

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS****JULY 2008**

- 13.** Shepparton and District Kennel Club Championship Dog Show.
- 17-18.** Orchestra Victoria in association with Bendigo Bank and Greater Shepparton City Council proudly present Orchestra Victoria Free Community Concert.
- 19.** Ross Wilson Live.
- 20.** Murray Valley Orchid Club Orchid Workshop and Display.
- 22.** David Scheel.
- 23-26.** Australian Country Football Championships.
- 25-26.** The Australian Ballet presents The Dancers Company in A Classical Triple Bill.
- 25-29.** Classic Skylines Australia.
- 26.** Shepparton Spiritual Centre Inc. presents The Chakras Energy Anatomy and Healing Process Workshop with Carol Crawford,.
- 30-31.** Christine Harris and HIT Productions presents "Menopause The Musical" by Jeanie Linders.

**AUGUST 2008**

- 1-2.** Christine Harris and HIT Productions presents "Menopause The Musical" by Jeanie Linders.
- 12.** Memories of a Ten Pound Pom.
- 13.** SIPCA People's Choice Winner.
- 14.** The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.
- 15.** The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra School's Concert.
- 16.** Big W Shepparton 30th Birthday.
- 29-31.** Craftalive 2008.
- 30.** 2008 Australian Dancing Society Shepparton DanceSport Competition.
- For further details on these events and more please go to the Greater Shepparton website at [www.greatershepparton.com.au/](http://www.greatershepparton.com.au/) events
- If you would like to include an event on the calendar, please do not hesitate to contact the Visitor Information Centre on 5831 4400 or email [visitor@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:visitor@shepparton.vic.gov.au).

**"Tourism Talk" is produced by the Greater Shepparton Visitor Information Centre on behalf of:**

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**Tourism Talk**

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**Tourism Victoria's Marketing Masterclass 1 October 2008**

Voluntourism, Baby-moons, slow travel and high expectations - Victoria's tourism businesses are competing for the tourist dollar in a crowded market place that is ever changing.

Tourism Victoria's *Tourism Marketing Masterclass* is an innovative forum designed to provide you with updates and insights on what marketing is happening in the industry.

Registrations will open soon for the *Masterclass*, which will be held on 8 October at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

As Victorian tourism goes from strength to strength, tourism operators must be prepared to meet the opportunities that go with this growth with sound businesses, innovative marketing and ease of access to bookings by potential guests.

Come to the *Tourism Marketing Masterclass* to find out what you need to know about reaching your target and prospective domestic audiences, and how to achieve better results from your marketing efforts.

Topics to be explored include the future of on-line marketing and booking, brand marketing and marketing the 'green' credentials of your business. Hear tips on how to market your business on a shoe-string and join a hands-on workshop designed to teach you how to take fantastic photos for either web or traditional mediums.

Tourism Victoria's *Tourism Masterclass* is your opportunity to keep up with fast moving marketing trends and share ideas and practices with your industry colleagues.

For further information contact Jodie Stevens, Manager Corporate Marketing, on 9653 9848 or email [jodie.stevens@tourism.vic.gov.au](mailto:jodie.stevens@tourism.vic.gov.au).

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**New Tourism Manager**

As you may all be aware, the current Tourism Manager Sharlene Putman is heading off to have a baby. During the interim period, Amanda McCulloch, who you will all know as the current Retail Coordinator with Shepparton Show Me will continue on as the interim Tourism Manager. We welcome Amanda to the role and wish her the best for the coming year

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

### The Last Straw

John and Yao O’Donoghue came to Shepparton in 1999 from Thailand. Yao is originally from Thailand, and their two daughters Jia and Jess, both born in Thailand, were six and four years, respectively, when they came here. John had been working with solar energy technology in South East Asia for 10 years. After returning to Australia they started up a small business to manufacture solar dryers and to dry organic fruit for the Melbourne organic market. They would also attend farmers markets to sell their products.

John and Yao have always been passionate about good clean food and The Last Straw was a natural progression from previous initiatives. The Last Straw opened in October 2006, however John and Yao have been drying organic fruit from that site since 1999.

The Last Straw is a solar passive designed building made from straw bales and recycled timber. It is an organic produce store and café. The store is an outlet for organic solar dried fruits produced on site, as well as a small organic grocery line from other producers. A traditional coffee roaster has just been installed in the shop which roasts certified organic coffee beans from exotic countries in Africa, South America and the Pacific to the people of the Goulburn Valley. The freshly roasted coffee is branded ‘Bean Around’. The shop also provides a light organic lunch, prepared by Japanese chef Shingo Fujimoto, and also offers dinner group bookings for authentic Thai cuisine.

For more information regarding the solar drying process, visit The Last Straw website on [www.kiallasolar.com.au](http://www.kiallasolar.com.au)

24 Keppel Street, Shepparton.

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### **RACV 101**

The RACV has launched its new campaign to find Victoria’s top 101 tourism experiences. Victorians are encouraged to vote online at [www.101victoria.com.au](http://www.101victoria.com.au) for their favourite destination, attraction, accommodation, activity, tour or food and wine experience. Those experiences with the most votes will feature in a one-hour *Postcards* TV special to be broadcast in September 2008.

We would love to get Greater Shepparton on the list, so we encourage all TGS members to get online and vote for our tourism experiences. SPC Ardmona Kidstown, SheppARTon Festival, MooovingArt and Longleat Winery are just a couple of the Greater Shepparton experiences already nominated. If you comment on your selection, there is also an opportunity to enter the draw to win a \$1,000 travel voucher. Get voting!!

## INDUSTRY TRADE SHOWS:

### ADELAIDE AND MELBOURNE CARAVAN AND CAMPING SHOW

The Greater Shepparton City Council has actively promoted and participated in trade shows in the past and this year during February and March we attended both the Adelaide and Melbourne Caravan and Camping Shows as part of the Murray Campaign Group. Staff from the Visitor Information Centre attended both shows which proved to be beneficial for the area, even though there was a slight reduction in attendees to both shows (Adelaide down by 4.3 per cent and Melbourne down by 0.835 per cent).

Information was disseminated with Murray River Wind Down bags according to the clients requirements and destination “dreams” with just over 5,000 Greater Shepparton Official Visitors Guides distributed. We found that Greater Shepparton is still well known for its factory sales outlets, therefore staff endeavoured to reflect that the region is more than sales, but feedback has shown that Shepparton is known as the “town with the cows!” This next financial year, we will be looking to ensure the shows are measurable and run some competitions for family holidays in the region and will be contacting operators for further hot deals and goodies to give away.

A hint and warning to those people and individuals attending the Melbourne show next year—Anzac day was bedlam! With almost 20,000 visitors on this one day, which was a 212 per cent increase on the same day the previous year, you might want to reconsider and choose to attend on a quieter day which will allow you to discuss your requirements, be it purchasing a van or gaining holiday ideas. If you do attend, be sure to stop in and say hello to the hard working staff promoting the area!



### Visitor Information Centre Volunteer Profile—Bernice Blain



In December 2008, Bernice will have been volunteering at the Visitor Information Centre for three years. Originally from Timboon, Bernice moved to Shepparton five years ago to enjoy the warm weather and be closer to her grandchildren. Good friend, and long serving VIC volunteer, Margaret Babidge introduced Bernice to Shepparton society by taking her along to join the Probus, Art Gallery and U3A groups. Bernice wasn’t originally interested in volunteering at the VIC, but after hearing Margaret speak so fondly of it every week, she decided that it might be something she would enjoy.

Currently Bernice volunteers four hours on a Friday morning and occasional weekends. Bernice looks forward to her shifts each week and her family know that all Fridays must be kept free for volunteering at the VIC.

Bernice has spent many years travelling the country and by volunteering at the VIC she is able to utilise her knowledge of Australia and share it with visitors. Bernice especially enjoys the days when the European and American backpackers come in and loves to hear their stories.

We take this opportunity to thank Bernice and look forward to working with her for a number of years to come. Thanks Bernice!

## COMPANION CARD PROGRAM

In the past, a person with a disability who required a companion for attendant care support to participate at venues or activities has sometimes been required to pay two admission and/or booking fees; one for themselves and one for their companion. The law now requires that you do not discriminate against people with a disability based on their need for attendant care support. By charging an admission fee to the disabled person and their companion you may be accused of discriminatory ticketing practices.

The Companion Card is issued to people with a significant, permanent disability, who are unable to access most community activities and venues without attendant care. The card contains a photograph of the cardholder and can be presented when booking or purchasing a ticket at events and venues, providing the cardholder requires attendant care support in that particular activity. Participating organisations will issue the cardholder with a second ticket at no charge for their companion.

Organisations, events and activities are invited to become Industry Affiliates and officially register to participate in the Companion Card program. An Industry Affiliate will issue a companion ticket at no charge to cardholders from any Australian State or Territory who require companion care support; display the Companion Card logo in a prominent position; and abide by the Companion Card Affiliate Terms and Conditions.

Becoming an Industry Affiliate is free. You can find more information on the Companion Card website [www.companioncard.org.au](http://www.companioncard.org.au).

Any questions about participating in the Companion Card program can be sent to [IndustrySupport@companioncard.org.au](mailto:IndustrySupport@companioncard.org.au). Alternatively, you can phone the Companion Card information line on 1800 650 611.

### **2008 TOURISM AWARDS**

#### **NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!**

Nominations are now officially open for the Melbourne Airport 2008 Victorian Tourism Awards. This is your chance to be named among the best in a range of categories that recognise business excellence.

By nominating your tourism business, individual or volunteer/s, you are able to access a wealth of information about the Awards and receive up to date information about events, support tools and the bigger and better incentives for entrants.

Registrations for the Mentor Program are now being accepted. This is a free initiative for Award entrants, where you are matched with an experienced judge or Hall or Fame winner to help you with your submission. What could be easier?

Both nomination forms (under Entry Kit) and Mentor Program application forms (under Entrant Support) can be found on the Awards website.

[www.victoriantourismawards.com.au](http://www.victoriantourismawards.com.au)

## APRIL FAMIL TOUR

On Tuesday 1 April the staff and volunteers of the VIC, along with a few TGS Members, went on the second Famil Tour for the year. This tour covered places of interest in Shepparton East, Cosgrove and Dookie, including some TGS members properties such as BIG4 Shepparton East, The Churches Bed and Breakfast and Valley Fruit Products.

There were a number of stops in the rapidly evolving tourist area of Dookie, including the brand new Dookie Emporium and Rosewater Bed and Breakfast. Further stops in Dookie included Wilma's Gallery, The Gladstone Hotel and the recently revamped Dookie College Winery.

The Cosgrove Camel Farm provided a unique way to finish the Famil with everyone being able to pat the camels and Vince from Country Comfort having the opportunity to ride one.

The Famil Tours are a great way to gain a better understanding of the accommodation and tourist attractions available in Greater Shepparton and surrounds. Tourism Greater Shepparton members are always welcome on the Famil Tours and the staff at the VIC will keep you informed of any upcoming tours. We encourage you to come along and meet not only the staff and volunteers of the VIC, but also the tourism operators in our area. Increasing your awareness of what Greater Shepparton has to offer will encourage tourists to stay in the region longer and increase yield for the area.



### **A note from the TGS President**

By the time you are reading this I will have visited China where I will be taking part in three trade opportunities to market my wine.

My product will be showcased along with a number of others from the area—Woodlands Estate Lavender Skin Care Products and Willow and Stick Muesli—at a trade fair in Kunming and in other parts of China where trade meetings have been set up for us by Austrade.

This is a very exciting opportunity and I hope to report on a successful trip when I return.

Closer to home it was wonderful to attend the 20th Anniversary of the Shepparton Visitor Information Centre earlier this month.

Local Parliamentarians, Councillors, dignitaries and most importantly the hard working and dedicated volunteers and staff of the VIC enjoyed a night of reminiscing and congratulations.

Here's to another busy and successful 20 years of serving visitors in our area.

Cheers, Fred O'Keefe, Broken River Vineyards.

### **TOURISM TALK SURVEY**

We want to know your thoughts on the Tourism Talk Newsletters. Please let us know if you have any ideas on how the newsletters could be improved or what you would like to see in them. We also want to hear from you if you have any stories, events or tourism based information that you think other TGS members would like to know.

Please email any thoughts, stories or information through to Rebecca on: [rebecca.stait@shepparton.vic.gov.au](mailto:rebecca.stait@shepparton.vic.gov.au)