

# National Urban Design Forum 2008

## Registration

If you would like to spend a long weekend with a bunch of urban design and planning enthusiasts, to make a presentation or learn more about urban design in regional and rural towns, complete and submit registration form with payment. For any further queries email [bruce@urbaninitiatives.com.au](mailto:bruce@urbaninitiatives.com.au)

## Accommodation

Supply is limited in Nathalia, but the motel, cabins and home-stay have been reserved for NUDFers. A range of accommodation is available in nearby towns for those who are not quick enough to book for Nathalia, but this involves a 30 minute trip at the end of each day.



## The program

### 24 Friday 24 October

- 8.30am bus Central Melbourne (9.00am Tullamarine airport for interstaters)
- 12noon Nathalia - Welcome to Country and lunch at Bernie's.
- Session 1: 'It's a question of scale'
- Session 2: 'So ya reckon you're small!'
- Walk the town and then Bonfire Barbeque at the Footy Ground

### 25 Saturday 25 October

- Session 3: 'Community initiatives'
- Session 4: 'Art into landscape'
- Session 5: 'Is the economy stupid?'
- Session 6: 'Getting it all together'
- The Famous Forum Dinner will be at Brereton's Bakery, hosted by renowned yarn spinner, Tammy Muir.

### 26 Sunday 26 October

- 9.00am bus Nathalia to Shepparton Showgrounds
- Session 7: 'Shepp Town Centre'
- Session 8: 'Future Shepparton'
- Walk the town and lunch
- Session 9: Panel discussion
- 3.15pm bus to Tullamarine (5.30pm) and Central Melbourne

See [www.udf.org.au](http://www.udf.org.au) for update

URBAN DESIGN  
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# NATIONAL UDF 2008

## Fees

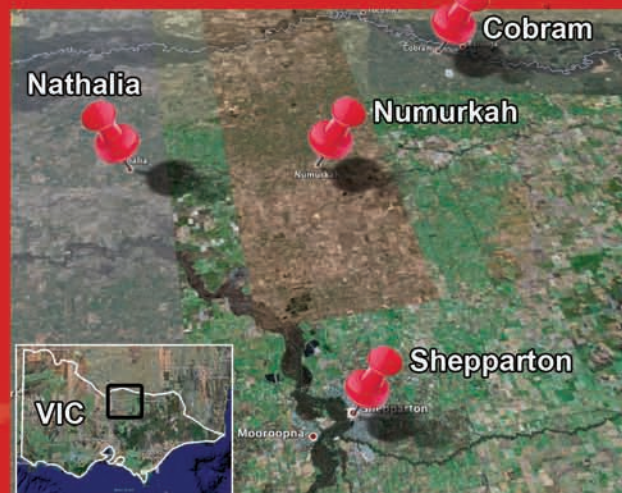
**Full fee registrations:**  
\$490 (includes bus travel, all meals, and Nathalia Showbag)

**Friday Afternoon Sessions:**  
\$60 (including lunch and afternoon tea)

**Saturday All day Sessions:**  
\$80 (including lunch and morning/afternoon teas)

**Sunday Morning Sessions & Summary:**  
\$60 (including lunch and morning/afternoon teas)

Attendance at dinners and other events for spouses etc is available at cost.



UDF

National  
Urban  
Design  
Forum

Oct 24 -26 2008 Nathalia & Shepparton

Nathalia, you ask, where is that? Well read on! In the tradition of very interesting boutique gatherings, this year's National Urban Design Forum will be held in Nathalia and Shepparton in rural Victoria. The theme will be "Design for Vitality in Rural Communities"

Recent NUDFs have been in state capital cities and major regional centres, but never in a rural town. Yet today, large shires, after having catered for their larger towns are engaging firms to do planning and landscape designs for many of their smaller rural towns - with varying success. Part of the reason for this may be the lack of local knowledge, and the differences between larger urban and regional centres and smaller communities. Nathalia provides the quintessential environment in which to hold this discussion.

## The questions

### Some of the questions we will address include:

- what will be the effects to design in rural communities with climate change taking hold?
- what will be the effects of "peak oil" reducing travel to larger rural centres for people and materials?
- how do you change the only town centre streetscape (often only one or two blocks long) in a rural town and contribute to its economic strength, its amenity and its social cohesion?
- how can planners, landscape architects and artists acknowledge existing assets and create built form solutions that compliment these?

But that is just for starters. What questions do you want addressed? What successes do you want to showcase? What do you want to contribute to the opportunity and challenge of revitalising the towns of Regional Australia?

## The Forum Sessions

The program is designed to encourage as much involvement from all participants as possible. There are no 'key note papers'. For each session, three people will make 15 minute presentations to stimulate discussion and debate, then it is open floor.

### 24 Friday 24 October

#### Session 1: 'It's a question of scale'

Design policy-makers and practitioners who normally work in capital cities often fail to understand the importance of scale in devising successful design outcomes for small and medium towns. The focus of this session is to put the scale of towns in a state context and use case studies to explore how scale has affected design outcomes.

#### Session 2: 'So ya reckon you're small!'

How small is too small? What happens when towns are so small that they cannot attract the necessary economic and human capital. Do they risk disappearing altogether? Using case studies, this session focuses on survival mechanisms and the relevance of urban design.

### 25 Saturday 25 October

#### Session 3: 'Community initiatives'

In big cities the key role of experts, specialists, big money and big government in achieving successful places is usually assumed and frequently needed. But what happens in small towns when the same resources are not available? This session focuses on the initiatives taken by local people in their communities.

#### Session 4: 'Art into landscape'

Over the past two decades, the contribution of artists in urban design has evolved from 'quaint' to 'expected'. But what is that role and how does it integrate with the overall landscape of urban design? In this session, Nathalia and other case studies will review just how art and landscape contribute to the wider well-being of small towns.

#### Session 5: 'Is the economy stupid?'

You don't have to be a genius to conclude that applying the extremes of economic rationalism to small towns will other than end in tears. But what other approaches are valid? The focus of this session is to provide a reality check on the means and methods of keeping small towns viable.

#### Session 6: 'Getting it all together'

Is dealing with climate change the primary task? Amidst the plethora of creative ideas, this session will consider how concerted integration is needed to ensure that small towns stay vital and viable and asks the question – who needs to take the responsibility for this challenge?

## The Forum Sessions (Cont)

### 26 Sunday 26 October

#### Session 7: 'Shepp Town Centre'

The Shepparton CBD is characterised by wide streets and low scale. Add to this the fact of competing out-of-centre shopping development and the challenge for urban design is substantial. So what to do? This session will focus on the current studies of the CBD and assess whether the proposed outcomes will meet the challenge.

#### Session 8: 'Future Shepparton'

What is the future of Shepparton? Solar City? Cyber City? Retirement City? City of diverse culture? Pure food capital? This session will focus on practical options for Shepparton in the light of national and international climate and economics.

#### Session 9: Panel discussion

This final session will focus on lessons learned, regional similarities and differences, opportunities for action, and the courage needed to make necessary changes.

## Where are we going?

### Nathalia

Nathalia is a town of 1450 people. Once renowned as a centre for the river redgum timber industry, it has survived the decline of this industry. It is the town acknowledged with the lowest rainfall of any town in Victoria, yet it is surviving the drought and remains renowned as a major agricultural area. It was rocked with job losses and income when it lost its status as the shire seat at the time of Jeff Kennett's changes of council borders, yet has gone on to create a streetscape and amenity second to none for a town its size.

It embarked in (2004) on an economic and social Strategy Plan, built a new library (2006), a new police station (2007), is currently building a new hospital (2008-2009), is the subject of a town Planning Strategy, and has commissioned (2007-2008) Romaldo Giurgola AO to produce a 'test' Master Plan with Pamille Berg Consultants for a proposed Living Arts/Rural Arts Centre. It is a town which has creatively sought to acknowledge and build upon its assets.

### Shepparton

Located two hours north of Melbourne, the Shepparton area has a population of 70,000 people with a small-scale but significant cultural diversity. It features magnificent food and wine, glorious weather and all the attractions and activities you could imagine in a regional city. Over many years, the Council has undertaken a range of urban design and planning studies, and is currently involved in a major study of its central area. The region has an international reputation for quality fresh and processed fruit and dairy products. A number of Australia's largest food processing companies have their home there. Irrigation channels criss-cross the region and the neat rows of fruit trees - bare in winter, blossoming in spring and bearing fruit in summer - provide just some of the contrasts.