



Men's Learning and Wellbeing Research to August 2011

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Researching Adult and Community Education (RAVE)

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- **Completed and ongoing research related to men's learning & wellbeing is summarized on http://www.adieh.com.au/cb_pages/projects.php**
- **Completed and ongoing research related to men's sheds is available on the AMSA website <http://www.mensshed.org/page16994/Research.aspx>**

RAVE's research interest in men's learning and wellbeing came out of a series of research projects undertaken in Victoria, Australia since 2002 for the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board. *Men's Sheds in Australia: Learning through community contexts* (2007) was our NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education research)-funded national study of informal learning through community-based men's sheds in Australia. That research included surveys and interviews in 25 men's sheds across five Australian States. The wider suite of research on equity in community-based contexts since the late 1990s (see reference list below of 2007-11 publications) has helped inform ongoing Australian & international research into men's learning and wellbeing in community contexts.

RAVE's (2009) research (detailed later) had two major Australian strands:

- *Men's learning and wellbeing through community organisations in Western Australia*, funded by the Western Australia Department of Education & Training (WADET), including research sites in Perth, the Great Southern Region and the Gascoyne.
- *Senior men's learning and wellbeing through community participation in Australia*, funded by National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC) and the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, including urban, regional, rural and remote research sites in South Australia, New South Wales & Tasmania.

Acknowledgements

RAVE acknowledges the generous cooperation of volunteers as informants in our research, as well as the pioneering research work in this field by many individuals and organizations. Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) manages the web site www.mensshed.org that lists all community men's sheds in Australia and other useful community shed-related information including forthcoming events and conferences, back copies of AMSA newsletters, a freecall number 1300 550 009 and Australian regional and state AMSA contacts. David Helmers amsa@mensshed.net is the 2011 AMSA contact. Community shed-based organisations can check, update and supply their organisation details on the free, community-based shed web site www.mensshed.org. AMSA membership is open to all sheds. Based on experiences of many shed start-ups, an

AMSA-supported manual is available on *Setting up a Men's Shed*. The price is A\$25 (+\$10 p&p) available from AMSA. Also see the many links on Men's Shed Online, launched on 13 Dec 2010. <http://www.theshedonline.org.au/about>

The first National Men's Shed Conference was in 2005 in Lakes Entrance, Victoria; the second in Manly (Sydney, New South Wales) in 2007 and the third in Hobart, Tasmania in August 2009. The 2011 AMSA Conference was held in Brisbane, Queensland 21-23 August with 360 participants. By that date there were 600 men's shed organisations across all states and territories of Australia, with around 30 also in New Zealand and 30 in Ireland, with three Men in Sheds projects being funded for two years through Age UK in England and at least two sheds open in Canada. At the 2011 Conference a decision was made to set up an International Federation of Men's Sheds Associations.

In 2008/9 the Victorian State government announced government grants through the Department of Planning and Community Development for many new sheds in Victoria: the first government in the world to provide specific support (A\$4 million over four years) directly to community-based men's sheds. The Victorian Governor, Professor David de Kretzer is the Victorian Men's Sheds Association Patron. The Australian Men's Health Policy Strategy has recently identified men's sheds as an important community health innovation, and Adult Learning Australia regards them as an important national innovation in informal learning for men. During 2010 the Australian Government provided four years of funding (A\$3.3 million) through the Department of Health and Ageing for the national coordination of sheds through the Australian Men's Sheds Association. The first 20 sheds received federal funding in Feb 2011.

Our research report *Men's sheds in Australia: learning through community contexts*, (2007, NCVER) and the 'Supporting documents' are available free for download (www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1780.html). While the emphasis in this community shed-based research has mainly been on the informal learning function of sheds, it provides a carefully researched profile of the range of men who participate, for what sorts of reasons and what they are getting out of it. The outcomes include health, happiness and wellbeing as well as informal learning. Our research report has already been useful to shed-based organizations, governments and auspice organizations that plan, mentor, auspice and support men's sheds in community contexts. Our aim in 2011-12 is to progressively extend some of our research and findings to other organisations, communities and nations where learning and wellbeing are recognised as a problem for some men, particularly for men not in paid work, and where the wellbeing value of informal, community-based lifelong and lifewide learning is sometimes not recognised or valued.

Our national and international research to 2010 'Men's learning and wellbeing: Beyond the workplace'

In 2008 we undertook reconnaissance for a collaborative national and international, field-based study that aims to investigate and compare men's attitudes towards (and experiences) of learning, and in particular non-formal and informal learning, in different cultural, national and regional contexts. The intention of our 2009 research, through the WA DET and NSPAC research projects in Australia was to identify and study contexts where men of various ages, cultural, economic and social backgrounds were already learning informally and non-formally through community organisations. The purpose was to analyse the nature and benefits of that engagement in learning beyond the workplace to the wellbeing of the men, their families and communities. The overall aim was to find out

what is attractive, common and different about group settings that work for men, including but not restricted to men not in paid work, to identify better ways to engage and benefit men in learning through active community involvement and informal learning beyond the workplace.

This research into men's learning through informal community contexts is one of the outcomes of our Australian research into men's learning and community men's sheds. The research is considered timely and of interest to nations experiencing one or more of the following:

- Concerns about men's attitudes to and involvement in formal, lifelong, community and adult learning.
- Concerns about wellbeing and health for the growing proportion of men not involved in the paid workforce (unemployed, working voluntarily, retired or with a disability).
- Pessimism about the value of formal training for re-integrating displaced males into the workforce and downturns in the global economy.
- Perceptions that skill shortages may be associated with some men's early withdrawal from the workforce, ageing in regional and rural communities and retirement.

Informal learning contexts and organizations we are particularly interested in

- Adult and community education
- Volunteer fire and emergency services
- Sporting
- Religious or culturally diverse / Indigenous
- Disability, age-related and institutional
- Men's social and special interest organizations

Research questions that are guiding our international research

- What shapes men's attitudes towards the learning beyond the workplace?
- How are these attitudes affected by location, class, culture and men's different masculinities?
- Which informal, group learning environments, contexts and community organizations engage men not involved in paid work, for what reasons and with what outcomes?
- What is the relationship between informal group affiliation and learning in community contexts, and the wellbeing of men, their families and communities?
- What learning roles do different types of community organization play and what are the preferred pedagogies (ways of learning)?
- What can be done to positively re-engage other men in learning through community engagement?

Who has been involved before 2011?

- *Australia:* Professor Barry Golding and Dr Annette Foley, University of Ballarat, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia.
- *UK:* Dr Rob Mark, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland.
- *Republic of Ireland:* John Evoy, Wexford VEC, Ireland.

Research Plans for 2011-12

During 2010 visits and meetings took place with researchers in or from several European Union nations (Greece, Portugal and three Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland and Sweden) as well as in Ireland and the UK to investigate whether there is interest in research collaboration to create new research teams and sites to inform the research. In 2011-12 other researchers and sites are being added in the Asian and Pacific region. Research sites being visited during 2011 include Samoa, New Zealand, Finland, Ireland, Scotland, England, Portugal and Greece

Other researchers joining the network or contributing in some way to Phase 2:

- *Australia:* Dr Ai Jing a.jing@ballarat.edu.au who has plans to do some research in China.
- *Ireland:* **John Evoy**, johnevoy@cowexfordVEC.ie Waterford. John is AMSA representative in Europe as well as the Caretaker of the Irish Men's Shed Association.
- *Finland:* **Arja Mielonen-Walker** arja.mielonen-walker@helsinki.fi Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, University of Helsinki.
- *England:* **Jim Soulsby** jim.soulsby@btinternet.com Leicester & Dr Peter Lavender peterlavender@yahoo.co.uk NIACE, Leicester; Harvinder Channa Harvinder.Channa@ageuk.org.uk Age UK, London.
- *Greece:* **Assistant Prof George Zarifis** gzarifis@edlit.auth.gr Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- *Portugal:* **António Fragoso** ESEC (Escola Superior de Educação e Comunicação) Universidade do Algarve, Campus da Penha, Faro, Portugal aalmeida@ualg.pt & Paula Guimaraes.
- *New Zealand:* **Prof Brian Findsen** bfindsen@waikato.ac.nz and University of Waikato, Hamilton & Dr Neil Bruce nb001_wave@ihug.co.nz Hamilton.
- *Samoa:* National University of Samoa: **Dr Malama Meleisea** malamameleisa@yahoo.com.au

University of Ballarat RAVE research, primarily about men's learning 2007-10

2007

- 'Old dogs, new shed tricks: An exploration of innovative workshop-based practice for older men in Australia', B. Golding, M. Brown & A. Foley, Refereed Paper to AVETRA Conference, 11-13 April 2007, Melbourne, Victoria.
- *Men's sheds in Australia: learning through community contexts*, B. Golding, M. Brown, A. Foley, J. Harvey & L. Gleeson, NCVET, Adelaide, South Australia, 2007. www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1780.html
- 'Social, local and situated: evidence and insights from Australian research into the effectiveness of older men's learning in community contexts', B. Golding, Paper to Second Nordic Conference on Adult Learning, 17-19 April 2007, Linköping University, Sweden.
- 'Researching men's sheds in community contexts in Australia: What does it tell us about education for older men?' B. Golding, Paper CASAE-ACEEA, Mount St Vincent University, 6-9 June 2007, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- 'Older men's lifelong learning: common threads/sheds', B. Golding, Paper to CRL Conference, 22-24 June 2007, University of Stirling, Scotland. (2009 Book Chapter)
- 'Shedding some new light on gender: Evidence about informal learning preferences from Australian men's sheds in community contexts', B. Golding, A. Foley & M. Brown, Paper to SCUTREA Conference, 3-5 July 2007, The Queen's University of Belfast, Ireland.
- 'The international potential for men's shed based learning', B. Golding, A. Foley & M. Brown *Ad Lib*, *Journal of Continuing Liberal Adult Education*, University of Cambridge, Issue 34, December, pp.9-13, 2007.

2008

- ‘Houses and sheds: An exploration of the genesis and growth of neighborhood houses and men’s sheds in community settings’, B. Golding, H. Kimberley, A. Foley and M. Brown, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 48: 2, pp.237-262, 2008.
- ‘‘They’re funny bloody cattle’: Encouraging rural men to learn’, P. Vallance & B. Golding, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 48:2, pp.369-384. (Reflection). 2008.
- ‘Shedding school early: Insights from school & community shed collaboration in Australia’, B. Golding, A. Foley & M. Brown, Refereed Paper to AVETRA Conference, Adelaide, 3-4 April, 2008.
- ‘Let the men speak: health, friendship, community and shed therapy’, A. Foley, B. Golding & M. Brown, Refereed Paper to AVETRA Conference, Adelaide, South Australia, 3-4 April 2008.
- ‘Researching men’s sheds in community contexts in Australia: What does it suggest about adult education for older men?’ B. Golding, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 14 (1) Spring, pp.17-33, 2008.
- ‘Learning by men not in work: A review of research’, B. Golding, Refereed Paper to (in Proceedings of) Fifth International Lifelong Learning Conference, Yeppoon, Queensland, 17-19 June 2008.
- ‘How men are worked with: gender roles in men’s informal learning’, B. Golding & A. Foley, Refereed Paper to SCUTREA Conference, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 2-4 July 2008.
- ‘Common wealth through community men’s sheds: lives and learning networks beyond work’, B. Golding, Paper to Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, University of London, England, 14-17 July, 2008.
- ‘Out the back: men’s sheds and informal learning’, M. Brown, B. Golding & A. Foley, *Fine Print* 31(2) pp.12-15, 2008.

2009

- ‘Informal learning: A discussion around defining and researching its depth and breadth’, B. Golding, M. Brown & A. Foley, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 49 (1) April, pp.34-56, 2009.
- ‘Older men’s lifelong learning: common threads/sheds’, B. Golding, in J. Field, J. Gallagher & R. Ingram, *Researching transitions in lifelong learning*, Milton Park, Routledge, pp.65-75, 2009.
- ‘Shifting the locus/ts: Evidence and insights into academic power and knowledge from recent Australian adult, vocational and community education research’, B. Golding, A. Foley & M. Brown, Paper to AVETRA Conference, Sydney 16-17 April, 2009.
- *Senior men’s learning and wellbeing through community participation in Australia*, B. Golding, A. Foley, M. Brown & J. Harvey, Report to National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre, University of Ballarat, October.
<http://archimedes.ballarat.edu.au:8080/vital/access/HandleResolver/1959.17/16450>
or <http://www.productiveageing.com.au/site/publications.php>
- *Men’s Learning and wellbeing through community organisations in Western Australia*, B. Golding, M. Brown, A. Foley & J. Harvey, Report to the Western Australia Department of Education and Training, University of Ballarat, October. Available via <http://archimedes.ballarat.edu.au:8080/vital/access/HandleResolver/1959.17/16443>

2010

- ‘Making good connections: How community participation enriches learning, wellbeing and a sense of identity in older men’, Report based on a 2009 NSPAC study by B. Golding, A. Foley, M. Brown & J. Harvey by E. Skladzien & S. O’Dwyer, National Seniors Australia Productive Ageing Centre, Canberra, Feb 2010.
<http://archimedes.ballarat.edu.au:8080/vital/access/HandleResolver/1959.17/16465>

- ‘Beyond the workplace: An investigation into older men’s learning and wellbeing in Northern Ireland’, R. Mark, V. Montgomery & H. Graham, Report for the Changing Ageing Partnership (CAP), Queen’s University Belfast, Feb 2010, <http://archimedes.ballarat.edu.au:8080/vital/access/HandleResolver/1959.17/16457>
- ‘Drying and perceptions of climate change: Insights from a Riverina site in the Southern Murray-Darling Basin’, B. Golding, Paper No. 35 to AVETRA Conference, 8-9 April 2010, Gold Coast, Queensland.
- ‘Learning at the end of the rainbow: A study of community learning availability & outcomes for older men in an Australian regional community’, B. Golding, Paper No. 36 to AVETRA Conference, 8-9 April 2010, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia
- ‘The big picture on men’s (and boy’s) learning’, April 2010, B. Golding *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 50:1, pp.54-74.
- ‘Men learning about communication and wellbeing through community involvement: Evidence from an empirical Australian study’, B. Golding, Paper to Conference of the European Society for Research into the Education of Adults (ESREA), 23-26 Sept, Linköping, Sweden.
- ‘What learning experiences and outcomes are valued by older men in Australia?’ B. Golding, Paper to Conference of the European Society for Research into the Education of Adults (ESREA) Network on Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA), 7-9 Oct, Munich, Germany.
- ‘What factors influence older men’s learning and wellbeing through community organisations in Australia?’ B. Golding, Paper to Conference of the European Society for Research into the Education of Adults (ESREA) Network on Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA), 7-9 Oct, Munich, Germany.
- ‘Crossing over: Collaborative cross-cultural teaching of Indigenous education in a higher education context’, S. Morgan & B. Golding, *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 39S: 8-14.

To date, 2011

- Golding, B. (2011) ‘Social, local, and situated: Recent findings about the effectiveness of older men’s informal learning in community contexts’, *Adult Education Quarterly* 61:2, pp.102-120.
- Golding, B. (2011) ‘Men’s informal learning and wellbeing beyond the workplace’, Book Chapter in *Innovations in Lifelong Learning*, (ed. Sue Jackson), Birkbeck Institute, University of London, pp.67-86.
- Golding, B. (2011) ‘Not just petrol heads: Men’s learning in the community through participation in motor sports’, *European Journal of Adult Learning*, pp.1-16.
- Golding, B. (2011) ‘Thinking inside the box: What can we learn from the men’s shed movement?’ *Adults Learning* 22: 8, pp.24-27.
- Golding, B. & Foley, A. (2011) ‘Do you want VET with that? Some implications for lifelong and lifewide learning in an era of universal VET’, Refereed Paper No. 29 to AVETRA Conference, 28-29 April, Melbourne. <http://avetra.org.au/publications/conference-archives/conference-archives-2011/2011-conference-papers>
- Golding, B. (2011) ‘Older men’s wellbeing through community participation in Australia’, *International Journal of Men’s Health*, 10(1), 26-44.
- Golding, B. (2011) ‘Older men’s learning through age-related community organisations in Australia’, *International Journal of Education and Ageing*, Vol. 1, No.3, May, pp.237-252.

- Golding, B. (2001) 'Shedding ideas about older men's learning', *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, 2: 2011, pp119-124.

Also available on line 2011

- *A list of research that informs men's shed-based practice* (including all international shed-related research reported to early 2011: if there are omissions or additions, please please let Barry Golding know) in the AMSA website <http://www.mensshed.org/page16994/Research.aspx>
- The NCVER VOCED Data Base lists most of Barry Golding's other research. See <http://www.voced.edu.au> (type 'Golding' into 'the terms' box).
- Listen to interviews about the (2009) 'Men's learning' and 'Learning to be drier' research projects on http://www.ala.asn.au/Learning_Works.aspx
- Researching Adult & Vocational Education (RAVE) Group research: See <http://www.ballarat.edu.au/ard/education/research/rave.shtml>

Downloadable NCVER research reports about community-based learning involving Barry Golding, 1998-2008

- *Vocational education and training for people from non-English speaking backgrounds*, V Volkoff and B Golding, NCVER, 1998. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/187.html>
- *The vocational essence of ACE: The delivery of VET programs by community education providers*, V Volkoff, B Golding & J Jenkin, NCVER, 1999. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/345.html>
- *A consolidation of ACE research 1990-2000: Review of research*, NCVER, B Golding, M Davies & V Volkoff, 2001. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/638.html>
- *Adult learning through fire and emergency services organizations in small and remote Australian towns*, C Hayes, B Golding & J Harvey, NCVER, 2004. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1497.html>
- 'Who's doing the hunting and gathering: an exploration of gender segmentation of adult learning in small and remote communities', B. Golding and 'Inequity in Australian vocational education and training', B. Golding & S. Pattison, in *Equity in vocational education and training: Research readings*, (Ed K. Bowman), NCVER, 2004, p.225-242 and pp.108-119, 2004. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1389.html>
- *Learning through Indigenous business: The role of vocational education and training in Indigenous enterprise and community development*, K. Flamsteed & B. Golding, 2005. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1572.html>
- *Men's sheds in Australia: Learning through community contexts*. B. Golding, M. Brown, A Foley, J Harvey & L Gleeson, 2007. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1780.html>
- *Creating learning spaces for refuges: The role of multicultural organizations in Australia*, B. Miralles-Lombardo, J. Miralles & B. Golding, 2008. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1964.html>