

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA
HANSARD

Tuesday 11 August 2026

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

[excerpt...]

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, it's been a long time coming, but it is now time for special interest matters. I'd like to welcome to the Chamber and thank them very much for their patience, and assure them that this is normally about an hour earlier than it is, but we thank you for staying guests of the Member for Nelson, Paul Chatterton, who is the President of the Kingston Men's Shed, Craig Coventry, Treasurer of the Kingston's Men's Shed, Peter Harrison, Secretary, and Pam Harrison, who's a supporter, and they are the subject of the first special interest matter. It's my pleasure to call the Honourable Member for Nelson.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Kingston Men's Shed

[12.25 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Thank you, Mr President. I rise today with great pride to celebrate the Kingston Men's Shed, a wonderful community organisation in the electorate of Nelson. In particular to recognise the Men's Shed and its members for their contributions and impact in supporting men's mental health in the community. Here I will add my welcome to the Chamber, to Paul, Craig and Peter and to Pam who was here - has had to step out for a moment - hopefully will be back and hear some of it in person.

Madam Deputy President. The Kingston Men's Shed located in Gormley Drive, in Kingston. From its beginnings in 2006, the Kingston Men's Shed has grown over time into an active and much loved and valued part of the Kingston community.

Today, there are around 50 members ranging in age from 40 to 95 years, many of whom meet regularly at the shed to create, repair, learn new skills and work on projects for the community.

Members have constructed everything from chook houses to chess sets to furniture and regularly undertake projects for groups within the community such as Wildlife Safe Tasmania and for local schools. The Kingston Men Shed also provides an ongoing schools mentoring programme, with students regularly spending time at the shed each week and they host local aged care residents on three Tuesdays of each month.

Madam Deputy President, the shed is filled to the brim with all the tools and machines you could possibly need, but if you were to ask the members what makes the Kingston Men's Shed special, I suspect they would tell you the most important piece of equipment isn't a power tool at all. Members might say the most valuable resource offered at the Men's Shed is the tea, coffee and biscuit bar and the kettle. This little bar sits adjacent to a large table with half a dozen plastic garden chairs where any member is welcome to take a seat and just watch what's happening.

Provided, of course, he doesn't eat all the biscuits.

It is said that all the world's problems are frequently solved at this table with conversations, exchanging knowledge, lived experience, a joke or two, a bit of ribbing here and there. Morning tea is about much more than a break from the workbench. It provides an opportunity for members to check in with each other. Through conversations had at morning tea, friends can see who might be struggling in silence and offer their support.

We know how important these connections are for men's mental health, and it's partly because of their shared love of morning tea the Men's Shed's commitment to mateship and supporting men's mental health that the Kingston Men's Shed began hosting a very significant morning tea each year.

Members here will be familiar with the Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea initiative. very successful initiative. However, members may not be familiar with Australia's Biggest Morning Tea with a difference. You may be wondering what the difference is. Well, in 2023 Kingston Men Shed decided to put their own spin on the Cancer Council's initiative. Their catch cry at the shed was don't bring a plate, bring a mate.

The idea was very simple. Members were encouraged to donate to the Cancer Council what they might otherwise have spent on making a slice or a cake, and the shed would provide the tea, coffee and cakes. The important part was to bring a mate, a friend who might be interested in joining the shed, or someone who might simply benefit from knowing the shed exists. And of course, almost everyone who turned up in that first year generously did bring along a plate to share anyway, as well as a mate to show around.

Since their inaugural year in 2023 at the shed they have raised over \$3,000 for the Cancer Council, gained several new members and it is a morning members love and look forward to each year. The Kingston Men's Shed Biggest Morning Tea with a Difference gives members an opportunity to introduce their mates to the shed, to help spread the word about men's mental health and brings the wider community together in support of an important cause.

I attended this year on 11 June for the Biggest Morning Tea With a Difference and it was delightful. The place was packed to the rafters, but what struck me was how little fuss there was about it all. The invitation was simply to come along and have a cuppa, a bite to eat and spend some time with the guys.

I took a mate, my dad, along with me and we met with members, their partners, their friends and community members and got a real sense of what the Kingston Men's Shed was about. It was relaxed and welcoming and showed enormous value in sitting around a table with other people and simply having a conversation, enjoying the company, sharing stories and laughter. That's what true community is all about, and why I'm so pleased to acknowledge the Kingston Men's Shed in this place today.

I thank all members of the Kingston Men's Shed for what they do, the generosity that they show to the community, and especially for the way they continue to look out for one another.

I for one, will certainly be looking forward to the Biggest Morning Tea With a Difference next year at the Kingston Men's Shed.

Members - Hear, hear.

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