

Wellington City MenzShed benefits from Medibank grant

Every Wednesday a group of wrinkly Wellington blokes meet over a cuppa and put the world to rights. Other days they pick up power tools and hammers and make themselves useful repairing chairs for kindergartens and community groups.

Such are the goings on in the companionable environment of the Wellington City MenzShed. The organisation, which provides social contact and support for older men, is the one of the recipients of a grant from the Medibank Community Fund.

The Australian Health Services group has awarded grants totalling \$50,000 to four New Zealand community programmes that foster activities such as healthy living, physical activity and social inclusion. Wellington City MenzShed Secretary, John Shrapnell, says the organisation is delighted with the \$16,250 grant, which will help expand a service that is much needed.

“We’re there for any man who wants to find companionship, revive past skills and learn new skills. We hold ‘Grumpy Old Men’s’ sessions where we can rail against the world while sipping tea and eating stale biscuits. That helps get rid of some of the frustration but then next day we’re repainting stools for the kindergarten, repairing furniture for refugees or putting up shelves at a medical centre.”

Mr Shrapnell says the grant will pay for someone to manage the shed, in Haining Street, and allow it to open more often, to provide Wellington men with the social contact so many crave.

“Blokes from all walks of life and from all parts of the city come here. It’s great to see men, who have been isolated and lonely, blossom through meeting others, creating things and occasionally just having a good old curmudgeonly moan.”

Medibank General Manager New Zealand, Davis Lemke, says the grants are aimed at helping people

in the community to connect with and support one another, and live healthy lifestyles.

“As a health company, Medibank sees every day the stress families and individuals are placed under when someone becomes isolated or unwell. We hope the grants will help people be active, choose healthy and stay connected.”

The MenzShed is open to all Wellington men, but especially those in the older age group, who for many reasons, may be feeling isolated or alone.

We offer a place where you’ll find companionship, and a chance to revive your old skills, or learn new skills.

We help Kindergartens, Plunket, Refugee Services and other community groups by repairing and painting broken furniture. We have a great collection of tools. The workshop meets from 10 to about 1pm on Thursdays.

You don’t have to work at the MenzShed. On Wednesday afternoons there’s a Grumpy Old Men session from 1 to about 3 when we just sit around drinking coffee eating stale biscuits and moaning about the world in general.

Come and join us. You’re bound to find something that will interest you.