



## The Shed, Mt Druitt

### *In Our Words: Buddy*

I lived down here once and then I lived & worked in Port Macquarie, but had some trouble with drugs and drug court and jail. I moved back here because I was sick of going to jail. Then the kids' mum was on drugs and her mum started to live with us and it went downhill. She was giving her money to go get drugs while I was at work.

I knew about The Shed but because I'm so quiet I never used to come here. When I moved back here, I thought 'I won't associate with no one - I'll just work and stay with my kids'. Otherwise you end up picking out the drug friends again. But when the kids got removed, I came up here and saw Rick and they just helped me. That was about 18 months ago.

It was a bloody mess. I've been through criminal court but never been through DOCS. First, I rang up and made all these appointments to see what I had to do to get my kids back. The kids' mum was saying we have to stay together, but I came up here and they were saying to get my kids back, separation might be better. I grew up without a mum and dad, so I thought, I don't want my kids going through that. First the court said I wasn't getting them back, even after separation. I was in shock. I came here again and they made some phone calls to the solicitors and said things have changed. They really had my back and got people to understand my story and then we went back to court. In the morning, they said it was still no deal in the morning. but then next minute, it went to court room and there was no hearing at all. The judge just told DOCS to give me the kids back. If it wasn't for Rick and The Shed, I wouldn't have got the kids, honestly. Like, if I didn't get them back; I was thinking am I going to get back on the drugs again?

So from The Shed, I learnt not to give up. Just all positive stuff. They know who is serious here and who's not serious. If they see someone here who is serious, they will work with them and try their hardest. It's like there is a 100 Ricks – I don't know how he does it all. He does a lot of bloody work. I've been put in touch with other services and that's been a big help.

There's' been domestic violence too – but that was after I had about 18 months of copping abuse years ago, and then I abused, but I changed as soon as I had the kid. I promised that I'm not going to be one of those fathers that go to jail, and the kids come to jail. And I haven't done that. I haven't gone back to jail ever since. The passion of the people at The Shed keeps them going and keeps me going.

