

MEDIA RELEASE

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Get A Piece Of The Action

ENTREPRENEURS planning to capitalize on new walking and mountain bike trails in the expanded Great Otways National Park are invited to a free Action-Packed Tourism Workshop.

Designed for new and existing business people who are moving into tour guiding and adventure tourism, the workshop will be held at Forrest Hall on March 7 from 5pm.

Colac Otway Shire's Tourism development Coordinator Georgina Wheeler said there was a recognised need for more soft-adventure companies to offer mountain biking, bushwalking and great outdoors activities.

Ms Wheeler said the opening of the Great Ocean Walk, the Old Beechy Rail Trail and the new Department of Sustainability and Environment mountain bike trails in Forrest, meant there was plenty of fresh and exciting tourism products in Colac Otway Shire for businesses to embrace.

She said 20 per cent of Victorian visitors engaged in adventure activities during their most recent trip and said in the national market 29 per cent of domestic nights in Victoria were accounted for by interstate adventure travellers.

She encouraged new and potential tourism operators to take advantage of the Action-Packed Tourism workshop which will be led by Tourism Alliance Victoria's Matthew Rechner.

Mr Rechner said the workshop would provide a step-by-step guide to planning and starting a new business including horseback trail riding, bushwalking and mountain biking.

"This introduction to the tourism industry has been tailored specifically for potential adventure and nature-based start-ups within the Otways region," he added.

"The workshop is one of a range of initiatives, focused on improving the capacity of existing and potential tourism operators to take control of their

future and their future prosperity, to be implemented through the three-year Otway Hinterland Capacity Building Project.”

He said the four-hour workshop would give a strategic insight across a range of essential business practices, and would help improve their overall business accumen and planning skills.

Victorian Tourism Awards 2005 winner Terry Smit, managing director of Go West Tours recommended the workshop.

“It’s a great place to begin to find out what’s required and how to avoid some serious pitfalls. It helped us in the planning and establishment of our day tour company,” Mr Smit said.

The workshop is a joint initiative of Tourism Alliance Victoria, Colac Otway Shire and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

To register for the workshop call StreetLife Officer Karen Patterson on (03) 52 29527.

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