

# practical stories

## Myrtleford Men's Shed

*"I'll just go up to the Men's Shed and have a yarn".*

The Myrtleford Men's Shed was established with the help of Alpine Health just before the 2009 Black Saturday–Mudgegonga Beechworth bushfires affected local communities.

The Men's Shed is located in a building on the Myrtleford Hospital site and supports mature-aged men in the area. The Men's Shed received funding from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal to assist local men through the recovery process.

After the 2009 fires a need was identified for services to support men affected by the fires. In the words of the current Secretary/Treasurer of the shed, Clive Walker, "men were looking for somewhere they could sit down and talk, where somebody would listen without any pressure. Many men wanted to stand in front of the fires and keep their families and property safe. But for many in 2009 they tried but lost.



Image: Clive Walker

"In small country towns after a disaster it can be good to talk to locals who know who you are, what's been happening and who have been through similar experiences.

"A large percentage of the men at the shed have been CFA or SES volunteers, or farmers who have fought fires on their own properties or who have been DSE or council workers involved in fighting and recovering from fires.

"They are men who know what it is like to lose everything or half of everything, and what to do and how to get back on your feet.

"They know what it's like to feel ... *'I don't want to start all over again'* ... and wonder if this is the time to make the hard decisions about getting out.

"It can be equally important to talk to people who are outsiders who you don't ever have to see again—where information shared is kept very confidential.

"Depending on the day and how a man feels, he will want to talk to and cry with an absolute total stranger, or a local friend who will be there for the long haul.

"The 2013 Harrietville fires have reignited talk about fires. The smoke brings back the 2009 experiences and feelings," said Clive.

The Myrtleford Men's Shed continues to be a place where men can get together to talk and listen about fires and anything else that is happening.

### Further information

Myrtleford Men's Shed:

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Image: Clive Walker

Men's Sheds provide a place for men to meet and share experiences.