

Sharing wisdom, knowledge and skills

When partnerships work they are wonderful. When they don't they are woeful. TOMNET is fortunate to be in partnership with men's groups within the Westhaven Retirement Community, Lourdes Home, Freedom Aged Care, Yukana and Nubeena Aged Care Services. There are no woeful aspects to these interactions we all **share**, and to **observe** the pleasure derived from meeting together is worth its **weight in gold**.

TOMNET members volunteer to represent us at the monthly meetings held in each location. Our fellows get as much pleasure out of the gatherings as the members of the host groups. Each group has a co-ordinator, who has volunteered to coordinate each meeting and ensure that there is **no stone left unturned** in making each meeting a successful occasion.

As the TOMNET men have experienced, so do our mates in these other facilities, that women play an important part in their lives; but equally the men really **enjoy the company of other men** without women being present. This is borne out when we all get together. Conversation varies from reminiscence – both humour and pathos – opinions on what needs to be done to solve the problems of the world, issues associated with personal health and well-being and simply taking an interest in one another.

An observer of these groups in action over a cuppa would be impressed by the wisdom, knowledge and life skills represented in these gatherings. Sharing much of themselves while reserving the right not to talk about other things they would like to forget is always a comfortable “par for the course” for the men. Although the men are surrounded with caring staff and have the company of others, they frequently feel lonely and isolated. It is the **simple act of joining** with their mates and men of their generation that makes a huge difference for good in their lives.

The wonderful thing about our partnerships is a significant difference they make in the lives of the participants. They all have so much to offer. They all have so much to