

## A brief summary, background

### **How did this need for community men's sheds develop?**

Over the past generation or two; there has been a dramatic cultural shift in housing and life style, in Canada as in Australia and other countries.

1. Agricultural/rural, our grandfather to father's time
  2. Suburban/urban low density, our father to our time,
  3. Suburban/urban medium density, during our generation,
  4. More high density. Our senior time and our children's generation.
1. In the agricultural, rural, small town scenario, there is a pattern of a self sufficient lifestyle. Self reliant when it comes to repairs, home, shop, equipment, do it yourself in many areas. A sharing and support with neighbours and family, especially with specialty skills, e.g. blacksmith, wood work, repair skills.
  2. As our population moves toward a more town/city situation, the house, yard, backyard garage is common. Often there is a workshop as part of the garage or basement for household, auto repairs, hobbies and some specialties. These were often shared with family, friends and neighbours, common interest groups but not as open as in the above rural scene.
  3. As the opportunity for a house and lot with a shop becomes less affordable, the trend shifts toward the medium density, condo with an attached garage. This limits the workshop possibilities and tends to discourage the sharing aspects of the separate garage space. The trend is toward hiring a handyman or skilled trades rather than trying to keep the tools and skill to do it yourself. There is also a trend toward buy new, discard and replace rather than repair as expedient and more economical. At the same time, there is a trend toward more workplace density and social connections related to employment associates, especially for men and women in full time (or greater) employment.
  4. As housing density increases to the apartment and high rise scene, there is a drift toward more workplace connections, less with neighbours and also family units are getting smaller and more mobile. The result is fewer options for social connections and the workshop opportunity disappears in a high density living environment.

Many families today, especially in the 50+ generation may have experienced three or four of these levels, usually moving from lower density to higher density living as children move on and economics get more restrictive. Retirement, loss of a spouse or partner, fewer connections with work buddies as people move add to the increased sense of isolation.

Men, in particular, are affected by the loss of identity and self worth the workplace connections and contribution are lost due to retirement or redundancy.

A feeling of: "I was the best darn xxxx around and now I can not find any place to use my skills and the knowledge a lifetime". It leaves a big hole to fill.

Men's Sheds as developed and proven in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Great Britain and elsewhere in recent years go a long way to filling this big hole for many men and their families.