

CALENDAR OF EVENTS**MARCH 2008**

- 4-16. SheppARTon Festival
- 4-5. Bell Shakespeare presents As You Like It
6. Strong Women, Strong Families with Denise Drysdale
7. AFL Practice Match. Collingwood V's Hawthorn
- 7-27. Sidney Myer Fund International Ceramic Awards
- 8-9. Woodworking, woodturning and Furniture Show
- 13-16. Rotary District 9800 Conference
- 14-16. Goulburn Valley Antiques & Collectables Fair
14. Strong Women, Strong Families; relaxation, meditation and tastes of the valley
15. Ave Maria Community Village Operetta al Fresco
16. Strong Women, Strong Families; Recharge batteries at Belstack
- 21-24. Annual Shepparton Lawn Tennis Club Tournament
22. Crusty Demons Unleash Hell Regional Australia Tour
26. Annalisa Kerrigan—Ireland
29. Earth Hour 2008
- 29-30. The Goulburn Valley Vintage Tractor & Farm Machinery Club 25th Annual Rally

APRIL 2008

4. Gadgets
6. John Williamson "Wildlife Warriors" Tour
15. Laughingstock Productions presents Heath Franklin's Chopper
- 22-24. A Queensland Theatre Company Production Heroes
- 25-27. Berry Street Golf Tournament
- 26-27. Mooroopna Bowls Club Premier Affiliates Triples Tournament
29. Annie Get Your Gun
- For further details on these events and more please go to the Greater Shepparton website at 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 58314400 or email visitor@shepparton.vic.gov.au

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 included in them. Please email your thoughts to rebecca.stait@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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GREATER
SHEPPARTON

EARTH HOUR 2008

At 8.00pm on 29 March 2008, Greater Shepparton will turn off its lights for one hour and stand united to show that it's possible for everyone to take action on global warming. The aim of Earth Hour™ is to reduce greenhouse gases by five percent in 2008.

You can show your support to Earth Hour by turning out the lights in businesses and homes for one hour from 8.00pm on 29 March 2008 and by communicating the Earth Hour message to friends, customers, community groups and workmates. You can show your support and commitment to make a difference to global warming by signing up your business at www.earthhour.org. It's free to sign up and you will be sent regular Earth Hour updates and information. Earth Hour is a simple, but powerful way to make a difference and we urge everyone to participate. We remind businesses to adhere to OH&S standards and security and emergency lighting where required should remain on. No street lights or lights that affect public safety will be turned off. Switching off logos or signage that is purely for advertising benefits during Earth Hour in one way to maintain safety but contribute to the effort. It is the perfect opportunity to enjoy a candlelight dinner!

To sign up for Earth Hour go to www.earthhour.org

FEBRUARY FAMIL TOUR

On Wednesday 13th February 2008, 12 staff and volunteers from the Visitor Information Centre went on the first Famil Tour for 2008. This tour took in elements of Shepparton, Mooroopna, Tatura and Murchison. The day included stops at accommodation properties, new eateries, memorials, artworks, museums, wineries and much, much more. It was fantastic to experience our own back yard and learn more from the tour and meet the volunteers that tirelessly give to the attractions in the area.

The Famil Tour's are a great way to see accommodation, places of interest and attractions around Greater Shepparton and further afield, that you might not usually get a chance to visit, which will benefit your business and the customer service that we deliver to visitors to the region. It is also a fantastic way to meet other tourism operators and the VIC staff. The VIC will keep Tourism Greater Shepparton members informed of any upcoming Famil Tours, we encourage you to come along and enjoy a day out!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Profile: Giggle Kids 2

Return To Work Seminars 3

A note from the President 3

BIG4 Shepparton East's Giant Jumping Pillow 4

Training Courses Available 4

Profile: — VIC Volunteer 5

My Business, My People 5

Calendar of Events 6



TATURA MURAL



JACK FINDLAY MEMORIAL

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

Giggle Kids

Lyndell King has always enjoyed working with children and up until 3 1/2 years ago, when she bought Giggle Kids with her husband Darryn and friends Toni and Andrew Phillingham, she was a relief primary school teacher around Greater Shepparton. Buying Giggle Kids gave Lyndell the perfect excuse to be around children everyday as well as having adult interaction with the parents and guardians.



Giggle Kids is a big indoor playground for children of all ages to enjoy. Not only does it have the playground, but Giggle Kids also run birthday parties for children, discos for teenagers and a craft market for parents. This year is the first time that there will be set market days for customers to bring their craft to display and sell. The profits from the craft market days go to a few different community groups that need a little extra support to raise fabulous children.

Giggle Kids is very popular with shift working dads and tired mums who need sleep, but also need to look after their children. Giggle Kids gives these parents a chance to relax by having a cuppa at the café or a sleep on the couch while their children play.

Giggle Kids have visitors from all over Australia and various parts of the world. Lyndell loves being able to meet visitors from all over and hearing stories about where they have been. She also says a lot of people who move to Shepparton don't have the close networks needed if times get tough, so Lyndell likes to be there to lend an ear to these local people and just give them someone to talk to.

Lyndell feels great about being able to serve and help the community in simple ways like this. She says “we’re all here together, so its good to be able to put back into the community and help each other out”.

You can contact Lyndell at:

**Giggle Kids—13a Callister Street, Shepparton
(03) 5821 4661**

GV BRAIN EVENT

The Goulburn Valley Business Rural and Industry Network have secured John Anderson, the founder of Contiki Tours to speak at the networks event in May 2008. Tourism Greater Shepparton has agreed to sponsor this event as it is a fantastic opportunity to raise the TGS profile and Contiki is a shining example of a successful tourism business. John is a dynamic public speaker who is extremely entertaining with fantastic ideas on diversifying your business, delivering quality product and ensuring you exceed customer expectations. The sponsorship agreement includes five complimentary tickets to the event. If you would to nominate yourself for the draw, please email Rebecca Stait at the Visitor Information Centre at rebecca.stait@shepparton.vic.gov.au by Friday 25th April and nominate yourself to be put into the draw (only those nominated will be considered for a free ticket). You will be contacted by phone if you are one of our lucky winners!

My Business, My People

Tourism Alliance Victoria is helping to deliver the My Business, My People program. This program, a Victorian Government initiative, is aimed at supporting businesses to attract and retain skilled staff. The program offers practical solutions to help businesses improve their workforce planning, subsidised access to training and support to strategically address skills shortages.

Businesses are able to have a free one-on-one meeting with an experienced, industry specific consultant. This consultant will provide strategic direction by assessing where the business is now, where it needs to be in the future and the best way to get it there.

The initial part of the program is valued at approximately \$5000 and the only investment the business will need to make is time for the consultant to conduct the workforce planning diagnostic and devise an action plan. After receiving the action plan the business will then have the opportunity to review and improve business and staff management practices and sign up for management capability programs which will be subsidised up to 50% by the Victorian Government.

To be eligible for the My Business, My People program you must own or manage a Victorian business with between five and 100 full-time equivalent employees, have been trading for a minimum of 12 months and be financially sound.

To find out more information, or to register your business go to the Business Victoria website on www.business.vic.gov.au/mybusinessmypeople



Visitor Information Centre Volunteer Profile—Isabelle Scanlon



Isabelle has been a volunteer at the Visitor Information Centre for about 12 months. She was originally invited to volunteer by a friend as a fill in, but ended up enjoying it so much that she stayed on as a permanent member of the volunteer team.

Living in Shepparton since 1951 has meant that Isabelle has a sound knowledge of the Greater Shepparton district, but she is still surprised at how many things she doesn't know about the area with tourists throwing many doozie questions her way. One of the highlights of volunteering at the VIC for Isabelle is meeting so many different people from around the world and sharing travel stories with them.

Outside of the visitor centre, Isabelle enjoys spending time at the Hockey in Winter (she is a Lifetime Member of the Goulburn Valley Hockey Association) and water aerobics. Isabelle is also very keen on patchwork and has produced many beautiful quilts for friends and family.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Isabelle for her contribution to the centre. Thanks Isabelle!

BIG4 Shepparton East - Giant Jumping Pillow



BIG4 Shepparton East have launched their giant jumping pillow. The jumping pillow is 20.5 metres long and 10 metres wide and when its pumped up it raises to 1.6 metres high. The pillow is a combination of a trampoline and a jumping castle all in one, but it is built into the ground. The giant jumping pillow has been placed next to the tennis and basketball courts. It also has an outdoor setting around it and is covered by great big shade sails making it a fantastic outdoor entertainment area for guests. Owners Kym and Kaye Bernardi report that the pillow is proving to be a hit with not just the kids but adults as well, especially Dads. BIG4 Shepparton East is the only caravan park in town with a giant jumping pillow.

Greater Shepparton Business Centre—2008 Training Courses

The Greater Shepparton Business Centre is hosting a number of business training courses throughout 2008. These training courses are designed to help small businesses in the Greater Shepparton region to prosper and flourish. Please find below two courses we thought you may be interested in attending.

Developing a Business Plan—get the tools and knowledge to develop a business plan. Tuesday 8th April from 6.00pm to 8.00pm. Cost is \$35 per participant. Course to be held at the Greater Shepparton Business Centre.

We want to sell online, show me how—participants will learn how eCommerce works, what the costs are and various ways to integrate it into their website. Wednesday 14th May from 6.00pm to 9.00pm. Cost is \$20 per participant. Course to be held at the Greater Shepparton Business Centre.

For more information on these courses or any other courses the Business Centre is hosting please phone (03) 5832 1100 or check the calendar of events at http://www.sheppartonbusiness.com.au/information/bc_events/

RETURN TO WORK SEMINARS

VECCI is presenting a series of free Return to Work (RTW) seminars across Victoria. Each seminar will be followed by a round-table discussion to provide insights into the practical management of the sometime complex and legally perplexing area of returning injured employees back to work.

Attend the seminar to learn:

- What the law requires regarding returning injured workers to work
- How the Return to Work inspectorate operates
- Who the key players are and their roles in the rehabilitation and RTW process
- How to manage the RTW process to minimise the impact on your WorkCover premium and other business costs
- How to develop strategies for managing difficult cases
- How to deal with your claims agent and the treating doctor

The round-table discussion offers you a chance to discuss particular WorkCover issues, difficult cases and also time to network with other employers who may have similar issues.

There will be a seminar held in Shepparton on Thursday 27th March 2008 at Country Comfort Shepparton Parklake. The seminar will be from 9.00am to 12.30pm with the round-table discussion to follow from 1.00pm to 2.00pm.

To register for this event go to the VECCI website www.vecci.org.au

A note from the TGS President

Firstly a belated happy 2008 to you all and I wish everyone a prosperous and exciting new year ahead. The TGS committee is continuing to work hard to keep the profile of our region at a high level and some new ideas for more media promotion and a better grass roots working relationship are on the table.

We will endeavour to revisit our attempts to have a TGS website up and running this year after a number of hold ups last year and members have been asked to work with Greater Shepparton City Council on a comprehensive tourism plan for the region. A brainstorming session to contribute to the Greater Shepparton tourism plan was attended by some of our members at the end of January, along with Council staff, business sector representatives and other interested parties.

Any effort toward highlighting and addressing issues relating to tourism in the area, and more importantly strategies to address them, should be supported so hopefully through our members feedback and contributions we will see some positive outcomes.

TGS is also a sponsor of the SheppARTon Festival this year and a marquee for members to display, sell or talk about their products and services will be set up at the Twilight Festival at Shepparton Showgrounds on Saturday 8 March. We have a number of members already participating and would like to hear from anyone else who would like to be involved. The Twilight Festival is a free entry event for the public and runs from 11.00am till late on Saturday night.

We look forward to our members taking part in TGS events this year, including our first general meeting in April with a very interesting guest speaker from Destination Gippsland. A great chance for all of us to learn how other regions successfully promote themselves.

Hope to see you all at these events. Fred O'Keefe.