

## Melbourne Airport 2007 Victorian Tourism Awards submission process kicks off

The entry process for the 2007 Victorian Tourism Awards has now begun. The good news is that following a review of the submission process, entering the awards is now simpler and the time required to prepare a submission has been shortened.

The best way to kick start your submission process is by attending a Tourism Awards workshop. The workshops offer a range of submission tips directly from the experts, drawing on the experiences of mentors and judges, past winners and placegetters as well as staff from the Victorian Tourism Awards unit.

Workshops are being held throughout Victoria over the next two months. The closest upcoming workshop is at Wangaratta on the 6th June.

Winners will be announced at the 2007 Victorian Tourism Awards Gala Ceremony, which will be held in Melbourne on Monday 19 November 2007.

For more information or to register, please visit [www.victoriantourismawards.com.au](http://www.victoriantourismawards.com.au) or contact Kerry McClure at Tourism Victoria on 9653 9706 or [kerry.mcclure@tourism.vic.gov.au](mailto:kerry.mcclure@tourism.vic.gov.au).

## Greater Shepparton Visitor Map to begin production.

In the next few months, the Tourism Department will begin production of the new visitor map for the region. This map will feature a comprehensive map of the municipality and beyond, emphasising the attributes of the region. It will also feature maps of the surrounding towns such as Tatura, Dookie and Murchison. Sharlene Putman will soon be approaching businesses to participate in the map and all members of Tourism Greater Shepparton will be offered a discount for advertising. This map will complement the current Official Visitors

Guide. Keep an eye out and if you are interested in advertising, please contact Sharlene on (03) 5832 9849 or email [sharlene.putman@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:sharlene.putman@shepparton.vic.gov.au)

## KidsFest is coming!

These September school holidays will again see KidsFest come to life at KidsTown. Run over a four day period (Wednesday 3 October—Saturday 6 October), the festival will be abuzz with kids activities and live shows. The team have been extremely busy putting together a comprehensive schedule. If you would like to contribute to KidsFest, by either being a sponsor or a volunteer, contact Vicky Mansell or Tracey Biddle at KidsTown on 5831 4213. Or email them at [kidstown@shepparton.net.au](mailto:kidstown@shepparton.net.au)

“Tourism Talk” is produced by the Greater Shepparton Visitor Information Centre on behalf of:

### Tourism Greater Shepparton

PO BOX 110  
SHEPPARTON VIC 3632  
ABN 41 505 178 163

President:

Kaye Bernardi 5829 2396

Vice President:

Cheryl Hammer 5828 8332

Treasurer:

Fred O’Keefe 0428 570 105

Minute Secretary:

Sharlene Putman

(Tourism Manager)

5832 9849

TOURISM TALK

## Greater Shepparton receives national TV coverage!

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Profile: Kingfisher Cruises 2

Accreditation— What is it? 3

A note from the Vice President 3

State Budget 4

Profile: — VIC Volunteer 5

Join Up! What are the benefits of tourism 5

Victorian Tourism Awards 6

This year has seen the Greater Shepparton region receive some of its best national television coverage ever! During January, we played host to Shelley Craft and the crew from “The Great Outdoors”. This was largely due to the Tatura Hot Bread Bakery winning Australia’s Best Vanilla Slice competition in September 2006. A full day of filming took place in Tatura with a huge turnout from the locals, in particular the male population taking advantage of several “coffee” breaks at the bakery. Geoff and Glenda, the owners Tatura Hot Bread were the stars of the show with a fantastic result once the show went to air. Sales of their delicious vanilla slice went up a huge 150%! They have also extended their opening hours to include Sunday trading. To capitalise on the coverage, we enticed Shelley and the team to stay a few nights in the region and also taped a “snapshot” segment on SPC Ardmona KidsTown. The day again was a huge success, made all the easier with the fantastic host Shelley who was willing to have a go at everything at KidsTown! The Visitor Information Centre also started to receive an increase in the number of enquiries for Tatura and the bakery, showing that television really does work!



Shelley Craft and Geoff from Tatura Hot Bread Bakery



Monique and Cow Cocky

To further enhance our profile, the region was also lucky enough to play host to the Sunrise Weather Wagon and Monique Wright at SPC Ardmona KidsTown. Again, this was fantastic opportunity to get Greater Shepparton into the homes of thousands of Australians. A feature during the morning was Bernardo’s Mother of the Year Carmel Gordon taking on Ben Hogarth, producer of the show in a “best mum” competition. The action was fierce but Carmel came out the victor! Monique also got to experience a sled dog dash with Helen Pettifer and the guys and girls from Aquamoves Bootcamp strutted their stuff. It was fantastic to see that our own local Darren Linton from the Shepparton News sung the region’s praises to his friends from the Seven Network.

To top off our national coverage, Mike Dalton from the TODAY show visited the lovely Victoria Park Lake with the Australian Women’s Weekly Road Train during April. A performance by the Congolese choir topped off the fantastic morning and it was great to see that over all three shows, the MooovingArt cows prominently featured.



Sharlene Putman, Mike Dalton (TODAY Show), Jens Zimmermann and Maree Glasson (VIC)

## The “who’s who” of local tourism operators:

### Benita Lamond & Kingfisher Cruises

As a child Benita’s dream and goal in life was to become a park ranger like Ranger Stacy on ‘Totally Wild’.

In 2000, Benita graduated from Charles Sturt University with a double degree in Applied Science – Parks, Recreation and Heritage and Applied Science – Ecotourism. In modern day terms a park ranger, environmental officer and eco-tourism operator.

One of Benita’s work placements whilst at University was with Bill Vickers at Kingfisher Cruises. Bill was forced to sell the business in 1999 due to ill health.

After graduating from university Benita gained employment with Murray River Paddlesteamers and clocked up 900 hours experience to gain her coxswain boat licence working on both the Paddleboats in Echuca and on Kingfisher Cruises. She then operated Kingfisher, on their behalf for the next two years. At 23 years of age, on the 1 February 2002 she took the challenge and purchased Kingfisher Cruises from MRPS with the help of her parents Jo and John.

MV Kingfisher was specifically built in Port Macquarie in 1990 and has since traveled the narrowest section of the Murray River. Between Albury and the ocean called the ‘Narrows’ or the ‘Barmah Choke’. Here the river travels at almost twice the normal speed and those who have traveled aboard

have experienced the timeless, natural beauty and peace of the World-Heritage listed Barmah Wetlands. Kingfisher Cruises carry around 5000 passengers each year consisting of both internal and international visitors, special interest groups, and schools (both primary and secondary) and Tertiary Institutions.

On 15 September MV Kingfisher was destroyed by fire, after being pulled from the water at its mooring on the Murray River in Barmah State Forest by person/s unknown. The night of the fire, despite the devastation of losing her business, Benita’s determination to start afresh was very evident and on 1 January 2006, MV Kingfisher II made her maiden voyage. This vessel is a sister vessel to the original boat and was again built by Bale Engineering in Port Macquarie

The challenges along the way have included the acceptance of Benita being young and female. (River Boat Captains are supposed to be male and weather beaten) These past 12 months have been the most challenging in picking up business again. Coping with the drought and the perception by many that there is no water in the Murray River has seen Benita work very hard to showcase the area she loves so much to world.



**You can contact Kingfisher Cruises on**

**(03) 5480 1839 (office)**

**(03) 5855 2855 (after hours)**

**www.kingfishercruises.com.au**

**Or email**

**info@kingfishercruises.com.au**

## Join Tourism Greater Shepparton.

Over the past 12 months, Tourism Greater Shepparton has continued to increase its member base as well as its profile. Tourism is like an iceberg. We all see the tip—the tourists, hotels, souvenir shops, visitor information centres, attractions, tour guides and so on. But tourism, and its impact, goes much deeper and broader than this. Underneath the tip of the iceberg are towns and cities, businesses and individuals that directly and indirectly benefit from a region’s tourism industry.

The flow on effect of expenditure from visitors is far and broad. A perfect example is the recent Rotary District 9810 conference. This conference attracted approximately 900 people to Greater Shepparton, which represented 50 clubs from the district. These 900 attendees stayed in the range of accommodation across the municipality, which in itself attracts expenditure of approximately \$100,000 in accommodation alone. This increase of income for the accommodation properties results in an increase in cleaning costs which in turn means there was a higher demand for usage of the dry cleaners for sheets and bedding, contractors for repairs and of course staff to undertake the cleaning. These 50 clubs also had one free night, of which the majority chose to eat out at our local restaurants, again increasing consumption and staff required to satisfy their requirements. The flow on of this expenditure goes further with the restaurants and motels requiring further supplies from local butchers, wineries and green grocers. The dollars earned by the staff catering to these visitors is then spent locally again on their personal requirements, again contributing to the flow on of the conference at hand. So next time you see some visitors in town, give them a wave, make them feel welcome and thank them for their contribution to our local economy.

The Greater Shepparton City Council and Tourism Greater Shepparton work tirelessly on promoting the municipality. By joining Tourism Greater Shepparton you can help to continue to promote our region to potential visitors and conference delegates. So join up and get involved with this exciting venture.

To join Tourism Greater Shepparton please contact either Sharlene Putman, Kaye Bernardi or Cheryl Hammer at info@tourismgreatershepparton.com.au or phone Sharlene on 5832 9849. We look forward to welcoming you into the association.



### Visitor Information Centre Volunteer Profile—Kay Lovick



Kay became a valuable member of the Visitor Information Centre team in December 2005. An extremely busy lady, Kay initially chose to volunteer at the centre as she enjoys interaction with the community and customer service. A very active volunteer, Kay commits to at least two shifts per week, often covering difficult to fill weekends and public holidays. She also volunteers elsewhere in the community including GOTAFE’s Shepparton Library, National Council for Women, Friends of the Shepparton Art Gallery, Friends of the Shepparton Library (inaugural member) and is also a casual library officer at the Shepparton Library.

Prior to all of her volunteering duties, Kay ran a hospitality (food outlet) business in Shepparton so is well suited to the role

When asked what she enjoys about volunteering at the VIC Kay stated she enjoys the pleasant people she works with, both staff and customers and seeing visitors walk out of the centre satisfied. Kay also enjoys the team atmosphere and the friends she has made through her volunteering experience.

Kay has a passion for Greater Shepparton and sees the township as a cultural city without the smog. As for the tourism industry she sees it as a thriving industry, especially from the food hospitality side of things as Kay helps with her son’s catering business.

Kay edits the Visitor Information Centre’s volunteers quarterly newsletter – the “Volunteer Vibe”, and does a fantastic job of caring for the VIC’s fish, as well as any wounded local wildlife!

We take this opportunity to thank Kay for her contribution to the centre as well as the community!

## State Budget Recognises Tourism Value

Considerable benefits for Victoria's regional tourism industry will flow from the \$66 million tourism investment announced in today's State budget, according to Tourism Alliance Victoria.

"Major events, regional tourism and natural attractions are winners," said Nicholas Hunt, CEO of Tourism Alliance Victoria.

"All in all, this budget is good news for tourism as the State Budget has picked up a number of key priorities that Tourism Alliance Victoria articulated in its 2006 Election Position Paper."

Tourism Alliance Victoria, which represents a network over 3,000 tourism businesses, is particularly pleased to see tourism initiatives focusing both on the supply and demand aspects of the industry announced in the budget.

"The focus of major events (\$34 million) and regional tourism (\$23 million) recognises the importance of these aspects of Victoria's tourism industry.

"Within these major areas the budget provides a combination of infrastructure, events and marketing, all of which help to address the supply and demand aspects of tourism," said Mr Hunt.

"This allows for professional practice within the industry to be improved, including support for customer service standards, continued growth of community tourism events and supporting business internet access."

He also welcomed the suite of activities focused on encouraging Victorian's to get outdoors. Within the \$47 million package there are a number of initiatives which will focus on enhancing recreational fishing and growing Victoria's 4WD track network.

The \$95 million in improving Victoria's Parks including camping and recreational facilities, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne and infrastructure upgrades to piers and jetties within Port Philip and Westernport Bays will have good flow-on to the rest of regional Victoria.

Tourism Alliance is concerned about the \$5.5 million allocated to international marketing.

It is a good start but there has to be more invested in international marketing as research shows that 7 out of every 10 tourism growth dollars will come from international market by 2016."

"Regional business events also need leveraging to benefit Victoria beyond Melbourne. "

"Tourism Alliance Victoria will continue work in these areas and secure appropriate resources."

Tourism Alliance Victoria exists to lead and support a professional and sustainable tourism industry in Victoria.

For a comprehensive look at the state budget follow this link  
<http://www.budget.vic.gov.au/>

### Useful Websites:

<http://www.tourismvictoria.com.au/>

This website has a plethora of information including research and statistics, market segments, information on sustainable tourism, business development and funding opportunities.

## Accreditation—Aiming for excellence!

As an operator or manager of a tourism business it is imperative that you always aim to exceed your customers' expectations. Accreditation can help you achieve this.

### So what exactly is accreditation?

Accreditation is a set of nationally endorsed industry standards that provide a model for better business practice. These standards include:

- Effective business planning.
- Professional customer service.
- Accuracy in advertising
- Compliance with health and safety standards
- Appropriate business licensing
- Sound environmental practices.

By becoming Accredited your business is recognised as having achieved these standards. This will ultimately help to promote your business sustainability.

We can help you to meet the standards for Accreditation by providing you with the necessary checklists, guidelines, forms and sample documents.

Any business that caters for visitors or operates within the tourism industry, whether new or established, is welcome to apply for Accreditation.

[www.tourismaccreditationvic.com.au](http://www.tourismaccreditationvic.com.au) or  
[www.bbtap.com.au](http://www.bbtap.com.au) email [infor@bbtap.com.au](mailto:infor@bbtap.com.au) or  
Phone (03) 9620 4199



### Trade Travel Expo

Pictured above is Kate Smith from Billabong Garden Complex attending the Trade Travel Expo in Melbourne. The Greater Shepparton City Council along with TGS attended this show to increase our tourism profile and to also increase the number of coach groups coming to Shepparton. We were a big hit on the day and look forward to welcoming the groups to Shepparton.

## A note from the TGS Vice President

What fantastic national coverage the Greater Shepparton region has had over the past couple of months with television shows like The Great Outdoors, Sunrise and Today Show visiting the area to showcase who we are and what we have to offer.

A big thank you to Greater Shepparton Tourism Manager, Sharlene Putman, and her staff for their efforts in securing this type of promotion for our region.

Tourism Greater Shepparton has also lived up to its proactive pledge so far this year with its involvement in a number of media promotions, expos and conferences which have attracted thousands of people to the Shepparton region.

The Love Month campaign in February with Shepparton Show Me and Star FM resulted in valuable TV and radio coverage for TGS which our budget alone would not have allowed.

In March, four members took the opportunity to represent TGS at the Shepparton Trade and Building Expo and all reported very good interaction and feedback from their displays. Broken River Vineyard, Greendale Grove Olives, Campbell's Soups and Valley Fruit Products provided tastings, product and information about our region to visitors.

Sharlene Putman, Kate Smith from Billabong Nursery and I spent a day in Melbourne on April 30 talking to Probus groups and tour operators at the annual Trade Travel Expo.

Our goody bag and colorful site (the new banners were used) were a definite draw card and we believe we have encouraged a number of groups to visit Shepparton in the future. Lets hope they come in their droves.

Finally, TGS sponsored the recent Women on Farms Gathering in Shepparton which attracted more than 200 women to the city. These women traveled throughout the region on half day and day trips during the weekend and attended many workshops involving local businesses – a great way to promote what we have to offer.

As a conference guest speaker and host to a tour group at my lavender farm I can assure you the ladies were enjoying every bit of their time in Shepparton and many have vowed to come back.

Hope to see you all at our next member's social night. Cheers, Cheryl Hammer, TGS Vice President.