



FREMANTLE MEN'S COMMUNITY SHED

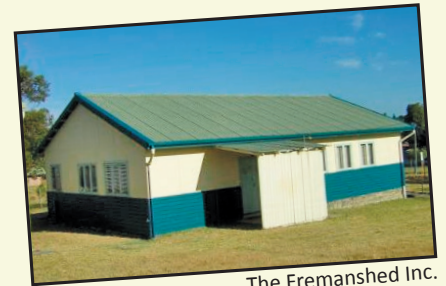
PEP Community Services

Proudly sponsors

FREMANSHED INC.

As part of the ongoing commitment by PEP Community Services Inc. to improve the wellbeing of disadvantaged people including those with disabilities, PEP has chosen to sponsor the Fremanshed Inc. This Men's Shed in Fremantle provides a "tooled up" workshop environment for men of all ages and stages. As part of the shed's commitment towards adding value to the community, it also supports men who are experiencing a range of psycho-social issues such as isolation, loneliness, low self-esteem and unemployment. The Men's Shed has links to many agencies, such as PEP Community Services who can provide further assistance to men seeking advice or support for issues such as relationship difficulties and anger management.

Here at PEP we are constantly touched by the stories of men whose lives have been transformed through the work of the Fremanshed Inc. PEP Community Services has seen for ourselves the change Fremanshed Inc. has made in so many lives. Read this compelling story below to see how your contributions can assist to make a difference to the operations of this life-changing hands on program.



The Fremanshed Inc.



One of the many workshops at The Fremanshed Inc.

Meet Bob...



A night in front of the television, back in 1995, was just what Bob was looking forward to after a long day repairing and building windscreens down in the marine yard. Kicked back in his favourite arm chair, Bob sat glued to the television.

Disgruntled that the TV suddenly blacked out, well at least that's what Bob first assumed, Bob got up to investigate the problem. Quickly realizing though that the problem was not the television, rather something more drastic – something had happened to his left eye - he had no vision. Quite alarmed, Bob called for help and was immediately taken to the doctors.

Over the next few days, an eye specialist consulted with Bob, finally diagnosing the problem as burst blood vessels at the back of his eye. This caused serious complications for Bob leaving him with only 5% vision in his left eye to this day.

Prior to his sudden loss of vision in his left eye, Bob was diagnosed at the age of 25, following a struggle as a child with Pseudoxanthoma elasticum (PXE). PXE is an inherited disorder that causes select elastic tissue in the body to become mineralised, that is, calcium and other minerals are deposited in the tissue causing bleeding from several points in the stomach and or intestines. PXE can be life-threatening and for Bob there were many times an ambulance was called. Faced also with a battle with Chronic Fatigue, Bob was forced to retire from work and apply for a Disability Support Pension. Approaching only 30 years old, this was hard for a once very fit man to accept. As time progressed the PXE worsened, which was the reason for the loss of his eyesight in his left eye years later.

Homeswest helped to place Bob in a home in Kensington. Everything had a place and Bob went about life as normally as he could. Bob spent most days in the woodwork shop at the Association for the Blind of WA. Bob loved filling his days working on an array of projects.

As time progressed the sight in his right eye also began to deteriorate (5% vision) so a move into a more visually-impaired friendly environment was necessary. Homeswest helped to move Bob into a suitable unit in his beloved hometown of Fremantle.

This move meant that Bob could not access the woodwork shop everyday as the journey there by public transport would take 1.5 hours. Bob grieved the company of the woodwork team. He missed working with wood, as ever since his boyhood Bob had walked in the shadows of his Dad who taught him the art of making things. This was just another disappointment for Bob.

A year and a half went by without the interaction he used to share at the Association for the Blind of WA. However a trip to the local barbers in the Fremantle region saw his days brighten up once again. The barber told Bob of a local "blokes shed" in the Fremantle region. Bob contacted the Fremantle Council who informed Bob of The Fremanshed Inc, its location and operating times. That was 1.5 years ago. Bob is now a permanent feature of the shed!

For Bob the Fremanshed Inc. is a place of belonging. It's a place where he has cultivated mate-ship and an opportunity to continue with his childhood love of woodwork. Bob is also part of a gardening crew that operates from the Shed. For a small cost the member's mow, tidy up and maintain gardens for the elderly. Bob is a much admired member of the Shed. Other members often come to him for woodworking advice. Bob is able to tell you the intricacies of each piece of work by his valued sense of touch, and is quick to point out any hollows or lumps that still need attention!

The Fremanshed Inc. has been a remarkable lifeline for Bob- and he's thankful for the trip to the barber's that day!

In order that the FREMANSHED Inc. continues its operations we NEED your support!

Holidaying in New South Wales, Bill Johnstone (co-founder) had a chance encounter with a men's community shed in Nambucca. He was struck by the potential a community shed might have in his own home town, the historic port of Fremantle, Western Australia. After a discussion with his close friend Alan Gowland, a TAFE Building and Construction lecturer both agreed that men in the Fremantle area could benefit from having a "tooled up" shed facility to work on projects – their own or community ones. Both men, together with a committee of 12 local men helped to establish the first metropolitan shed in Western Australia. The Fremanshed Inc. opened in January 2005. Currently over 340 community sheds exist throughout Australia.

Four years later, Fremanshed Inc. measures its success by an ever-increasing membership of men who take pride in sharing their skills and passing them on to the wider Fremantle community. Skills such as woodwork, metalwork, and computer literacy are developed. All projects are based entirely on recycling.

Over time Fremanshed Inc. has developed into a hub for men from diverse backgrounds. A priority focus for the shed has become men's health and well-being. The shed has assisted men from all walks of life including retired, unemployed, single-parent fathers, and isolated men. The Fremanshed Inc. has become a catalyst for involving men ranging in age from 9 to 90 with their community. It has helped to foster men's self esteem, create "active" social networks and worked on creating valued roles in society, particularly for men who have become disengaged with their community. These active social relationships have enhanced the health and well-being of countless men in ways that formal learning environments did not. These engagements have assisted in protecting against physical and emotional sickness including stress, depression and mental illness.



Bill Johnstone & Alan Gowland

The AIMS of Fremanshed Inc. are to:

- Provide a workshop space for men of all ages to do projects that can benefit both themselves and the community.
- Link men in the community to services and support structures to enhance their health and well-being
- Foster, maintain and expand men's social and educational networks



Men at work



Men play, talk and support each other in the Fremanshed Inc.