Zealand website: www.menzshed.org.nz

Peter Blackler
Treasurer MENZSHED New Zealand Incorporated and
Treasurer MenzShed Kapiti Incorporated
31 March 2014

