



Having a voice: Left to right: Mike King (Mt Druitt shed co-ordinator), UWS professor John Macdonald with interim Blackheath board members, Michael Brogan, David O'Brien (front) and Tony Jacques. Photo: Gary Moloney.

Blackheath gets a shed load

The community of Blackheath has formed its own Men's Shed in next to no time, demonstrating a true sense of community.

Spokesperson Tony Jacques said the volunteer-run organisation formed in less than six weeks and already has a steering committee of 20 people and more than 50 members.

Mr Jacques said the Blackheath Men's Shed, supported by Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, is based in a property owned by Blackheath Baptist Church at 8 Bundarra Street (Old Lilly's Place).

Mr Jacques said the property needed a little bit of work, which would be the foundation project for members.

"There has already been over-

whelming support from the community," he said.

"Without the committee asking anyone, donations of white goods and some cash started to turn up and our friends at Katoomba Men's Shed donated a lathe, a drill press, power tools and toolboxes.

"This will be a place where men will not be judged but befriended, where religion, politics and prejudice can stay outside at the gate.

"We already have men with skills in the law, project management, OH&S, woodturning, building, cooking, gardening, information technology and many other areas, but we need more.

"Australia leads the world in the Men's Shed philosophy, with more than 600 sheds estab-

lished to date."

The sheds are widely recognised as a major contributor to men's health and are vigorously backed by Beyond Blue and the Federal Government.

The movement's motto is "men don't talk face to face, they talk shoulder to shoulder."

Blackheath Men's Shed held a brainstorming meeting two weeks ago attended by 60 people including Professor John Macdonald, director of the Men's Health and Resource Centre at the University of Western Sydney and a patron of the Men's Shed Association.

It will officially open on Monday, October 29 at 2pm with a special celebration. To find out more about the Men's Shed movement in Australia, visit www.mensshed.org.

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