



FAQs-

Proposal to Lease 56 Griffiths Rd to Upwey Men's Shed Inc.

What is being proposed?

Council is investigating whether or not it should offer Upwey Men's Shed Inc. a lease over 859m² of vacant land at 56 Griffiths Road (near the corner of Riley Rd) to build and occupy a Men's Shed facility.

The general terms of a lease (if granted) would be:

- A term of 10 years – to commence upon the Men's Shed obtaining all relevant planning permits.
- The lease would be for land only, with responsibility for construction and any subsequent building maintenance to sit with the Men's Shed.
- A lease fee commencing at \$290.00 per annum, in line with Council's Leasing and Licencing Policy and Schedule of Fees and Charges in the Council Budget

What is a Men's Shed and what do they do?

Men's Sheds are providing an increasingly important social function for men, many of whom may be otherwise socially isolated. Their membership consists of a wide cross section of the community, but with a commonality being they are all men with time on their hands and looking for something meaningful to do with it.

To quote the Australian Men's Shed Association website:

"Good health is based on many factors including feeling good about yourself, being productive, contributing to your community, connecting with friends and maintaining an active body and mind. Becoming a member of a Men's Shed provides a safe and busy environment where men can find many of these things in an atmosphere of old-fashioned mateship. And, importantly, there is no pressure. Men can just come and have a yarn and a cuppa if that is all they're looking for."

Men's Sheds typically undertake small projects with the aim to provide community benefit. That might include such things as building and installing bike racks, making wooden toys, planters and nesting boxes, or repairing bicycles. Men's Sheds sometimes may undertake such activities as teaching members computer skills, cooking classes, health awareness and other social/living skills. Above all, men's sheds provide a social outlet to their membership and a chance to connect where such connection may be otherwise difficult.

What has Council's process been so far?

On 9th December 2019, Council commenced a formal statutory community engagement process to hear the views of the community regarding its proposal to lease the land to Upwey Men's Shed Inc.

During the engagement period, which finished on 2nd February 2020, the community was invited to make written public submissions to Council to voice their opinions on the proposal. On 25th February, those submitters who chose to do so, spoke in support of their submissions at Special Committee of Council meeting.

Despite the formal submission period now having closed, Council is seeking further relevant information, such as the views of the school community, to ensure that its decision making is balanced and fully informed.

Why has Council's engagement process been specifically about granting a lease?

By law, before it can implement a lease with a duration of 10 years or more, Council must undertake community engagement processes to hear what the community has to say about the proposal. This engagement allows community members to provide Council their views on whether they support or oppose the proposal, or would like to raise any specific issues or concerns before a final decision is made.

It needs to be established whether or not Council would be prepared grant Upwey Men's Shed tenure (via a lease) over the site prior to them going to the trouble and expense of submitting a planning permit application.

Any planning application that may follow (subject to a lease being granted) would involve its own consultative process.

How will a final decision on the lease be made?

A final decision on the lease proposal will be made by Councillors at a Council meeting, which at this stage is likely to be on the 12th May. Council will consider all of the public submissions it received from the community during the consultation process, and any other relevant information put forward, including the opinions of the Upwey South Primary School community.

As a neighbour to 56 Griffiths Road, the school community's opinions matter and will form an important part of Council's decision making process.

Does the community really have any say over the lease?

Yes. It is important that the community voice their opinions over Council decisions that directly impact their regions. Councillors have a duty to consider the views of their communities (both support and objection), before making balanced decisions on any matter before them. This is an important part of the democratic process.

What would the facility look like?

There are no Council endorsed plans for a Men's Shed structure at this stage. The Men's Shed have put together some drawing of what a facility might look like, although these could be subject to change during any subsequent planning process.

A planning permit application would still need to be made by the Men's Shed if they were to be successful in securing a lease over the land.

A copy of preliminary plans have been included toward the end of this document.

Why would Council investigate a lease before a planning permit?

There are two key reasons why Council has opted to consider whether it would grant tenure over the land before considering a planning application for the site. They are:

Funding: Typically, organisations such as Upwey Men's Shed, who seek funding from various sources (such as the State Government) to build new facilities, are not able to secure funding until they have certainty over where the facility is to be built. A Council agreement to grant a lease is the key to that creating that certainty.

Planning Application Costs: Planning application costs can be quite significant for a small community organisation, particularly where such things as Bushfire Management Overlay, vegetation and soil reports may be required to be submitted as part of the application. It is more appropriate for Council to establish whether or not an organisation should be offered a site (by way of a lease) before them having to go to the significant expense of a permit application.

When would a planning application be made?

Upwey Men's Shed would only make a planning application after they have secured an agreement from Council to offer them a lease. At this stage, the Men's Shed have had some plans drawn, however those have not been endorsed by Council and may be subject to change during any planning application which may follow.

An planning application would be considered entirely on its merits and would involve its own community notifications and engagement, like any other planning application.

There is no guarantee a planning permit would be granted, even if Upwey Men's Shed were successful in obtaining a lease over this land.

Why 56 Griffiths Road?

Over several months, Council looked into a number of sites around Upwey that could be suitable for a Men's Shed facility, with 56 Griffiths Road being viewed as the least constrained and potentially most suitable.

Like any site, the land does have certain limitations, however it was felt that on balance it held enough positives to go forward with asking for community feedback over the proposal.

There seems to be other suitable sites in Upwey. Were those explored?

A number of other sites (including the Upwey South Rec Reserve, and the carpark area behind the Main Street Shopping strip), were indeed looked at by Council as possible candidates to accommodate a Men's Shed.

After weighing up the pros and cons, it was determined that new, permanent facility (such as a Men's Shed) may compromise future improvement and development possibilities for those sites, and so ideally those locations should be left as unconstrained as possible.

How would a Men's Shed facility impact traffic on Griffiths and Riley Roads at school pick-up and drop-off times?

Upwey Men's Shed have indicated that they would be happy to operate during school hours, in-between school drop-off and pick-up times in an effort to avoid additional traffic congestion along Griffiths and Riley Roads at peak times.

Upwey Men's Shed's preliminary plans indicate 7 onsite car parking spaces, although those plans have not yet been assessed by Council for endorsement. Issues, such as parking availability for its members, would need to be addressed by the Men's Shed during any subsequent planning permit phase.

Is there any support for the Men's Shed at this site?

During the recent community engagement process, Council received 46 submissions, with those being a mixture of support and objection.

Almost unanimously, submitters supported the concept Men's Sheds and the valuable function they play in our communities. The differing opinion, however, was around whether or not 56 Griffiths Road is the best site for such a facility.

Through that process, a number of nearby residents indicated that a Men's Shed would be a good use for a currently underutilised site, however equally, a number of other nearby residents objected to the site being use, raising concerns such as:

- Additional traffic congestion in an already congested street network, particularly during school drop-off and pick-up, potentially compromising pedestrian safety.
- The bulk and scale of a facility, and activities to be carried out in such a facility, may not be appropriate for the quiet residential nature of the area.
- Potential noise and air pollution concerns
- Lack of sufficient off-street parking, particularly with preliminary plans showing on 7 spaces available as part of the proposal.
- Limited public transport accessibility to the site.
- There may be more suitable locations, such as the Upwey South Rec Reserve, or the Carpark precinct behind Main Street.

Preliminary site plans

Please note these plans (over page) been provided by Upwey Men's Shed as an indication of what a shed may look like, and how it may sit in relation to the site. These plans have not been endorsed by Council's Planning department, and so could be subject to change.

Information prepared and collated by:

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for use by the Upwey South Primary School community.

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