

# How are Your Men? Projects Relevant to Canterbury Men's Needs and Wishes

by Donald Pettitt, Canterbury Men's Centre, September 2011

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## Purpose:

This document was written to define appropriate responses for projects to support men in Canterbury in light of the 2010/2011 earthquakes. It follows from the Canterbury Men's Centre's (CMC) "How are your men?" research carried out in August 2011.

## *What should be happening for (Canterbury)men that isn't?*

The following table and list are copied the "How are Your Men?" research. It is an indication of the needs as perceived by a range of health and community workers.

# of Respondents	Need	Theme
5	A	Men's health/social info
4	B	Men's groups
3	C	Men's sheds
3	D	More Support/Counselling
3	E	Alcohol Messages
2	F	Networking Groups
2	G	Help for men to set up projects
2	H	Training for young men
2	I	Something to "cross the gap" for older men (denying need)

One respondent referred to each of the following; J-Stress Management info/workshop, K-Budgeting and Financial info, L-Respite out of town, M-Spiritual self-care, N-Coaching to be better fathers, O-Focus on families (not just the individual), P-Mentoring between young and old, Q-more community events.

**Projects:** Proposed programmes were suggested by respondents, are some cases already in development, and in others are continuation of models that existed in Canterbury prior to the recent civil defence emergencies. When we are aware of research about relevant models we mention them.

1. **“The blokes Book 2”** stages one and two: a second edition of a booklet recently produced by the CMC, based on a template from Tasmania. The needs that this project would support to be filled include A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I
2. **Asian Blokes Book** to be done in a partnership between Partnership Health Canterbury and CMC.
3. **Men’s Groups.** Activity based groups in local settings. A, B, D, F, I, M, P, Q
4. **Men’s Sheds** is an Australian model (see Footnote 1) that had significant traction across Canterbury prior to the earthquakes but has stalled despite community interest. Needs A, B, C, D, F, G, H, I, J, M, P, Q
5. **Isolated Men’s Well-being** was suggested by a male client of the CMC. He asked us to make it easy for men to find groups of particular interest to men (wood turning, men’s sheds, hunting clubs,...). Needs include B, C, D, F, I, J, L, M, P, Q
6. **Young Men: Apprenticeship training** H
7. **Tane Ora: Maori Men’s Health and Well-being** A, B, C, E, F, G, I
8. **Appetite for Life: for men** A, B, C, E, I

In the proposals below the Canterbury Men’s Centre has either a leadership role or a partnership role in seeing that the projects are established. Though some of the projects include a health theme, our focus as an agency are social interventions leading to better outcomes for men in both the well-being and the health areas.

### *The blokes Book 2 Project (BB2):*

Background: Men are less likely than women to have a basic knowledge of existing social and health services and doorways/ways to engage with those services. Many of the workers that will come into Canterbury over the next ten years will be even more ignorant of local services.

The Ministry of Social Development in December 2011 funded the CMC to produce a booklet called “The blokes’ Book” that has been effective at addressing this gap. The 20,000 booklets produced have been distributed and the CMC have pre-orders for 10,000 more and need funding to complete the next stage. The MSD declined a further funding request due to their focus being on establishment funding for projects.

Project Plan: This project involves two stages. The **first stage** is production of “The blokes’ Book 2” (BB2). Though well regarded, the first version requires some additions:

- A national mental health page (supported by the Mental health Foundation).
- A more comprehensive second page for Maori/Tane Ora. The current page had only limited information and has a range of supporters to do a more inclusive list in BB2.
- A page for men that experienced childhood trauma (sexual and domestic violence) as these issues have come forward for many men since the earthquakes.
- Men's Shed page.

The **second stage** involves distributing the booklet and would require a community development worker to do this. If we only complete the first stage we will be able to slowly roll the booklet out across Canterbury, but more likely it would be over a three year period. Having a worker focussed on this means that the rest of our staff can manage the additional workload associated with support requests and that the booklets will also be reaching men that are in harder to reach situations (rural, Maori/Pacifica/ethnic, lower socioeconomic).

Costing: (this information is internal to the Canterbury Men's Centre)

Partners: We have over 100 different agencies, general practices and agencies that plan to have the booklet on display. In addition the CDHB Community Health Information Centre expects to continue actively promoting the book in their role.

Expected Duration: stage 1 is 4 weeks of 32 hour/week, stage 2 is 52 weeks at 24 hours per week

Sustainability: Once the template of "The blokes' Book is completed it will require minimal updates for the occasional update. The CMC will have the final artwork, and has the software required continuing this project as part of its regular work in the community. The printing costs so far for this project have been very easy to find funders for and should be for the occasional reprint.

### *Asian Blokes' Book:*

Background: Asian men rarely come to the attention of health and social services but are recognised as a particularly vulnerable grouping in health outcomes. Partnership Health Canterbury (PHC) has asked to use the template produced by the Canterbury Men's Centre to target groupings of Asian men with Chinese and Korean as the initial point of focus.

Project Plan: PHC has already started the translation process. Printing costs will be provided by \*\*\*\*. Distribution/promotion of the booklet will be arranged by the PHC worker currently working on this project. The booklets will be distributed to relevant focal points in the community and used by PHC for its health promotion work for an indeterminate time.

Costing: Costing for printing is yet to be defined. PHC is already paying for a worker in this role. Funding for printing will be sourced from pub charities and the CMC will complete the project using internal funding. This project may require professional translation support which could require external funding.

Partners: The Partnership Health Canterbury team has expressed a keen interest in translating and distributing the booklet. They currently have a health promoter working with Asian groupings. Christchurch Resettlement Services has expressed some interest as well.

Duration: This project will accomplish its goals in the first 12 months.

Sustainability: PHC's capacity to continue promotion after this time frame would be dependent on issues outside its control. However, CMC could support another champion of the relevant communities should one arise.

### *Men's Groups:*

Background: The "How are your men?" survey found a significant belief that men need and would respond to more "men's groups" in their local community. Christchurch based research in 2009 found that there was an interest in men in the focus suburb, that men didn't involve themselves with many of the other community opportunities, and that they expressed an interest in being involved in such groups (see Research Footnote 3). The "men's groups" mentioned by the respondents are activity based (walks, trips to museums, garden tours).

The community centres around Canterbury often find themselves short on the skillbase required to form a men's group, and many of their key employees feel they can't be involved as they are women, hence the need for outside input.

Canterbury has a track record of forming these types of groups. The CMC has recently had expressions of interest from a range of parties to help form such groups, or to invigorate existing ones. Requests have come from Hei Hei, Lyttelton, Woolston, and Addington but we have had to avoid doing the larger work involved in supporting local communities to set them up.

Another men's group model that is ready to be developed is "Fat Boys Fitness" (FBF). Chris Mene, a well-known local health worker/advocate describes his project as the following;

#### **Fat Boys Fitness**

'Fat Boys' began as a concept over a couple of quiet beers with a mate who had arrived from Australia in late 2008. My wife and I had just closed down our fitness centre which we had built up and run for three years. I was looking for something to continue practicing my coaching and training interest and, to cut a long story short, 'Fat Boys Fitness' was born.

The basic premise is that guys will tend to get into regular fitness if they are:

- Training with (responsible to) one or more other guys
- Playing games with (a tolerable amount of) structured fitness
- Getting to give (and get) some stick as and when deserved

After beginning in April 2009 with half a dozen guys there are now over 20 who are attending on a regular basis.

Where? - We run 'Fat Boys' from school and community gyms and outdoors in parks.

Who? - Dads from school, and their mates and work colleagues (as long as they're good sorts!)

When? - 6am-7am on Mondays and Fridays during school time

What do we do? - Soccer, Basketball, touch rugby, boxing, core and circuit exercises. Go out for a dinner once a term.

Why do we do it? - Because its fun, a wee bit challenging, and good for us  
How to start and sustain the programme? - Get someone keen to coordinate and facilitate the sessions then find a bunch of guys who are keen. Get a place, some gear and away you go...

Project Plan: This project requires a **Community Development Worker**. They would;

- Liaise with the communities that have already expressed an interest, and make other groups aware of this opportunity
- Identify and resolve barriers to the development of groups including finding volunteers, producing relevant posters, developing relevant activities/programmes based on the experience of other groups
- Promote the groups in the wider community, ensuring that they are covered in local newspapers and relevant community databases/noticeboards

Costing: (this information is internal to the Canterbury Men's Centre)

Partners: The various existing men's groups would be partners, and we would also be working alongside the various community centres, schools, and any other parties that have an interest and are positioned to form a relevant group.

Expected Duration: 12 months, 24 hours per week.

Sustainability: The groups that are started will be self-lead and supported by local community groups. Costs are minimal and met by participants with volunteers providing the limited required support. The groups based around a community centre are seen as one of their day to day projects that they fulfil.

### *Men's Sheds Project:*

Background: Men are more likely to experience social isolation than women. Men that are leaving the workplace (retirement, redundancy, and health reasons), and blue collar workers are more vulnerable to poor outcomes due to a lack of engagement with social settings. Men's sheds are seen as a successful model for re-involving men and have the potential to act as a platform to re-engage men in the community and as volunteers with a range of practical skills (see Research Footnote 2 and 3). Men's sheds could be a useful setting in the case of future civil defence emergencies from which to organise practical support for local communities.

Monthly access of the CMC Eldernet internet men's shed pages tripled after the February earthquake to 96 visits per month (see below).

There have been 601 page views for **Men's Shed Hub** in the last 12 months.  
Below are the statistics for your Eldernet listed services.

- [Community Groups](#) Total: **601** page views

20	32	23	11	20	72	69	56	43	61	98	96
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
2010				2011							

Yours,  
The Eldernet Team  
<http://www.eldernet.co.nz/>

The Canterbury Men's Centre has supported the range of existing men's sheds groups in the following way;

- Provide a monthly (currently bi-monthly) forum for sheds to meet up
- Act as a connection place for men to find others in their area interested in starting a shed
- Provide basic community development support to have an initial community meeting
- Include any shed in promotional material (the [www.menssheds.org.nz](http://www.menssheds.org.nz) site and the Canterbury Menz Sheds flyer)

The CMC recognises that it underprovides to the existing groups and that they need significant further support to establish themselves as operating sheds. Current pressure on the CMC services due to the aftermath of the earthquakes mean that without added support we won't be able to give these projects the extra support they need to thrive and in some cases to recover.

Project Plan: This project requires a **Community Development Worker**. They would

- Help the existing sheds to define and overcome barriers in their projects or opportunities for expansion.
- Foster the development of further sheds by reaching reach out to groups that have expressed interest but haven't had the practical support they need to start (Sydenham, Sumner, Woolston, Ferrymead, Avonside, Avonhead, Lyttelton, have all expressed interest by local champions).
- Find other platforms and suburbs for sheds to develop. The Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Trust has expressed interest in having a shed, and we suspect there is special potential to develop this model with local Maori agencies/ groupings.
- Promote men's sheds generally in Canterbury by using the CMC range of media contacts, pamphlets and other distribution networks.
- Update the recently developed Men's Shed flyer to represent the current information

Partners: The existing men's sheds, as well as any other groupings we can find around the city. The impetus for sheds often comes from church communities and community drop-in support centres and we have range of interested parties.

Expected Duration: 1 year at 3 days per week.

Costing: (this information is internal to the Canterbury Men's Centre)

Sustainability: The created men's sheds will be standalone projects, designed to be sustained by local support. They will be independent bodies, possibly under the auspices of a local community group or church. The experience in Australia is that men's sheds are self-funding or are dependent on only limited funding, and that this can be part of their charm for the men involved.

### *Isolated Men's Well-being Project: Project for CMC*

Background: Isolated men have been identified by a range of providers as being a particularly vulnerable group, both before and after the earthquake. This problem existed before the earthquakes with men's work roles being disproportionately affected by the recession. Anecdotally men experiencing social isolation are drawn in to alcohol abuse, family violence, depression and other mental health issues (men can also be isolated because of these behaviours). Men particularly at risk are blue collar workers, retired, displaced, ex-prison inmates, bereaved, carers, separated and lower income.

This project has been suggested by a male client, saying that he doesn't want to be told how to take care of himself. He wants to know more about the fun things available to him so he has something to look forward to. When the CMC asked other men if they would benefit from this programme they seemed quite interested overall, and started making suggestions about listings.

This project would involve production of a listing/flyer, and promotion of it through existing community and health networks. Service clubs such as Probus, the Lions, and the Freemasons would also be seen as excellent places from which to promote and distribute this resource. It would also be partnered with the "Blokes Book 2" project which will involve promotion of both resources in community settings (A and P shows etc).

Project Plan: This project requires the retention of a **Community Development Worker** to;

- compile a succinct but ranging listing (estimated 40 listings)
- prepare a flyer
- present to the community groups in the list and enlist their support to distribute the resource
- collecting corrections suggestions for a second (final) version and prepare for print/publication.

Partners: The various groups that will benefit from the promotion of their work, as well as their members. The boarder community sector

Expected Duration: 9 months, 16 hours per week

Costing: (this information is internal to the Canterbury Men's Centre)

### *Young Men: Apprenticeship training*

The expansion of apprenticeship training programmes are being supported by the New Zealand government and as such appear to be well on their way.

### *Tane Ora: Maori Men's Health and Well-being*

An effort has been put into local Maori men's health and well-being over the past year with the support of the CMC. One significant project has resulted. Recently, the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB), Community and Public Health team have assigned a worker to coordinate projects for men, with a focus on Maori men.

### *Appetite for Life: for men*

The CDHB runs a health course for women that are experiencing lifestyle related negative health outcomes. The CMC has been engaging with them for three years over the inclusion of men on this programme and we have recently taken a more active approach to encourage the CDHB to include men in this (or a similar) programme. 1,000 women are expected to do the course this year with 3500 having done it in the last 5 years.

## **Research Footnotes:**

1. "How are your men?" posted on the [www.canmen.org.nz](http://www.canmen.org.nz) site. by Donald Pettitt
2. "Men's sheds—a strategy to improve men's health",  
[http://10thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/papers/docs/Misan\\_Gary\\_D7.pdf](http://10thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/papers/docs/Misan_Gary_D7.pdf)
3. "Men's Health and Wellbeing in New Zealand: Hei Hei/ Broomfield Men's research",  
<http://nzmenshealth.org.nz/research/hei-hei-broomfield-men%E2%80%99s-research/> by Bernard McMillan