



So what's it all about?

What Ascot Shed is and does

Ascot Shed is a 'Men's Shed'. The first Shed was founded in Australia about 15 years ago, offering retired men a place to congregate and socialise, and that concept has since become a movement. Out of work and retired men are a poorly served demographic, with few options for recreation or connection with peers, leading to an epidemic of loneliness and purposelessness. We've taken the Men's Shed model and broadened it, because men aren't the only ones who enjoy practical hobbies.

Ascot Shed is a workshop. It's a space where members can come together to work on projects, share skills, and engage with like-minded people. The Shed is equipped with machines, tools and materials for woodworking, metalworking, automotive, electronics and other hands-on activities, and it's open 5 days per week for up to 7 hours each day (except public holidays). Most activities are self-directed, requiring members to decide what they would like to work on, either individually or in conjunction with others.

Ascot Shed is for the community. We're funded by our members and that's the only community we're obliged to serve, however members frequently extend goodwill to other charitable organisations in the area, providing their time and expertise for the benefit of the wider community. This is entirely optional and organised by the members themselves.

Ascot Shed is inclusive. We welcome adults of all ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities, as long as they can operate safely in a workshop environment with its associated risks and corresponding rules. We're apolitical as an organisation, meritocratic in our governance, and with minimal operational hierarchy. The minimum age for membership is 18, with our youngest member being in their early 20s, our oldest in their late 80s giving a Shed average in the mid 60s.

Ascot Shed is a registered charity. All our trustees and members are volunteers and Ascot Shed is entirely reliant on membership fees and donations to operate. We do not pay salaries or offer grants to individuals or other charities. Many of the tools, machines and materials we use are donated to us or salvaged, reducing waste and encouraging ingenuity.

Ascot Shed is a team. Looking out for one another is essential in a potentially hazardous environment, but becoming a member of Ascot Shed provides opportunities for collaboration and teamwork that delivers much more than that; trust, friendship, growth; a sense of purpose and belonging. The chance to learn and perhaps to share your own experience and unique perspective, may be all the impetus you need to get out of the house.

Ascot Shed is a safe haven. We operate at the baseline of the mental health 'pyramid', helping to alleviate a range of issues from social anxiety, loneliness and depression. We provide a supportive environment that promotes mental and physical well-being and fosters personal development through life-long learning.



What Ascot Shed is NOT

Ascot Shed is not a day care centre. All members must have their full cognitive faculties, be independent, and be able to look after themselves and others, while complying with Health & Safety Policies in a semi-hazardous environment.

Ascot Shed is not a formal workplace. It does not operate as a business or profit-making entity and there are no employment obligations or paid roles within the shed. Members participate on a voluntary basis, contributing their time and energy for personal satisfaction and community benefit rather than any form of financial or material compensation.

Ascot Shed is not a professional training facility. While members can learn and develop new skills through practical activities and peer learning, we do not offer accredited training programmes or qualifications. The focus is on informal learning and personal development rather than structured education.

Ascot Shed is not a therapeutic or counselling service. Although participating in activities with us can have therapeutic benefits, such as reducing isolation and improving mental wellness, we do not provide structured mental health or counselling services. Members seeking professional psychological support should access appropriate healthcare services.

Ascot Shed is not a substitute for healthcare or professional support services. We offer a very supportive social environment and opportunities for physical activity, but we cannot and do not replace the need for medical advice, treatment, or professional intervention. Prospective members are encouraged to seek out necessary healthcare services for any medical, physical or psychological issues.

Ascot Shed is not a government or institutionally run organisation. Although lots of Men's Sheds receive funding or support from local councils or other charities, we are a grassroots initiative financed and managed by our members themselves. This self-governance fosters a sense of ownership and camaraderie among the membership, each of whom has a say in how Ascot Shed operates and evolves.

Ascot Shed is not a repair shop. Many of our members are capable of repairing a wide array of devices but they usually prefer to fix their own things, or to refurbish items donated to the Shed for everyone's benefit. These repair capabilities are not offered to the public owing to the potential risks involved, either by damaging a cherished item or by implicating the individual or the Shed should anything go wrong with a supposedly 'mended' device. One of the greatest advantages of membership is access to the tools and expertise we've amassed, but this is electively offered as help and guidance, not provided as a service.

Ascot Shed is not a franchise. Most Sheds in the UK voluntarily belong to the UK Men's Shed Association (UKMSA), which provides guidance and resources to help with the set up and running of a Men's Shed. Each Shed is its own organisation with a unique format, objective and character. There is no standard or preferred kind of Shed and there may be several in your area to choose from. The UKMSA website makes it easy to find them.