

BRADBURY

Shed owes it all to his dedication

Hours of unpaid work pays off

Lulsa Cogno

MEN in Airds and Bradbury are feeling connected and part of their community and it's all thanks to one person - Andrew McGlinchy.

Mr McGlinchy, 57, is the devoted co-ordinator of the Airds/Bradbury Men's Shed and under his watch, the Greengate Drive centre is thriving, growing in popularity and reaching out to more and more males.

When Mr McGlinchy came on-board five years ago, the shed, which is under Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative, had 15 members and opened two days a week.

It now has 85 members and opens four days a week, from Monday to Wednesday and Friday from 9am for 2pm.

However the work is a la-

bour of love for Mr McGlinchy, of Bradbury, who is only paid for working 10 hours a week.

He gets so much satisfaction out of helping people that he devotes an average of 30 hours a week to the men's shed but he would like to do even more.

"I wish I was here every day to run it," he said. "What I am trying to do is to turn the men's shed into a centre for men.

"I do it because I want to make services accessible, to help homeless men find accommodation and help men with CentreLink and to ac-



Andrew McGlinchy devotes hours each week to making the men's shed a big success. Picture: Simon Bullard



cess government services and the NDIS."

Mr McGlinchy said there was a desperate need for services in Airds and the men's shed played a vital role in the community.

"There is a lot of male suicide and self-harm in the community and some men live on the streets," he said.

"I try to make it a place for men to come to. We provide mateship and camaraderie

and we give back to the community."

The men's shed provides leather, wood and metal work classes, as well as computer training and repairs.

Members also repair and sell second-hand lawnmowers for \$50 each and make picture frames and wildlife nesting boxes.

They also have a massive community garden and grow fresh produce for members.

A volunteer counsellor is also available on Fridays.

Keen for the men's shed to give back to the community, the members made a table for the new zen garden at Campbelltown Hospital's Birunji Mental Health Unit.

Mr McGlinchy attended the opening of the garden this month and was taken aback when the Airds/Bradbury Men's Shed was described as the best in NSW.

He said he felt very lucky in his life and he wanted to give back to the community.

He became an incomplete C7 quadriplegic after a motor vehicle accident 30 years ago and after working as a fitter and turner and then a purchasing officer, decided to retrain as a disability support worker to help others.

"The men's shed is like a family," he said.