



*unique
events
unusual
places*

2020 **FESTIVAL REPORT**



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the place now called Greater Shepparton, and all First Peoples living and working on this land. We recognise and celebrate the cultural heritage, creative contributions, and stories of the First Peoples of Australia. We pay respect to Elders of today, emerging Elders of tomorrow and Elders of the past.

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2020 Shepparton Festival

EVOLVE

Now in its 24th year, the Shepparton Festival can confidently claim to be the longest-running regional arts festival in Victoria. It has thrived because it has done what this year's theme boldly states — EVOLVE.

With a new Creative Director at the helm, the program promised to not only deliver an eclectic goody bag of creativity, but also to include many groups, tribes, cultures, beliefs, tastes, businesses, institutions and individuals of all ages. Over a fortnight and a half each year, the Shepparton Festival spreads across the CBD, the region's small towns, bars, wineries, galleries and paddocks. It revels in using art as a platform to unify people for 17 days to celebrate our connectedness and our common ground.

While Shepparton Festival was able to deliver 25 out of 64 events of its EVOLVE program over a four-day period, the declaration of a state of emergency on 16 March resulted in the committee's decision to cancel the remaining events to ensure the safety of the audiences, artists, staff, and the wider community.

The fabric of our community has been severely cauterised by the pandemic. Theatres, cinemas, cafes, sport, music, pubs, schools, and restaurants were not the only businesses forced to close their doors. The arts sector, vulnerable in its reliance on the gig economy and live audiences, was spectacularly affected. Shepparton Festival, true to its purpose of nurturing the

arts in our region, immediately stepped in to lessen the impact on artists, audiences, and the structures that enable them by:

- *Paying artists all or a proportion of their fee and/or providing a commitment to include their work in future programming;*
- *Continuing our commitment to our casual and contract staff;*
- *Maintaining student work placements;*
- *Providing full refunds to ticket holders.*

To cancel a festival that so many people had worked so hard to create rankled deeply. It is difficult to describe the sense of loss and disappointment. The mantra of show business has always been that "the show must go on."

In this context of massive change, there is a risk that much of what was wonderful about EVOLVE will be forgotten. This would be a shame because the 2020 Shepparton Festival, despite its premature conclusion contained many examples of inspiring and delicious artworks, as well as rare and exquisite moments of humour, engagement, connection and celebration that we would now like to share with you.



A NEW CREATIVE DIRECTOR

In June 2019, the Shepparton Festival committee were proud to announce a new Creative Director; Jamie Lea. Having been involved with all manner of local art events (including Winter Sessions, Numurkah Food Festival, Secret Garden Gigs, 3630 Music Festival and six years on the Shepparton Festival committee), Jamie is considered something of a local creative legend! She grew up loving the Shepparton Festival and is always inspired by Greater Shepparton's diverse, vibrant and creative community.

Her energy and passion for regional arts combined with advocating for the use of local existing resources while working with new concepts made Jamie the perfect candidate.



Photo credit: Liz Arcus

Jamie Lea
Shepparton Festival,
Creative Director

For the 2020 Festival, Jamie invited everyone to engage with the Festival and to use creativity as a platform to look at their region positively so that, together, we nurture a shared sense of belonging and pride.

"We are thrilled to welcome Jamie Lea to this role. She is passionate about the arts, deeply and organically connected well beyond the arts, and committed to our community. Her appointment heralds a new era for Shepparton Festival and we are excited to see Jamie Lea's spark ignite and invigorate our community."

FIONA SMOLENAARS
SHEPPARTON FESTIVAL CHAIR



THEME

During the Shepparton Festival's annual general meeting on 5th August 2019, the 2020 Festival theme EVOLVE was officially announced and expressions of interest were opened.

In choosing the theme, Jamie Lea was inspired by her observations of how Greater Shepparton and its attitudes continue to change and progress over time – from the waves of immigration to the changes in our educational institutions, architectural development and the impact of environmental change on our landscape. All contributing factors to the rich

tapestry that is Shepparton life - past, present and future. Creatives, organisers, venues and community members from far and wide were invited to tell Greater Shepparton's story through their interpretation of the theme. And, judging by the response we received from writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, photographers, choreographers, teachers, poets, community groups and businesses, the theme "EVOLVE" tapped straight into our region's Zeitgeist.

"Evolve or die! This is something I relate to deeply. The call to evolve transcends beliefs, religion, and circumstance. As our surroundings change, we are required to respond. How we react to our changing environment defines who we are. To move confidently and positively into our future, we must be united – we must share a vision and attitude. This is precisely what EVOLVE aims to achieve: Embrace our diversity as a strength, value and build on our traditions, and creatively harness the energy and potential of a more vibrant Shepparton in which we can share the benefits across cultural, organisational, and professional boundaries. No matter your role in our community, know how sincerely welcome you are to engage, experience and enjoy our region, through the lens of EVOLVE - Shepparton Festival!"

JAMIE LEA, SHEPPARTON FESTIVAL CREATIVE DIRECTOR



A CALL TO CREATE

At the AGM the Shepparton Festival announced a “Call to Create” for the 2020 featured promotional art; a throwback to previous years where we asked artists to produce a theme-based poster.

A number of local artists responded to the theme EVOLVE and put their best foot forward to be the Festival’s landmark talents. Photographers, painters, graphic designers, and kids were among those who submitted work, all of which were celebrated during the official launch of the guide and at the Festival opening.

A collage by Shepparton-based mixed media artist Rachel Doller was selected to be front and centre in the promotion of the Festival. Using a variety of media including acrylic, aerosol, cut paper, oil pastel, and ink, Rachel created a piece that was bold and graphic, featuring strong use of colour, shape and texture which was perfect for our guide, posters and website.



Rachel Doller
Mixed Media Artist
and winner

“My work is a celebration of the evolution of this amazing place we call home, into a truly diverse and exciting region. The mixed media collage is a harmonious collection of elements: geometric and organic shapes, bold colour combinations and expressive pattern, line and texture. The work aims to honour this place of opportunity, community and culture and the people that inhabit it. The artwork inspires fun and a child-like creative energy but above all aims to explore the evolution of our region’s modern landscape with its dynamic mix of people, places and experiences.”

BRANDING

A New Brand Strategy

The Shepparton Festival is a mainstay on the Goulburn Valley events calendar. While its rich history has created a festival-faithful, the committee and management were looking for growth. In September 2019, the festival partnered with local marketing and creative agency, So Creative. Their challenge was to increase brand awareness, grow community participation and more effectively convey the program diversity.

So Creative undertook a review of the current brand. They evaluated the brand positioning and strategy: How it was perceived, what it stood for, what made it unique, what it delivers, and how it engaged the community into participating.

Their solution was to reposition the brand. To create a new brand that was more recognisable. They wrote new language to promote it and built brand parameters to more effectively convey the Festival's exclusive offering - unique events, unusual places. They wrote and executed an end-to-end marketing budget and plan, achieving greater reach and frequency with improved cost effectiveness.

The new brand launch and implementation was considered and strategic. It made strong and distinctive brand promises. It allowed the community to decide how they want to engage and built consistent campaign messaging.



MARKETING

Deliverables

- New logo (Unique - fingerprint. Places - map drop-pin)
- Guide design
- Pocket guide design
- Posters and signage design
- Print management
- Media buying and partnership agreements
- Advertising creative
- Editorial and press releases
- Redesign the website homepage, including responsive design
- Database management
- Design and manage email campaigns
- Social media content creation and posting

Quantities

- Pocket guide x 20,000 (new in 2020, increased reach by 400%)
- Guides x 5,000
- A3 Posters x 200, A2 Posters x 80
- Pull up banners x 4

Press Schedule:

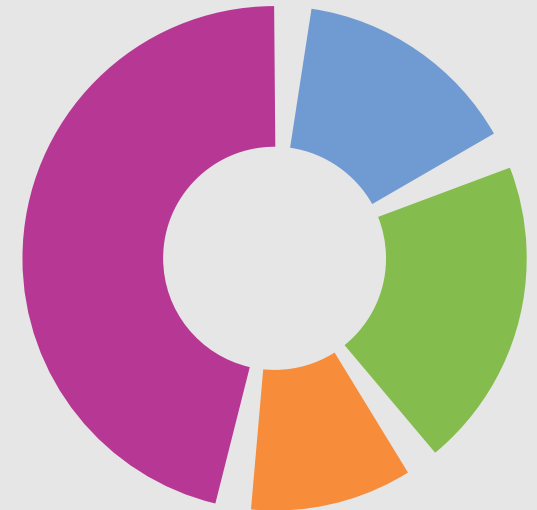
A press schedule of advertising and editorial ran from 11th February to 18th March 2020, including the Shepparton News, Country News, Benalla Ensign, Riverine Herald Echuca and the Shepparton Adviser. Exposure was maximised via media partnerships.

- Wrap around x 1
- Front page strip advertisements x 7
- Full page advertisements x 4
- Half page advertisements x 12
- Quarter page advertisements x 3
- Editorials x 28 (both in-print and online)



Pocket guide design

The Budget Breakdown



- Graphic Design Services
- Marketing Services
- Printing
- Media Buying

Press Tearsheets *The Shepparton Adviser*

THE PERFECT TRADIE CHRISTMAS

start here, go anywhere.

APPLY NOW FOR 2020

HOW TO APPLY (and win!)

petrol

A day full of smiles...

Shepparton's biggest street party is back!

CAROLS BY BARRELS

Saturday 7th December

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

BUSSIP

Goulburn Valley Water turn to solar power

World-class radiation oncology treatment arrives in Shepparton

Victorian Government calls for Aboriginal heritage council members

13-29 March EVOLVE 2020

SPECIALISTS IN skin

THE ADVISER

Super School work starts in earnest

13-29 March EVOLVE 2020

Council masterplan for Mooroopna

Starting to take shape

Always further

Open Day 2020

Scholarships - 2021

13-29 March EVOLVE 2020

SHEPPARTON FESTIVAL

13-29 March EVOLVE 2020

Starts next week!

17 days 60+ events 250+ artists 40 markets 10 games including 36 FREE events

Meet the makers and get into the festival spirit!

Gin, whisky and fabulous food

Shave the world from blood cancer

Kensington GARDENS SHEPPARTON

OPEN DAY

Saturday, 14th March 2020, 10:00am to 4:00pm

THE ADVISER

Capacity crowd at MDBA meeting

Comedy, cabaret, politics and periods, what could go wrong?

Freedom 21

SAVE PRECIOUS WATER, SAVE PRECIOUS TIME

TEACHING POSITION

Comedy, cabaret, politics and periods, what could go wrong?

GEMSTONE EXTRAVAGANZA

7TH & 8TH MARCH 2020 9:30AM TO 4:30PM

FEATURING

AT GEMSTONE EXTRAVAGANZA

SHEPPARTON FESTIVAL

13-29 March EVOLVE 2020

17 days 60+ events 250+ artists 40 markets 10 games including 36 FREE events

News in Brief

YIRRAMBOI MOOROPNA

Press Tearsheets *Shepparton News*

Wine not try a festival brew?

13-25 March EVOLVE 2020

17 days 60+ artists 350+ acts

LEATHER CRAFTS

EVOLVE 2020

Young ambassadors sought for council

Colourful silos land in Dookie

WHEN ONLY THE BEST WILL DO

Using our best tips, in our 'Seasonal Scapes'

Immerse yourself in festival events

Virus infects hen's party

MY favourite PLACE

Scents of place and time

SILOS ON THE MOVE

RETAIL PICKS UP

Council approval for Kialla caravan park

Festival is set to evolve

Father sentenced to eight years for collision that killed son

News

MORE POLICE SHEPP BOUND

EVOLVE 2020

News

SAFE HAVEN

EVOLVE 2020

Fest spookily close

Weather

News

Looking great with a facelift

News

Scents of place and time

News

Festival is set to evolve

Father sentenced to eight years for collision that killed son

News

Crowd wowed

Don't let pain or injury stop you performing

News

RUMBAFEST

Three shows full of laughs

News

Press Tearsheets *Shepparton News*

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]



ART FEST EVOLVING AND THRIVING

By [Name] [Title]

THE ARTS FESTIVAL, which has been a staple of the community for over 20 years, is set to return to the downtown area this year. The festival, which is held annually in the heart of the city, has grown significantly in size and scope over the years. This year's festival is expected to attract thousands of visitors and feature a wide variety of art installations, performances, and food vendors. The festival is a great way for the community to come together and enjoy the arts in a fun and festive atmosphere.

The festival is held in the heart of the city, in the area between the downtown and the waterfront. This location is perfect for the festival, as it allows visitors to enjoy the arts in a beautiful setting. The festival is also a great way for the community to support the arts and to see the work of local artists.

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News

Latent in the Editor

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REPORT IT ONLINE

WHEN YOU NEED US, BUT NOT THE SUREMS

131 444

131 444



REPORT IT ONLINE

WHEN YOU NEED US, BUT NOT THE SUREMS

131 444

131 444

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

SHEPPERTON FESTIVAL
13-29 March
EVOLVE 2020

SPECIAL EVENTS

VISUAL ART

MUSIC

COMEDY

CULTURAL

PERFORMANCE

KIDS

FILM

WORKSHOPS

FESTIVAL FEASTS

TOP 5

QR code

Small text box at bottom right

Brand Parameters

Brand messaging

The biggest misconception for the Festival was its size and scope, second was that its program was predominantly visual arts. So Creative wrote brand messaging to effectively convey and quantify the offering. These brand parameters are now used as prolifically as the slogan.

17
days

60+
events

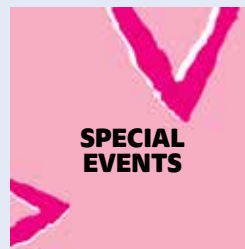
250+
artists

40
venues

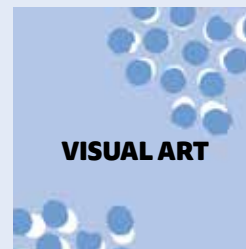
10
genres

Genres

Collating the guide into genres, meant the audience had a more user-friendly experience. It streamlined the way the audience engaged with the program and also highlighted the diverse range of events. So Creative extended on Rachel Doller's collage to create genre icons and established hero images to best represent each category.



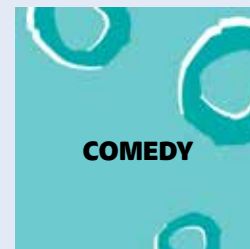
**SPECIAL
EVENTS**



VISUAL ART



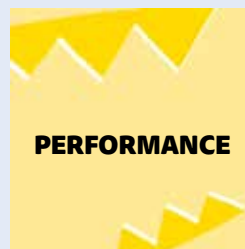
MUSIC



COMEDY



CULTURAL



PERFORMANCE



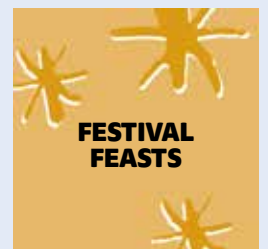
KIDS



FILM



WORKSHOPS



**FESTIVAL
FEASTS**

The journey

They then took the audience on a journey, filtering content and asking them how they'd like to connect with the program. The messaging was consistent across printed collateral, advertising, social media and the website.

Drawn by the power of conversation?

Keen to tour the region on a visual exploration?

Enjoy electrifying live performances?

Craving comedy and cabaret?

Eager to learn about cultural history?

Want to immerse yourself in dramatic performance?

Looking to inspire and excite the kids?

Like to experience home-grown stories in film?

Love to discover new skills?

Hungry to meet the makers and indulge in local produce?



Signage

For the first time, the Festival used a suite of signage options to promote the program. With such a large and diverse community, it was paramount to meet a range of tastes and preferences, to effectively capture a passive audience that may not have engaged with the Festival previously. The posters were distributed across Greater Shepparton, Moira, Strathbogie, Benalla, Campaspe, and Indi shires.

Website

The Festival website homepage was redesigned for 2020, the responsive design working more effectively across desktop, tablet and smartphone. It incorporates the brand parameters and efficiently filters the program by genre, again focusing on the user experience.

The Stats

Across the height of the marketing campaign (January to mid-March) the website had over 9,000 views by 5,335 users.

56% of visitors browsed on a smart phone
98% of visitors to the website were unique browsers
3+ mins the average session time

The Quarry Chorus, music events and festival feast events were the most popular.

Google remained the most utilised channel, followed by the direct link, either from an email campaign or QR code within press advertising. The remaining visitors were via Facebook.

46% Google search
26% Direct link
22% Facebook

The documented age group of visitors to the website is 25yrs to 44yrs.

90% visitors residing in Victoria



Open your camera, hover your phone over the app code, one click and you're there!



Social Media

Promotional activity for the 2020 Festival garnered a 27% growth in Facebook followers, with the total increasing from 3,517 to 4,457.

74% of the audience are female, aged from 25yrs to 54yrs. Over 50% of the followers reside in the Goulburn Valley area, with the next largest segment being Melbourne at 25%. People are predominantly engaging via a smartphone.

All social media content was recreated for the 2020 Festival, to bring it in line with the new branding. From January to mid-March, the key advertising timeframe, the Festival Facebook page achieved organic reach of 73,500 views. Posts achieving the greatest engagement were announcements for the launch of the new website and 2020 guide.



Email Campaigns

The Festival database contains 1,533 qualified recipients. Campaigns sent via MailChimp achieved an average open rate of 57% and an average click-through rate of 3.5%. These statistics are well above the industry standards for Events & Entertainment, which are 20.5% and 2.36% respectively.

The most popular events promoted via email campaigns were Yurri Wala Woka and Culture Conversations.

School Newsletters

To increase reach, particularly to younger people, 49 primary and 24 secondary schools from Greater Shepparton as well as Moira, Strathbogie, Benalla and Indi shires were contacted and asked to include information about Shepparton Festival in their respective newsletters.

Town Newsletters

To raise awareness in the small towns around Shepparton, Shepparton Festival provided articles for inclusion in Dookie's Saddleback News and Murchison's Neighbourhood House Newsletter, with a focus on what each of those towns had to offer during the Festival.

GSCC's Tourism and Major Events Industry Luncheon

The Shepparton Festival Creative Director delivered a vibrant presentation to the region's tourism and event management stakeholders, showcasing the Festival's guide and highlighting how the Festival is a major event in the region's calendar.



Secondary School Newsletter

Television and Radio

Shepparton Festival would also like to acknowledge the generous coverage provided by ABC radio, One FM and WIN News. Knowing that you value what we do and the support you give us throughout the year is priceless.

17
days

60+
events

250+
artists

40
venues

Festival Overview

The Shepparton Festival guide covered more than 60 events across over 40 venues, catering for all interests, backgrounds and ages. The 2020 Festival was programmed through three approaches:

- Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from local artists, businesses and the general public
- Shepparton Festival produced events
- Partnerships to produce works specifically for Shepparton Festival

With an anticipated 30,000 patrons, roughly every second person living in the region would have attended at least one event, on average. Over 250 artists participated in the events, which in itself led to new partnerships and connections, both in the local community and beyond. The generous provision of venues by Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC) and Latrobe University raised awareness of the significant investment both organisations make into our local infrastructure and publicly accessible spaces.



"This year's program is one of the best I have seen - it's packed with extraordinary experiences to discover, educate, challenge, or just plain old entertain."

JOHN LEWIS
SHEPPARTON NEWS

Attendance

The vital and generous support from our sponsors and supporters enabled the development and delivery of 64 individual events. Prior to COVID-19 necessitating a premature halt to the Festival, over 30,000 attendances/engagements and over 400 volunteers were expected. Here we present anticipated numbers. The below numbers are based on ticket sales, registrations, past years' attendances, known data and estimated traffic (foot and vehicle) converted into an engagement with outdoor exhibitions. It should also be noted that some of the actual numbers were reduced as the public became increasingly concerned about the unfolding pandemic.

Date	Event	Cost	Anticipated No. of Attendees
SPECIAL EVENTS			
13 Mar	Festival Opening Celebrations <i>Maude St Mall Stage</i>	FREE	300
17 Mar	Human Book Club <i>Shepparton Library</i>	FREE	40
18 Mar	Culture Conversations <i>La Trobe University</i>	\$10	90
19 Mar	Shepparton Festival Podcast <i>Terminus Hotel</i>	\$20	30
21 Mar	Rumbafest <i>Rumbalara Football Netball Club</i>	Gold coin	500
24 Mar	Let's Draw with Mandy Ord <i>Shepparton Library</i>	Gold coin	50
29 Mar	Festival Finale <i>Junction Hotel, Toolamba</i>	\$5 - \$60	200
VISUAL ART			
13 - 29 Mar	Sensing Place <i>Various locations</i>	FREE	10,000
13 Mar - 27 May	SAM Goes Local <i>Shepparton Art Museum (SAM)</i>	FREE	2,000
Mar - Jun	Kaiela Spirit Bush Face Sculpture <i>Longleat Winery, Murchison</i>	FREE	500
13 - 29 Mar	Festival Wall <i>Stubbs Wallace car park</i>	FREE	500
13 - 29 Mar	ConnectGV Photography Exhibition <i>Riverlinks Eastbank</i>	FREE	500
13 - 29 Mar	Rust & Wine <i>Tallis Wine Cellar Door</i>	FREE	400
13 - 29 Mar	Dookie Nomadic Silos <i>Dookie</i>	FREE	2,000+
14 - 29 Mar	Silo Exhibition <i>Dookie Artist Tree</i>	FREE	500
13 - 15 Mar	Life Drawing Exhibition <i>'Maude', 108 Maude St, Shepparton</i>	FREE	250
14 Mar - 10 Apr	Australian Muslim Artists Exhibition <i>La Trobe University</i>	FREE	500

Date	Event	Cost	Anticipated No. of Attendees
VISUAL ART			
14 - 21 Mar	EVOLVE with Textile Art <i>Alex Rigg Foyer, Eastbank</i>	\$3	350
21 & 22 Mar	Artwork Evolution <i>SPC Factory Sales</i>	FREE	500
MUSIC			
14 Mar	Quarry Chorus <i>Dookie Quarry</i>	FREE	700
14 & 15 Mar	Affinity Quartet <i>Various locations</i>	FREE	90
18 Mar	Shepparton Brass and Wind Concert <i>Chapel on Maude</i>	Gold coin	80
23 - 27 Mar	Interactive Artist in Residence <i>Chapel on Maude</i>	FREE	200
27 Mar	2020 Shepp Got Soul <i>The Vault</i>	\$16 - \$21	120
COMEDY			
20 Mar	Women of the White House <i>La Trobe University</i>	\$10 - \$25	60
21 Mar	Blak Cabaret <i>Rumbalara Football Netball Club</i>	\$15	150
26 Mar	Ovariacting: A Period Drama <i>La Trobe University</i>	\$25	60
CULTURAL			
20 Mar	St Georges Road Community Fun Night <i>Victory Park</i>	FREE	500
22 Mar	Albanian Harvest Festival <i>Shepparton Showgrounds</i>	Gold coin	3,000
23 Mar	Honouring our Stories <i>Bangerang Cultural Centre</i>	\$20	100
28 Mar	The Longest Art Table <i>Victoria Park Lake (during Converge on the Goulburn)</i>	FREE	200
28 Mar	Converge on the Goulburn <i>Victoria Park Lake</i>	FREE	5,000

Date	Event	Cost	Anticipated No. of Attendees
PERFORMANCE			
20 - 22 Mar	10 in Ten <i>Bakehouse Black Box Theatre</i>	\$15	300
21 - 23 Mar	Yurri Wala Woka <i>Meet at The Connection</i>	\$199	80
25 Mar	Auroa Circus Oz <i>Riverlinks Westside</i>	\$32 - \$115	400
KIDS			
29 Feb	Children's Silo Designs <i>Dookie Artists Tree</i>	FREE	15
13 - 29 Mar	Close to the Bone <i>Various Primary & Secondary Schools</i>	FREE	300
15 Mar	Plant Pot Decorating <i>Dookie CWA Gardens</i>	FREE	50
20 Mar	Storytime in the Park <i>Riverbank Gardens, Murchison</i>	FREE	25
21 Mar	Jurassic Art Attack <i>KidsTown</i>	FREE	100
28 Mar	My Boomerang Won't Come Back <i>Victoria Park Lake (during Converge on the Goulburn)</i>	FREE	200
FILM			
16 Mar	Furphy the Water Cart and the Word <i>University of Melbourne, Department of Rural Health</i>	FREE	120
17 & 24 Mar	True Vision <i>GOTAFE</i>	FREE	120
19 Mar	Guilty <i>La Trobe University</i>	\$10	100
WORKSHOPS			
14 & 15 Mar	How to Write the Story of Your Life <i>La Trobe University</i>	\$10	40
14 - 21 Mar	Community Textiles Workshops <i>Alex Rigg Foyer, Eastbank</i>	\$50	165
14 Mar	Nature Photography <i>Australian Botanic Gardens</i>	FREE	17

Date	Event	Cost	Anticipated No. of Attendees
WORKSHOPS			
15 Mar	Affinity Quartet Workshops <i>La Trobe University</i>	FREE	15
18 & 25 Mar	Film Workshops <i>Follow on Facebook</i>	FREE	20
19 & 22 Mar	Drawing the Versailles Woman <i>The Collective - Teller</i>	\$45	60
19 Mar	River Weaving Workshop <i>Junction of Goulburn & Broken Rivers</i>	FREE	12
19, 25 & 26 Mar	Craft and Coffee <i>Libraries in the GV</i>	Gold coin	25
19 Mar	Bush Verse <i>Shepparton Heritage Centre Museum</i>	FREE	40
21 Mar	Where Fashion and Culture Collide <i>Shepparton Art Museum (SAM)</i>	FREE	20
21 Mar	Ceramics Along the River <i>Australian Botanic Gardens</i>	FREE	10
22 Mar	History Walk with Accredited Guides <i>Greater Shepparton Visitor Centre</i>	FREE	10
26 Mar	Signs and Symbols Workshop <i>Jordan's Bend</i>	FREE	25
FESTIVAL FEASTS			
14 & 21 Mar	Whisky Masterclass <i>Thornebridge, Murchison</i>	\$95	50
18 Mar	Gin Revolution <i>Fryers Street Food Store</i>	\$80	50
20 Mar	Goorambat Silo Magic <i>Goorambat Silos</i>	\$150	100
21 Mar	La Scampagnata - Escape to the Vineyard <i>Longleat Winery, Murchison</i>	\$99 - \$115	100
24 Mar	Literary Lunch with Jill Barclay <i>The Barn at Buchanan's Ridge</i>	\$35	60
25 Mar	Cheese & Cider Tastings <i>Fryers Street Food Store</i>	\$60	50



HIGHLIGHTS

We hope that the following sections will give you a flavour of the diversity across the events, and a sense of the connections they created.



Opening Night

Friday 13 March

Attracting in excess of 200 to Shepparton CBD's Maude Street Mall stage, the Opening Night kicked off the 63 events spread across two and a half weeks at various locations in the Greater Shepparton region.

The evening opened with the crowd enjoying local food, wine and soft drinks to the sounds of local singer/songwriter Tienielle McKenzie. Keynote speeches were delivered by Shepparton Festival's Chair Fiona Smolenaars and Creative Director Jamie Lea, as well as Greater Shepparton Mayor Seema Abdullah.

The Call to Create art works were celebrated and displayed in CBD shop fronts. In a twist on 2019's highly successful *My Landscapes* event, the paradigm was flipped and writers from both Goulburn Valley Writers Club and La Trobe University's *Write for Community* writer's group responded to the artwork with poems and short stories. A selection of these written works were read aloud at the Opening and displayed together with their corresponding artworks in the shop windows for the public to stop and enjoy.

Enlarged fragments of Rachel Doller's featured artwork adorned the stage area and reinforced the theme in both hyper-visual and tactile ways.

Complementing this approach, Shepparton Festival's invited artist Kristen Retallick launched her mobile exhibition *Sensing Place* (see more below).

The evening concluded with a stroll down Maude Street to the opening of the *Life Drawing Exhibition*.



Sensing Place

Friday 13 &
Saturday 14 March

When Nathalia artist and G.R.A.I.N. Store gallery curator Kristen Retallick was invited by Jamie Lea to respond to the theme EVOLVE, she converted her parents' retro caravan to create a mobile exhibition. It invited the people of Shepparton to get in touch with their senses and step inside to experience familiar sights through art, sounds of the bush and smells; all of which may trigger a feeling of nostalgia and a sense of home.

Kristen collaborated with perfumer Rebecca Young to create a scent from local native grasses, eucalypts and local plant oils to replicate the smell of rain and evoke a distinct sense of place.

Sounds of the Bush (cockatoos, insects and flowing water) was created by her sister Sara Retallick.

On the walls were Kristen's paintings of desert landscapes, influenced by the Murray River and the landscape she experienced in the Northern Territory.

Kristen's mobile exhibition was intended to be displayed at multiple Festival events. Before COVID-19 we were pleased her caravan was at both the Festival's Opening Night and the Quarry Chorus events.

Sensing Place was co-sponsored by Greater Shepparton City Council.

Photo credit: Courtesy of the
Shepparton News taken by
Rodney Braithwaite.

"I hope that when people come in here, they have an instant feeling of nostalgia and memory of specific experiences"

KRISTEN RETALLICK



Soiree Silo,
Artist Tank.



Mooroop Kooroon (Spirit Brolgas), Artist Tom Day.



Gorgeous Nothings, Artist Domenico De Clario.

Dookie Nomadic Silos

Opened Friday 13 March

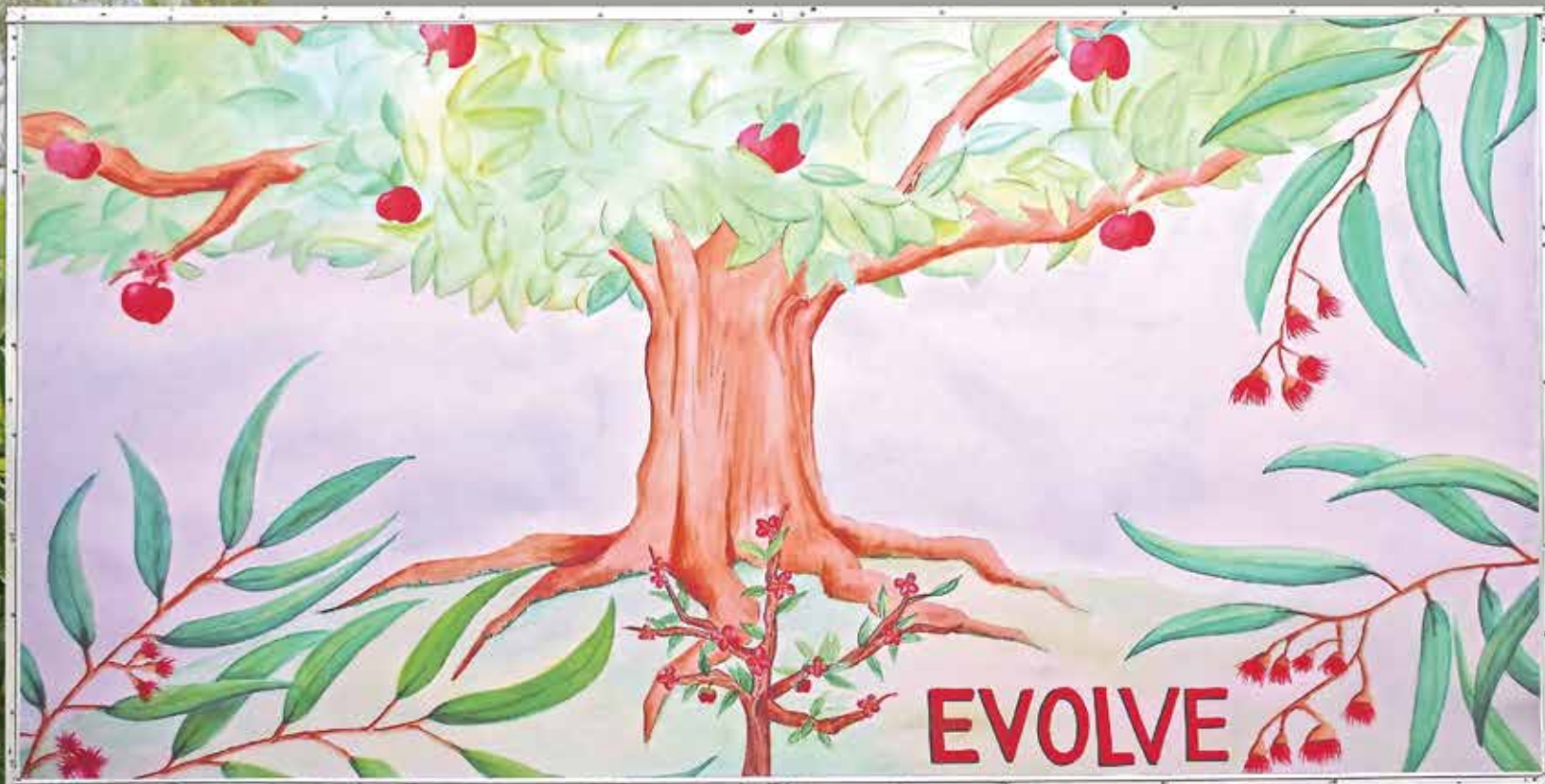
For years tourists have been arriving in Dookie asking "Why haven't you painted your silos?" But Dookie doesn't see itself as a community that follows the beaten path – it has its own vision and strong sense of agency.

So for the 2020 Festival, Dookie Arts responded with the Nomadic Silos, a slightly tongue-in-cheek response to the silo art trend sweeping Australian towns. Five mobile silos were painted by a series of local artists. The results were extraordinary.

The silos around Dookie were painted and decorated by internationally renowned Domenico De Clario, Koorie artist Tom Day, Tongala couple Sophie Wilson and Davidson Lopes as well as Dookie Artist Tree's Andrew Sands and Liz Evans. Shepparton artist Tank has also completed a colourful mobile silo at Tallis Winery just outside the town.

The Dookie Nomadic Silos project was sponsored by Greater Shepparton City Council and Dookie Arts.

The Dookie Silos are built for endurance and will be available to view long after the COVID-19 restriction are eased.



Artwork by Greater Shepparton Secondary College year 11 student, Prim Janthakhun.

The Festival Wall

From 13 March

Now in its sixth year, the Shepparton Festival Wall is an exciting collaboration between the Festival, accounting firm Stubbs Wallace and the young people from Greater Shepparton.

Over the years, Shepparton Festival has collaborated with the local high schools to encourage their year 10+ students to produce art. Each year a piece is selected to be enlarged (5 x 2.5 metres) and displayed on the wall at Stubbs Wallace for an entire year. For 2020, Greater Shepparton Secondary College

year 11 student Prim Janthakhun's art will be exhibited until March 2021.

This collaboration continues to be very successful and is a model the Festival will use in future years to offer art students a public, highly visible space to exhibit their art.

18 **SW** 97
STUBBS WALLACE
TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS SINCE 1897

Australian Muslim Artist Exhibition

Opened Saturday 14 March



2011 Archibald finalist and recipient of the inaugural \$15,000 Art Prize, artist Abdul Abdullah.

La Trobe University proudly presented some of the shortlisted works from the Australian Muslim Artists Exhibition, hosted by the Islamic Museum of Australia. The mission of the Islamic Museum is to provide educational and cross-cultural experiences and showcase the artistic and cultural heritage of Muslims in Australia and abroad.

The artists — Soraya Abedin, Fatima Killeen, Abdul Abdullah and Azza Zein — hail from a variety of states and backgrounds, but all identify as Muslim

and Australian. The work displayed the diversity of the artists' engagement with their Islamic cultural heritage.

The exhibition also featured 2011 Archibald finalist and 2019 recipient of the inaugural Australian Muslim Artists Art Prize, artist Abdul Abdullah, with his piece titled *You can call me troublesome*. The winning piece was manually embroidered, took over a month to create and was done with the assistance of a village community in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

"We have really appreciated the opportunity to work with the Islamic Museum of Australia, exhibiting artists, and La Trobe Art Institute to bring these beautiful Muslim artworks to Shepparton."

**ELIZABETH CAPP, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
(HEAD OF CAMPUS, SHEPPARTON)**



Pictured, Shepparton campus head Elizabeth Capp, City of Greater Shepparton Mayor Seema Abdullah, artist Azza Zein, Shepparton Festival chair Fiona Smolenaars and curator Associate Professor Jacqueline Milner. Image credit: Shepparton news.



Silo Exhibition Opening

Saturday 14 March

Another silo-themed exhibition, this time put together by Dookie Artists Tree. This exhibition explored the different ways of looking at silos, changing the way we think about the landscape and our surroundings.

In the weeks and months leading up to the Festival, artists young and old had been busy with preparation for an exhibition of work inspired by the grain silos in and around Dookie.

This culminated in an opening of the exhibition which included paintings, drawings, poetry, photography, etchings, and sculptures. One piece was a replica of the Dookie Silo that had been carved with incredible precision out of rock sourced from the Dookie quarry. Another was a charcoal

rubbing that was over five metres wide and was created with help from about a dozen members of the community, under the benevolent guidance of Andrew Sands.

This public exhibition allowed the participant artists to sell their displayed work at their set price and allowed local artists to participate in a public project and exhibition that will raise their profile while providing income from the sale of their work.





Kata Tjuta (The Olgas), Artist Olinda Poulton.

EVOLVE with Textile Art

Opened Saturday 14 March

Each year our valued partner Shepparton Textile Artists Incorporated presents an exhibition for the Shepparton Festival. For 2020 they were invited to respond to the theme EVOLVE.

The work they produced was an extraordinary range of beautiful, exquisite, funny, poetic and ingenious.

The venue was provided in kind by Greater Shepparton City Council at Riverlinks.




Above: Look at Me, Artist Lee Vause.



Blue Jar, Artist Barb Gray.



Right: Golden Pathways, Artist Ella Egan.



"I thought the workshop was fantastic. It was a humbling and rich experience. I not only gained new information but also a renewed impetus to keep writing."

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

How to Write the Story of Your Life

Saturday 14 & Sunday 15 March

These writing workshops were hosted by skilled writing teacher and mentors Hannie Rayson and Michael Cathcart. Hannie is one of Australia's most-loved playwrights and author of *Hello Beautiful!*. Michael is theatre producer as well as an award-winning writer of non-fiction and lyrics.

Hannie and Michael made a brilliant team, covering a great deal of territory while offering some practical techniques and clear insights. They created a safe atmosphere for a diverse group of people who all thrived under the tuition and caring attention. Participants were provided with the practical tools they needed to write the story they wanted to write.

The writing workshops were a precursor to *Hello, Shepparton!*, a planned 10-week project, which culminates in a performance in which residents of Shepparton tell and perform stories about their experiences of the town. *Hello, Shepparton!* will be delivered as part of the 2021 Shepparton Festival. The project will give Shepparton the exhilarating experience of staging and witnessing a professionally produced show which affirms the community's diversity, energy, struggles and achievements.

The venue was provided in kind by La Trobe University.



Close to the Bone

Opened Friday 13 March

Dr. Andrew Hamilton ("Nam") showed the theme EVOLVE through Darwin's spectacles. The idiom was used to explain to participants that learning about our origins necessarily invites reflection, which is sometimes unsettling and sometimes reassuring. The picture used in the promotional flyers and the Festival Guide overlays Nam's head with the skull of the most famous hominin fossil, Lucy. It was intended to grab attention but also, along with the idiom, remind people of the fact that evolution is intrinsically bound with our understanding of who humans are and why we do what we do.

A clear highlight was the following brief conversation that ensued at Tatura Primary School shortly after the pupils had held a replica Neanderthal skull and learned how, in evolutionary terms, Neanderthals were our close cousins, who lived in similar ways, shared lands with us, cared for their sick, produced art, and buried their dead.



Image used on promotional flyers.

Student: "So, does that mean that if Neanderthals were around today, they could come to school with us."

Nam (without hesitation): "Absolutely!"

Group: Excitement.

Nam: "They would be different. They would be shorter but much, much stronger, so I'd be careful who I played rough with in the playground. They would struggle to learn maths as quickly as you but would make some progress with effort and your help."

During March, this evolutionary extravaganza was delivered to two high schools, three primary schools and one community pub. Nam will resume his tour of the local schools and psycho-geriatric unit when the COVID-19 restrictions allow.

"It was bone shattering - so full of information and it got the kids thinking, which is always a bone-us!"

**WAAIA-YALCA SOUTH
PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**



Nature Photography

Saturday 15 March

Photo credit: Workshop attendee, Susan Marshall.

The Festival are proud to partner again with RiverConnect, an initiative of the Shepparton-Mooroopna community to acknowledge the Goulburn and Broken rivers as the heart and soul of the community. RiverConnect contributed 5 sell-out and varied workshops to the 2020 Festival program. Before COVID-19 prematurely closed the Festival, we were able to deliver the photography workshop, a collaboration with Shepparton Camera Club. Amateur photographers were able to hone their skills and make the most of what nature has to offer at the Shepparton Botanic gardens. Formerly a landfill site, this special location has truly evolved into a beautiful and unique location.

"Those of us who attended couldn't believe our luck. I have never seen four musicians play together with such commitment, precision and passion. The effect was transfixing."

CONCERT AUDIENCE MEMBER



The Affinity Quartet with workshop attendees.

The Affinity Quartet: Performances and Workshop

Friday 13 March to Sunday 15 March

Founded in 2015 and based in Melbourne, the Affinity Quartet members are all regulars with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and other acclaimed ensembles.

They had a busy time during the Shepparton Festival! During four concerts, one of which was on ABC breakfast radio, they delighted their audiences with performances of the best string quartet music; from classical 18th century composers Haydn and Mozart to 20th century Austrian composer Anton Webern and living American composer Caroline Shaw.

A workshop was attended by a group of local musicians who already regularly play together. The quartet were present, engaged and generous as they rehearsed some Webern, and

invited everyone to follow along with the score. Attendees remarked on how amazing it was that there were musicians at Shepparton Festival who can play to a world-class standard, and that this workshop gave them an opportunity to collaborate with and be inspired by some of the top performers in their field.

"Superb. One of the best things I've done at a Shepparton Festival. It opened my mind to experimenting more with dynamics and the feelings that music can evoke."

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Affinity Quartet were sponsored by The Fairley Foundation. The artists' accommodation was provided in kind by Parklake Hotel. The venues were provided in kind by "Maude" (as part of the Life Drawing Exhibition), La Trobe University and St. Alban's Anglican Church.



Quarry Chorus

Saturday 15 March

"It was a very moving experience to be involved - watching all of the other performances and participating with the community in such a beautiful location was amazing."

CHOIR MEMBER



The Quarry Chorus was the climax of the Shepparton Festival 2020.

Dookie Quarry provided a uniquely spectacular venue: an outdoor, red-cliff amphitheatre below the Milky Way.

Scott Darlow, the rock star and Rumbalara seniors premiership player, returned to Yorta Yorta country after huge success in Melbourne and around Australia, touring with Jimmy Barnes. Scott engaged the crowd in stories as well as songs, playing a solid set that then melded in with the biggest and most astonishingly beautiful community choir to sing at the Quarry, with the choristers materialising and accumulating en masse before the eyes of the awe-struck audience, and singing beautifully.

The choir consisted of people from Greater Shepparton who responded to an invitation issued by Creative Director Jamie Lea. The choir members attended a series of rehearsals under the guidance of choir master and local high school music teacher, Ryan Black. On the night they were over a hundred-strong. They sounded superb

and sang with gusto and in harmony. The effect was stupendous. The choir was followed by a troupe of young dancers from Awaken Dance Theatre Company, who performed *For the One*, a story about caring for one another. Led by local dance teacher and choreographer, Kyla McGregor, on a red earth stage the dancers moved to an ethereal soundscape and were lit by a spectacular light show that played over their moving forms and up against the magnificent backdrop of the quarry cliffs. This is the third year that this young dance troupe have brought a unique production to the Shepparton Festival. The result has been three stunning pieces of theatre that have left audiences feeling awestruck.

The Awaken Dance Theatre Company has now attracted the support of The Australian Ballet and dance schools in New York such as the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance.

As the evening drew to its end, the avant-garde guitar duo Wildebeest played. While some of the audience left, as anticipated, some stayed and, as anticipated, relished the music. Photographer

Serana Hunt-Hughes was one. She approached the guitarists at the end of their set and told them "Your music took me to another planet". They replied immediately: "We were there!"

The Quarry Chorus was a triumph: incredible, unforgettable, and fully booked.

"The atmosphere and backdrop were like nothing I have experienced before. A stunning concept and venue."

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Quarry Chorus was co-sponsored by The Fairley Foundation. The artists' accommodation was provided in kind by Parklake Hotel.





"The Australian Ballet came to our rehearsals and said they would like to mentor me and my team. They are due to mentor us for three years. That's amazing!"

**KYLA MCGREGOR,
CHOREOGRAPHER**



WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

During the year, Shepparton Festival has been involved in a number of initiatives with children and young adults. Highlights have included:

- Providing musical entertainment at Lulla's Family Centre and Kindergarten's health day. This is an annual event where allied health service providers come to Lulla's for the day to provide free health checks and vaccinations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The musical component and Festival give-aways added a party feel to the day.
- Participating in an informal life-skills initiative organised by the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project at Mooroopna Primary School. Shepparton Festival delivered a workshop for Year 6 children entitled "My Shepparton Festival Career", where we asked the children to think about everything that went into the planning and delivery of a festival.
- Participating in La Trobe University's Work Placement Program. This program is designed to offer students the opportunity to develop their employability skills in a professional setting. This year, Bachelor of Business student Michael Laino joined our team in February 2020. Michael worked with us in the lead up to and during our EVOLVE 2020 festival and will continue to work with us through the planning phase of our 2021 festival.

"I hope to develop many key work skills and more knowledge regarding marketing, business, event management and community engagement. It will be great to gain some work experience and build critical skills for the real working world."

MICHAEL LAINO
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS STUDENT



WHAT'S NEXT IN 2020?

While we had to cancel all events from 16th March 2020, there are plans afoot to reschedule some events later in the year or deliver projects by alternative means.

At the time of writing, the film workshops, Yurri Wala Woka, La Scampagnata, GVConnect Silo Magic Dinner, Guilty film and Close to the Bone intend to resume when restrictions and/or the weather allow.

A number of our partners have found or are considering ways to deliver their events differently. All of these have been or will be promoted on Shepparton Festival's social media channels and/or email. Examples include:

- The film "Furphy: The water cart and the word" was available on the Shepparton Festival Vimeo account May 4th to May 8th to all ticket holders;



- The documentary "True Vision" was available on ABC.net.au;
- Dookie Arts are creating a video about their Nomadic Silos.

The following outdoor exhibitions will continue to be on show, until the elements decide otherwise:

- Rust & Wine;
- Dookie Nomadic Silos;
- Shepparton Festival Wall;
- Bush Face Sculpture.



THANK YOU

We wish to thank you not only for your generous support, but also for excellent collaboration to generate EVOLVE. Although we were unable to deliver the whole program, we are proactively connecting people, artists, and organisations to promote arts in our region during the pandemic, and we are thinking about Shepparton Festival 2021, which marks our 25th anniversary! We are generating ideas for programming and community development, focused on art, culture, connection and entertainment; we know that in 2021 creating cultural opportunities and stimulating events will be very much needed.





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