

# COMMUNITY SMOKE-FREE PROJECTS PROGRAM: Tasmanian Men's Shed Association

## Smoke-free spaces

### Project background

The [Tasmanian Men's Shed Association](#) (TMSA) has 71 Men's Sheds across the state that offer health programs for men. Although some Sheds have mixed or ladies' days, the majority have a male membership aged 20 to 90 years. Many people in the network are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder.

TMSA wanted to find out how many of its members smoke, and to explore ways to help them to quit. The association shares regular messages about the health risks of smoking through different channels and wanted to improve on this work.

### What did we start with?

While smoking is not allowed within machinery areas, it is not known how many members are smokers. Members often engage in social activities, like playing cards and games together, which creates opportunities for smoking.

The purpose of the project was to encourage smoke-free spaces within the Men's Sheds. Initially by encouraging members to think about smoking cessation and then to support them with information available, e.g. [Quit Tasmania resources](#), to assist them through this journey.

### What did we finish with?

We shared information with 71 Sheds using various methods:

- Put up smoke-free signs.
- Shared Quit Fact Sheets to all Sheds in hard copy.
- Included Quit graphics in our social media posts.
- Added a Quit message to each quarterly Shed News magazine.

We emphasised the importance of quitting by using a trusted source, the [Dr Shed video segment](#).

We uploaded Quit Fact Sheets to the TMSA website, [Health Hub](#).



While it is still early days, so far it would seem that our Dr Shed Bryan Walpole was correct in saying that the majority of older men (the Men's Shed Movement) have given up smoking."

— WENDY KENNEDY, EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**TMSA's aim** was to encourage smoke-free spaces within Men's Sheds.

### Successes

- Information shared to 71 Sheds via email, newsletters, signage, social media, and a [Dr Shed video segment](#).
- Determined that there are few smokers in the Men's Sheds movement.

### Learnings

- There is an opportunity to develop social media tiles to support smoke-free messaging.
- Consider health literacy level of target audience and tailor messaging.



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## What were the successes along the way?

- Trust-based funding model (see call out box).
- Discussions at Shed gatherings indicated there was only one known smoker in the 30 Sheds represented.
- Multiple communication channels were used to deliver information to an older male demographic.

## What were the challenges?

- Finding published tiles to share on social media (here are some from [Cancer Council NSW](#)).
- Keeping video segments on topic.
- Gathering quantitative data on smoking status.

## What do we wish we had known at the start?

Before you start, you can use a simple survey to find out:

- Do any of your Shed Members smoke?
- Do you have a designated smoke-free area?
- Do you help members to quit smoking, through things like information and support?

## Sharing what we learned

- Consider the health literacy of your target audience and tailor your messages.
- Think about how you want to measure the effectiveness of your messaging and how you will gather feedback.



### Trust-based funding model

Simple and equitable for organisations with limited time and resources:

- Make your Expression of Interest application easy to understand and fill out.
- Design the project to meet the needs of the individual organisation (consider community-led and place-based principles).
- True partnership is more than just financial. You can support the organisation to plan, implement and report their project.
- Make reporting requirements easy and simple to follow.

## Summary

TMSA used a subtle communication approach and found a surprisingly low number of smokers within the Men's Shed movement. This word-of-mouth approach will be confirmed through a member survey and supported with ongoing information sharing about smoke-free living. Wendy Kennedy, Executive Officer says, "While it is still early days, so far it would seem that our Dr Shed Bryan Walpole was correct in saying that the majority of older men (the Men's Shed Movement) have given up smoking". TMSA will maintain the momentum of their smoke-free messaging when Irena, Community Engagement Coordinator at Quit Tasmania presents a [Supporting People to Stop Smoking & Vaping](#) session.

## Community Smoke-free Projects Program

Part of the TasCOSS [Supporting Smoke-free Community Services](#) project was to provide 10 community service organisations (CSOs) with \$5,000 each to conduct a small project to progress towards smoke-free work areas and services. The trust-based funding model for the grants was simple and equitable for organisations with limited time and resources. TasCOSS and Quit Tasmania collaborated with each CSO to develop an idea that was relevant to that organisation and the people who used their services.



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