

**As part of our growing focus on men's health and wellbeing,** we had an in-depth chat with Professor John J Macdonald, Director Men's Health Information and Resource Centre School of Science and Health, UWS, and a Patron of Men's Sheds in Australia.

***Professor Macdonald, please share with us your background and experience in wellbeing.***

I have spent more than 20 years in public health research, in addition to time in Kenya Africa and the U.K. where I was involved in Primary Health Care. I have been involved in the Aboriginal Communities of Western Sydney and have focused particularly on the social determinants of men's health (the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age). I am keen for social determinants to be added to the conversation around men's wellbeing. Too often there is just a narrow focus on violence in men.

***What does wellbeing mean to you and the definition in the context of your research?***

I have tended to avoid the word 'wellbeing' in my discussions with medical professionals as they tend to think of it as a 'fuzzy' term but I am particularly drawn to the Arabic term for wellbeing that I became aware of in Palestine that literally means a true sense of serenity and fulfilment. The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of health is " a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." I see wellbeing as the positive relationship a person has with their total environment and interactions therein. There is also the potential of psycho-immunology, where the emotional and physical interact so that positive wellbeing strengthens our immune system.

***How does your work improve or support your wellbeing?***

Receiving positive feedback from students and the people I work with. Also seeing the initiatives: Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, Men's Health



## What does Wellbeing mean to men? That is the question.

BY DEBRA MAINWARING

Website, and The Shed in Mount Druitt develop over time. The Shed has been successful as it has become a drop in where need informs provision of services and service providers such as family lawyers spend time (including sharing food) with the participants rather than in an office. I was excited when I was recently invited back to Scotland, my birthplace to talk to mental health teams as they wanted to open a Men's Shed to promote social inclusion.

***What one thing do you think is most essential to your personal or professional wellbeing?***

Being involved in something that is modestly of value to others. Having support, being acknowledged, accessing reciprocal love that involves 'give and take'. Still having this sense of purpose on retirement.

***What is the best piece of advice you have received and who was it from?***

I had the privilege of hearing a talk given by a social epidemiologist, Richard Wilkinson, who shared the finding in his research that if you want to live seven years longer what you need in life is three good friends as that strengthens the immune system.