

# SHIRE OF MUNDARINGS' "INSPIRATION ZONE" VOLUNTEER STORY

## Wally Winfield - Mundaring Community Men's Shed



*Some of the members of the Mundaring Community Men's Shed with Shire President Councillor Helen Dullard at the Shire Thank a Volunteer Day Celebrations 2008.*

Wally Winfield was born in WA and has lived most of his life in the Hills. He has been an active member of the community working; recreating and volunteering in the Mundaring area. Wally played football for Parkerville in the 1950's, and was Secretary of the Hills Football Association for 12 years. He worked in the Midland Workshops and was Secretary of the Midland branch of the Railway Officers Union for 4 years. He is President of the Mundaring Probus Club and a senior member of the Happy Wanderers bush walking club.

However it is his involvement with the Mundaring Community Men's Shed that has recently been his main focus. Wally has been instrumental in driving the development of the Mundaring Community Men's Shed, a project designed to get men out of the house and into an environment where they can create anything from furniture to friendships. Men's Sheds are an Australia wide phenomenon built around a common theme of men feeling useful and contributing back to their communities, whilst learning or sharing their skills, making friends, networking and availing themselves of health information, programs and opportunities.

The idea for the Men's shed project developed in 2006. It had become apparent that older and isolated men were not becoming

involved in the activities and events on offer at the Hub of the Hills, so a small group of men worked with Shire officers, HCSG staff (Hills Community Support Group) and the Active Ageing Network to find ways to engage this particular demographic group. This evolved into a community minded desire to provide opportunities for men to work, meet and greet in a healthy, social atmosphere, a place, a "Shed", where men not only utilise woodworking and metalworking tools and equipment to work on their hobby's and projects, but also to create a central place where they can learn new things from old hands.

An initial working group was set up to investigate the possibility of providing a Shed for the men of the hills and they traveled far and wide, from Fremantle to Bridgetown, in their own time and in their pursuit of knowledge. Through these meetings with other working Men's Sheds and their members, the group gathered enough information to have a public meeting with a view to forming a proper committee and becoming an incorporated body.

From humble beginnings and after various configurations the Mundaring Community Men's Shed was born. Elected as its inaugural President, Wally set about with a passion to have the Shed recognised by the Shire of Mundaring to reinforce its community credentials. Wally's keenness and commitment, along with the support of his committee to see a Men's Shed in Mundaring, has seen this project rise from merely an idea to become a solid working and viable outcome. Wally worked tirelessly to pursue facilities, resources and funding through various avenues and has achieved deserved success.

With the help of the Shire's Community Development staff, the group's goals of integration and recognition have come to fruition and now the Shed is associated with several existing Shire of Mundaring programs such as the Active Ageing Network and The Hub of the Hills. Some of the events where the Men's Shed group have volunteered their time and been of invaluable assistance is Seniors Week 2008, The Mundaring Truffle Festival 2008 and Aboriginal Seniors Sports Day 2009.

The Mundaring Community Men's Shed is hoping to provide opportunities for community learning and open avenues to people with disabilities for participating in activities that provide a sense of purpose or rehabilitation. But don't think the Shed is just about making stuff, it's also intended that any bloke looking for a friendly place to visit or enjoy a coffee with mates is also welcome.

The success of the Men's Shed is due in part to Wally's determination to provide local men with opportunities to get out of the house, meet and socialise with other blokes, and also to the commitment of the team he is supported by.

We would like to congratulate Wally on his generosity of time, spirit and his wonderful 'can do' attitude. Without wonderful volunteers such as Wally Winfield, our community would not be the rich and interesting place it is today. For more information about the Mundaring Community Men's Shed please call the secretary Martin Beal on 9295 6009.

If you would like to nominate someone for our 'Inspiration Zone', please call 9290 6682 or visit the Shire web site and follow the volunteer links. Wally, the Shire thanks you for your hard work and wishes you the best for the future.