



AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Maria Brown-Shepherd wins Women's Charter Award



From left: Marion Rak from Mt Bruno, 2021 Women's Award winner Maria Brown-Shepherd, Georgina Jaudzemis from Nagambie and Rien Silverstein.

The Greater Shepparton Women's Charter Advisory Committee (GSWCAC) was pleased to announce Ms Brown-Shepherd as the winner at a ceremony held at the Queens Gardens on Thursday, April 1.

Ms Brown-Shepherd was celebrated for her outstanding commitment to agricultural and multicultural communities, and her encouragement of rural women in Greater Shepparton.

Operating a family orchard since 1996, Ms Brown-Shepherd has built a wide skillset that she has shared with the community by combining primary production with work as a training provider.

Since 2007, Ms Brown-Shepherd has been a board member of the Shepparton and District Ethnic Council and has been president of the Ethnic Council since 2012.

The GSWCAC aims to increase women's participation in the community and in democratic governance, by supporting three main principles: gender equity, diversity and active citizenship.

ETHNIC COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Applications are now available for community members to become members of the Ethnic Council. Members get the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the Ethnic Council, can nominate to become a Board Member and vote for membership of the Board.

For an application form please contact Rhonda on 58312395 or info@ethniccouncil.com.au

Translator's head to hub to help



An enthusiastic team of translators, who speak 11 languages between them, are working to ensure the Goulburn Valley's diverse community has access to accurate, detailed information when visiting Shepparton's McIntosh Centre for a COVID-19 vaccine.

The service, organised by the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District, offers translation in Arabic, Dari, Hazaragi, Malay, Dinka, Kirundi, Swahili, Samoan, Farsi, Persian and Urdu.

Translator Seiuli Emmanuel Vagana said he and his colleagues were what he called *the people who stand in the gap*, serving as mediators between visitors who spoke different languages and English-speaking staff.

"People who come in with different languages might express a worry, a fear, they might have questions and

people here are not able to answer them," he said.

"For us to be here, not only do we bring a face, but we humanise it, we make it more comfortable for them.

We can have a good chat and a good laugh and try to ease their worries and answer any questions that they have."

Translator Alkeer Yel said there were "definitely more" people with different cultural backgrounds visiting the McIntosh Centre for a vaccine than there were when the rollout started.

In terms of accessible information, translator Jafar Naseri said plain-English COVID 19 resources should be made available more widely across multicultural communities.

Contact the Ethnic Council on 5831 2395 to learn when a translator who speaks your language is available at the McIntosh Centre vaccination hub.

COVID VACCINATION NEWS

The GV Health vaccination hub at the McIntosh Centre, Shepparton Showgrounds remains open from 9 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

But until August 17, the hub will be open from 9 am until 8 pm every Tuesday, with AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccinations

The GV Health vaccination hub will extend its Tuesday opening hours to 8pm to encourage eligible workers to receive the jab after office hours.

Community champion up for state award



Sam Atukorala's work with the Greater Shepparton community has been nominated for a Victorian Community Achievement Award. But he says everything he has achieved has been with the help of other community members. "There's nothing in this world you can do by yourself," Mr Atukorala said.

Mr Atukorala joined the Shepparton community in 2013 and completed the Fairley Leadership Program, upon the insistence of the program's former director, Amanda McClaren, the following year.

Since then, he has become well-known for his involvement in many community organisations and initiatives, including as project officer for the successful Regional Youth Leadership Participation Program with the Ethnic Council of Shepparton, AFL's Diversity Program Ambassador and Community Ambassador for Cricket Australia.

Now, he is the Goulburn region's strategic engagement coordinator for the Victorian Government, and assists new residents in the region

from diverse backgrounds with employment, housing and other challenges. Mr Atukorala said he was "honoured and humbled" to be nominated for the award, but his attention was directed toward assisting the community

"My focus is to do whatever I can do to make a difference," he said. Goulburn Murray Community Leadership executive officer Nathan Bibby said Mr Atukorala's passion for making all newcomers feel welcome in the Goulburn-Murray region made him a worthy candidate for the award.

"When I started my job in February this year, the first phone call I got was from Sam welcoming me to the community," he said. "It goes a long way really, when someone reaches out like that." Mr Atukorala continues to look for ways he can assist his community, but says he is looking forward to spending more time with his family in the future.

"Spending more time with my family is something that I'm really focused on," he said. "If I see something that I'm passionate about and I can find some time, and commit 100 per cent, then I'll put my hand up." Community Achievement Award winners will be announced Friday, December 17.

Sam Atukorala can be contacted at the Ethnic Council on 58312395 or satukorala@ethniccouncil.com.au

New service offers help to navigate NDIS



A new Shepparton-based disability support service aims to help regional Victorians who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to receive the benefits to which they are entitled and the support they need to thrive.

With the ethos of providing ‘total care from the heart’, Amos Care Support Services Director Thon Thon said his team would work with people who were struggling to navigate the NDIS.

Prospective Amos Care Support Services employees will need three things: a certificate in disability support, the ability to speak a relevant language other than English, and to value the cultures of the participants they assist. ‘If you don’t understand who I am, how will you look after me?’

Documents and correspondence written in English weren’t useful to families who helped manage their loved one’s care, Mr Thon said, and many struggled to stay on top of

information that was poorly communicated.

Amos Care Support Services will be based in the offices of the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District before moving to separate offices once established. Ethnic Council manager Chris Hazelman said appropriate disability support was an important and challenging issue across the community, particularly among new arrival communities where some had no concept of what help was available. ‘The demand will be there,’ he said.

Mr Thon named the new disability support service after his uncle, Amos, who lived to help others. ‘I thought maybe his care can continue, through this,’ he said.

To connect with Amos Care Support Services email info@amoscare.com.au or call 0403 662 050.

The Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District Inc. is a peak body whose mission is to promote and represent the social, cultural and economic well-being of ethnic communities in the Goulburn Valley Region through the provision of quality and innovative settlement, refugee support, community development and information and advocacy services.

Currently the Ethnic Council is delivering services in the community that address Social Cohesion Through Education, Prevention of Family Violence, COVID Safe health messaging, Settlement Services, Strategic Partnership Planning for Regional Services and Cultural Awareness Programs.

For more information contact the Ethnic Council on 58312395 or visit the website at <https://ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au>