

REPORT ON VISIT TO CESSNOCK MEN'S SHED & COMMUNITY GARDENS

By Stephen Davis – Katoomba Men's Shed (KMS) member

- Contacted Peter Torenbeek by email prior to travelling to Cessnock regarding visit to their shed
- Visited on 14 October 2013 with uncle in law Eric
- Upon arrival we eventually found Peter, who then proceeded to introduce us to members of their Shed as we encountered them



Peter Torenbeek amongst the garden beds

- I was immediately astounded by the level of activity on their grounds. Some were working in the Gardens (about a dozen or so raised beds with treated pine borders – see image below), some on the aquaculture tanks and system, some working on mowers & other petrol driven equipment, one guy doing welding, about a dozen or so on woodworking tasks. A few were assembling a device for making twists in square steel section (up to 0.5 inch) cold (Metalcraft gear)



General view of garden beds

- I started to quiz Peter about their set up and how they got started. Some of the following may astound KMS members:
 - There is no joining fee
 - There is no day attendance fee
 - Annual membership fee is \$ 6
 - They normally open on Mondays & Thursdays with an average attendance on those days of about 40!!!
 - Their premises are on land own by the Hunter & New England Area Health Service. Due to this fact they share electricity and water on common circuits. This results in not having to pay for these
 - They we helped in their set up by the Samaritans charity group. This enabled substantially lower costs for insurance.
 -

- Peter said that they have about 100 financial members.
- They are or have been financially supported from grants from local Clubs via the gambling tax proceeds
- Their area is about one half that of the Katoomba Showground
- Have four (20 ft) shipping containers used as storage
- They have one metal lathe similar to the old one we have at Katoomba, & 3 wood lathes
- The metalworking area is about equal to the KMS main shed in floor area (see image below)



View of the metalworking area

- They have access to a second shed about one half in floor area terms of our main Shed at KMS
- Currently working on a second or replacement woodworking area shed about 2 times that of the main shed at KMS. The frame for this already exists from its previous use as a greenhouse
- Main woodworking activity is the making of parrot breeding boxes (see image below) and sell these (I saw about up to about 100 in total). In addition they make artists easels and just recently started on wooden name boards using a router parallel transfer mechanism from a template – quite impressive



Example of the parrot breeding boxes

- At 10 am morning tea was held for usual 35-45 members
 - Gold coin donation is expected
 - About half a dozen plates stacked with biscuits and cake slices was observed
 - Peter announces the morning tea with a flute or some sort of wooden wind instrument – got impression that time of morning tea is rigidly enforced by the men
 - Introduced Eric and myself as ‘special visitors’ and got a rousing cheer from the assembled group
- After morning tea we managed to observe the name board routing referred to above, then Eric & I left

Visit their website: www.cmescg.org.au PS No direct phone number to their Shed on site.

Images above obtained from their website or general Google search