

what's on

COVERING THE INDIGO SHIRE

Wednesday, September 29



Discovery tours give visitors first hand experience about how science and the natural environment are working together.

Tours offer real life experience

by Gaynor Matthew

WOORAGEE tourism and rural community economic development consultant, Christine Stewart OAM, has been busy talking to farmers and producers in the North East and showing them how to share their skills and passion to make the most of tourism and marketing opportunities.

Her two Murray Heartlands tours covering the Australian Alps in Northern Victoria and the southern Riverina plains of New South Wales involve a hands-on approach to tourism where visitors can be informed while enjoying a full touch, see and smell experience.

Discovery Tours are designed to show how science and the natural environment are working together across four catchment areas.

Tour groups stop over at the CSIRO Discovery Centre in Canberra to hear from scientists about current Australian research and technology and then will travel to this region to see farm forestry sites, rebirding projects, soil health improvement sites, wetlands, revegetation, erosion and dryland salinity sites, and native flora and fauna.

Creative Tours showcase the very best of our food, wine, fibres and gardens. The region's most creative artisans, horticulturalists, natural fibre specialists, wine makers, chefs and farmers share their expertise and passion.

In Beechworth, visitors can learn from Jan Clements about feltmaking, Lyn Henry about alpaca, and Sandra Godfrey about silk.

Ms Stewart is committed to creating new employment opportunities in rural communities and works with communities in both a business and voluntary capacity with the initial assistance of project funding from Commonwealth Government departments.

Her drive, energy and ability to get things done has been evident in her other passion, the prevention of child abuse, for which she received the Order of Australia medal in 1990 for co-founding the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Now turning her focus to rural communities, Ms Stewart establishes grass roots driven groups, teaches skills and how to access support, funding and sponsorship, helps them achieve independence and involves them in marketing campaigns to promote themselves and become cost effective.

"The bottom line is that I hate rural poverty," she said.

"It's a matter of finding who is doing what and where and putting itineraries together, costing them out and teaching people the skills."

"I feel Indigo Shire out of all the shires is the best place to do agriculture and nature-based tourism with the Stanley berry and fruit industry, the wine and olive industries, broadacre and fat lambs - a lot is happening within the shire.

"What is important is to consult people within the community and give everyone an equal opportunity to participate and bring about change for the future," said Ms Stewart.

Something for all at Corowa fair

WHETHER you are after antique jewellery, delicate linen or peculiar pottery, there is something for everyone at the 14th annual Corowa Antique Fair on October 8, 9 and 10 in the Corowa Memorial Hall.

Organised by the Quota Club of Corowa Rutherglen this fair has become a drawcard for collectors both serious and novice alike.

Traditionally the aim of the fair is to cater for all tastes and incomes, from the smallest thimble to a magnificent piece of furniture.

Prices are competitive and the range of items for sale is enormous, enabling customers to view many different dealers all together under the one roof.

Dealers exhibiting at the fair are usually keen to negotiate on any items you may have to sell.

The fair is one of the Quota Club's major fundraising events with all proceeds going to charity and local projects.

Fair co-ordinator Wendy Davis said she hoped the usual lot of day-trippers would come along to the fair and peruse the array of antiques and collectables not often found in the area.

The opening hours are 4pm - 8pm on the Friday evening and 10am - 5pm on the Saturday and 10am - 4pm on the Sunday and admission is only \$4.

There will also be a raffle for a gold bracelet drawn on the Sunday afternoon.

AND SAVE!

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HIT

Terry Norris (Cop Shop) **Julia Blake** (Travelling North)

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