

Talking Business

March 2020

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Paul's Corner

Welcome to the first edition of Talking Business for 2020. The first quarter of this year has been a challenging one for Australia, with fires breaking out across the nation and impacting the lives of so many. It has been great to witness humanity coming together to assist in this crisis, and the courage and generosity of our firefighters has been second to none.

As an organisation, we have been mindful of the effect on staff and are committed to supporting them wherever we can. An article on ways business leaders can offer support is included on page 10. The Australian Taxation Office has also extended tax relief and assistance for people impacted by bushfires.

In this edition, we once again shine the spotlight on the social enterprise sector, featuring the great work being done for those with a disability at The Bridge Dandenong, with the imminent celebration of their 50th anniversary.

We explore the outcomes of a School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships program, which was a partnership between four organisations including City of Greater Dandenong, that has paved a career path for disadvantaged students.

We extend our congratulations to 2019 Chamber Award winners as well as the local F45 gym which has been recognised on a national level for excellence in their operations. Local manufacturing will see a \$12.5 million boost with five Dandenong-based companies, securing various funds via the Next Generation Manufacturing Investment Programme.

Please enjoy the many and varied articles in this edition of Talking Business, and we hope you have an enjoyable and productive next quarter in business.

Paul Kearsley
Director Business, Engineering
and Major Projects

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Springvale Community Hub

Cover: Scaling new heights, local tourism business, Melbourne Cable Park wins prestigious RACV Victorian Tourism Awards.

SEM sets the agenda for a revolutionary 'City Deal'



SEM's Chair Simon McKeon

South East Melbourne (SEM), comprised of eight councils, will implement a 'City Deal' process in 2020 to manage future population and jobs growth.

The City Deal will require investment and cooperation from the three levels of government involved in the negotiation. The federal government announced the Deal for the SEM region in mid 2019.

SEM includes the cities of Greater Dandenong, Casey, Frankston, Kingston, Monash and Knox, and the shires of Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula, while the board includes three external directors.

SEM advocates for investment, prosperity, jobs and sustainability across the region.

The south east produces \$74.7 billion in Gross Regional Product and is home to two National Employment and Innovation Clusters; one at Monash (75,000 jobs) and the other at Dandenong (55,000 jobs).

With the region's population predicted to surge to almost 2 million by 2036, Mr Simon McKeon AO, Chair of the SEM Board, says it is critical to provide the social and physical infrastructure that communities need.

"The SEM City Deal presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to research, plan and build in a coordinated, logical fashion for the future of the region as a whole. We want to address issues of social disadvantage and connect people with services, education and employment."

"we want to address issues of social disadvantage and connect people with services, education, employment and housing"

"SEM will work with stakeholders, including businesses, throughout the negotiation period to ensure it's bringing the right information to the table," Mr McKeon adds.

Projects that SEM supports include:

- extension of Cranbourne and Frankston Rail lines
- the South East Airport
- environmental solutions that deliver sustainable outcomes
- the South East's Major Roads Package
- build the South East Freight Hub
- expand the region's skills base
- bring jobs to the south east and
- provide recycled water for farmers, manufacturers and green spaces
- stadium for Dandenong.

\$12.5 million boost for local manufacturing

Five Greater Dandenong businesses were successful in securing funding via the Next Generation Manufacturing Investment Programme, totalling more than \$12.5 million.

The Programme is part of the Australian Government's \$155 million Growth Fund established in 2014 to support employees, businesses and regions affected by the closure of Australia's car manufacturing industry. The Victorian and South Australian state governments each contributed \$12 million to grants.

Bombardier Transportation Australia

Bombardier Transportation Australia Pty Ltd was granted \$3.2 million to expand its rail vehicle manufacturing capacity and capability at its Dandenong site. This is being achieved through installation of assembly lines for robotic welding

and electrical propulsion equipment, and extension of its final assembly and testing facilities.

Aluminium Industries of Australia

A boost of more than \$2.2 million has seen Aluminium Industries of Australia Pty Ltd establish a new facility in Dandenong South. It will manufacture aluminium components for the light and heavy transportation industries, as well as complex, metal-based engineering industries.

Walkinshaw Automotive Group

Walkinshaw Automotive Group Pty Ltd was awarded \$5 million in funding to establish special facilities in Springvale. The investment will enable the company to undertake modifications of imported vehicles for the local market and manage the supply chain for the manufacture of parts.

Meyer Timber

Meyer Timber Pty, trading as Timber Building Systems, will establish a pre-fabricated building manufacturing facility in Dandenong with its \$1.55 million grant. This will enable expansion of its wholesale timber business into timber panels production for use in low to mid-rise commercial and residential buildings.

Asaleo Care

Asaleo Care will invest its \$500,000 in equipment to upgrade its range of feminine products with new features at its Springvale factory.

Businesses seeking more information on available Federal Government grants and funding can utilise the online tool at business.gov.au/grants-and-programs.



Connecting all sides of disability and employment support

For 50 years, The Bridge has supported people with a disability. The organisation has evolved over this period, including the introduction of a social firm called 'Bridge Works'.

Chief Executive Officer, Phillip Toovey, says this "supportive employment" for around 40 people is housed in a factory facility in Dandenong.

"It involves mainly job placement and work experience for young adults with a disability – or who are disadvantaged – and need ongoing support.

"We're supported through the Jobs Victoria Employment Network and have subsequently acquired sufficient, steady business to create an integrated workforce.

"We secured a three-year contract in late 2017 to compile and pack bowel cancer screening kits for Sonic Healthcare. We employ 12 people without a disability as support staff in order to keep up with the rate of work, and this is enriching for everyone.

"We've directly employed two people from this program for The Bridge's operations – one is a young, Afghan woman who completed a Certificate IV in Training and is now actually working in disability support," said Mr Toovey.

The Bridge Employment

Mr Toovey says Bridge Works is only a "small part" of the organisation, which falls under 'The Bridge Employment' arm.

The Bridge also matches job seekers with suitable companies and aims to create careers. After a successful placement, one client is still working with McDonald's Cranbourne after 26 years.

The Next Step program supports people with a disability to develop the skills required in the workplace.

The Bridge Connect

The organisation's other service stream falls under 'The Bridge Connect' and has grown from two staff to 75 now supporting activity. This covers weekends away for both clients and their primary carers (respite care), one-to-one support, and accessing disability services.

The Bridge Connect provides day services for 170 clients at five sites around the region, in a post school environment that includes recreational activities and learning work and life skills.

Last year was a big year at The Bridge with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) transition, but 2020 will be a time for celebration with the organisation's 50th anniversary.

On 20 October 2020, The Bridge will hold its Annual General Meeting in the Supper Room of Springvale Town Hall – the same date, time and meeting of the organisation's first AGM in 1970. In November, The Bridge will take over the Springvale Town Hall in a dinner dance for more than 400 staff and clients, and a historian is currently working on documenting the organisation's story.

The Bridge is also managing a three-stage housing development in Noble Park to generate profits to further the organisation's work. The first stage is scheduled for completion in June 2021 with the final stage to finish in 2023.



“We’ve directly employed two people from this program for The Bridge’s operations – one is a young, Afghan woman who completed a Certificate IV in Training and is now actually working in disability support.”

“We aim to allocate some of these houses specifically to people with disabilities, for which there is an extremely high demand, but we need to balance the commercial aspects and risk of such a major initiative,” Mr Toovey says.

The Bridge is a great example of a local business, with a social enterprise arm, that is tackling key social issues and we encourage other social

enterprises to contact our Economic Development Unit to share their unique story. business@cgd.vic.gov.au

Who Gives a Crap? Simon Griffiths shares his success story.

Simon Griffiths CEO of the highly successful Who Gives a Crap brand, will host a seminar in March. Simon will share his experiences of the profit-for-purpose toilet paper company, including their successes, challenges and learnings.

Time:
8am-9.30am + networking

Date:
Wednesday 18 March

Location:
Victory Offices, Level 2/311
Lonsdale Street, Dandenong

Register:
greaterdandenong.com/whogivesacrap

Cranbourne Line to offer more frequent services

The Victorian State Government will invest more than \$1 billion for upgrades to the Cranbourne Train Line. The works will remove the remaining four level crossings on the rail line and create duplicate tracks.

The project will enable trains to run every 10 minutes and reduce traffic congestion, making travel more enjoyable, accessible and safer for Greater Dandenong residents and visitors to the area.

According to the State Government, the line upgrade will be delivered in stages to ensure works can be coordinated and completed efficiently.

Works have commenced on the Greens Road level crossing in Dandenong South, which are expected to be completed in 2023. Located in a commercial and industrial area, this level crossing will be removed by building a new rail bridge over the road.

The upgrade will also see the construction of 8km of new track between Dandenong and Cranbourne, removing single-track bottlenecks by 2023.

Eleven level crossings have already been removed on the Cranbourne line, with further technical investigations and community consultation to come for crossings at Webster Street in Dandenong and Camms Road in Cranbourne.

The State Government reports these crossings will be removed by 2025 to make the Cranbourne line the first to be level crossing-free.

A Victorian Government spokesperson said, “Everyone – from drivers who travel through the area, to businesses relying on the level crossing-hampered roads for their day-to-day operations – are going to benefit in some way from these major upgrades.

“Local businesses are excited about the level crossing removal on Greens Road in Dandenong South. It’s a major thoroughfare in one of Victoria’s most significant industrial and employment precincts.

“The local project team has already heard from businesses around Greens Road that they tend to avoid the level crossing all together because of the congestion.”

Further information: www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/projects/cranbourne-line-upgrade

Meet the 'Muesli Queen': How Carolyn Creswell turned \$1000 into a \$100 million food empire



"I am really driven by us being the best business we can be."

When Carolyn Creswell purchased a muesli company at the age of just 18 for just \$1000, she never anticipated the success that would follow.

After all, the 'muesli queen', as she is now commonly referred to, made the leap from employee to employer when she was told she was going to lose her part-time muesli-making job.

Looking back, Creswell says she did not fully understand the hard work and perseverance that she would require to transform Carman's Muesli into the household food brand it is today.

"If I could have got rid of the business in the first five years I would have," she says. "I worked very hard and was extremely broke for those five years trying to get it established."

While muesli was not popular in the late 90s, Creswell endured consumer food trends and eventually the Melbourne-based CEO managed to secure contracts with a major supermarket.

"At that stage it was all about the 99 per cent fat-free and people were eating foods that were full of chemicals, but then all of a sudden they came back into a phase of recognising that real food was awesome and good for them," she says.

"It's a pretty hard industry, but once we got a supermarket listing, we started gaining momentum," recalls Creswell.

Yet, the now mother-of-four says she made a lot of mistakes in the early

days and was essentially learning on the job.

"I was saying 'yes' to far too many things... and burning myself out," she said. It's easy to get distracted or find that you're spinning your wheels and not moving forward. Business is complex and you need to understand whatever you say 'yes' to, means that you say 'no' to something else," she adds.

More than 26 years later and Carman's is still a thriving business - exporting to over 30 countries and an annual turnover in excess of \$100 million. But money is not the motivator.

"I am really driven by us being the best business we can be," said Creswell.

"I love what I do. I love coming to work - you want to find something that you're passionate about. We're just a bunch of people in a suburb in Melbourne selling product all around the world... and putting that little extra sparkle and delight in their day. It's a huge honour."

It is this impressive work ethic, passion and business acumen that has won Creswell a number of accolades, including the 2007 Ernst & Young's Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award and 2012 Telstra Australian Business Woman of the Year.

"Winning an award like the Telstra one gives you street credibility," she says. "I'm super proud of the business we've built."

Carolyn's top three business tips:

1. **You have to start** – Take the plunge. Everyone has ideas, but not many actually start. It is not about completely giving up your day job, but starting is key.
2. **Don't try to be everything to everyone** – Know what you are good at, know what you stand for and try to build a business with integrity. If you know what the essence of your business is, it will be much easier to make decisions.
3. **Make sure you spend your time and energy on moving the business forward** – Where do you want the business to be in a year and what are all of the little steps you need to take to get there? It is about getting off the dance floor and getting onto the balcony.

Want to hear more of Carolyn's story? Join us in April to hear more...

Creating a Food Empire: The Carman Story

When: 8am – 9.30am, Wednesday 22 April

Where: Brick Lane Brewing

Tickets: greaterdandenong.com/creatingafoodempire

This story was written by Sheree Mutton and originally published on businesschicks.com.au

Partnership cultivates a career path for disadvantaged students



Pictured left to right: back row – Tom and Josh; front row – Motasim and Lochlan

A partnership between four organisations, including City of Greater Dandenong, has seen school students learn valuable work and life skills over 12 months, plus achieve Certificate II in Horticulture.

The School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) program involved classroom learning, hands-on training and work experience.

The National Horticulture Institute, GRE8, Citywide Open Space Services and Council participated in the program.

“We were involved with the practical horticulture aspect at Keshava Reserve in Dandenong,” says Jack Chittenden, Open Space Contracts Coordinator for Council.

“The 10 students involved in the program have disabilities and some learning challenges, this school based program was designed to provide trainees with skills and knowledge to improve employment opportunities into the industry.

“The trainees were predominately in years 11 and 12 participating in a school VCAL pathway, these trainees required an environment that was nurturing and flexible to achieve many benefits other than ‘employability skills’ such as becoming more independent, having their first part time job, getting themselves to and from work on their own and in a lot of cases making decisions for

themselves for the first time. The programs also helped the trainees understand the value of work, money and contributing to society.

“One of the trainees ultimately became an employee of Citywide. It’s a win-win because Citywide had the opportunity to observe the trainee’s work ethic and assessed that he was well skilled and a good fit for their team before recruiting.”

The school based traineeship works on a model that encompasses school for three days per week and the other two days is committed to a 13-hour per week work based SBAT at Keshava Reserve. Several excursions were included as part of the program to offer further insight into the horticultural industry.

“This holistic approach made the traineeship really relevant and practical for a career in horticulture. We had a graduation ceremony in December and the trainees said they had learnt a lot and felt really good about themselves, which was so rewarding to hear.

“I’d encourage local businesses interested in being a part of such an amazing program to contact Barbara Reid at National Horticulture Institute as the benefits to the community, as well as the business itself, are extensive,” Mr Chittenden said.

For further information, email operations@cgd.vic.gov.au.

Information about resolving business disputes now available in languages other than English

Victorian business people can now access information in languages other than English. When looking to resolve a business dispute or what to know, before signing a retail lease.

The Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) has released translated resources in Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Dari, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese. The new online materials include:

- an easy-to-read fact sheet about how the Victorian Small Business Commission can help resolve small business disputes
- a retail leases information brochure with important information tenants need to know before signing
- an animation on the VSBC’s services with translated voiceover and subtitles (in Arabic, Vietnamese and Simplified Chinese)

The Victorian Small Business Commission is a first step for small business disputes and saves small businesses time and money rather than going through the courts.

Small business people can either talk over the phone to find a solution to an issue or come together with an experienced mediator for a low cost. Interpreters can be arranged at no cost.

Visit VSBC’s languages page vsbc.vic.gov.au/languages to find out more.

Congratulations to the Greater Dandenong Chamber Award Winners

On 4 December, over 180 guests came together to honour and recognise the outstanding business achievements in Greater Dandenong area. We extend our congratulations to all nominees, with the spotlight particularly upon the following award recipients:

- **Greater Dandenong Chamber Business Award** - Springvale Botanical Cemetery
- **Small Business Award** - Soccer 5's
- **Large Business Award** - Future Recycling
- **Employment Award** - Springvale Botanical Cemetery
- **Retail Award** - Thrifty Car and Truck Rental
- **Innovation Award** - Ausgroup Alliance
- **Corporate Social Responsibility Award** - SELLEN
- **Youth Enterprise Award** - Zoe Atterbury

Nominations are now open for the 2020 Greater Dandenong Chamber of Business Awards. To nominate your business or someone you know, email info@greaterdandenongchamber.com.au.

Further information: greaterdandenongchamber.com.au/business-awards



Pictured left to right: Kelly Nunn, Megan Petty (Springvale Botanical Cemetery) and Paul Wood (NAB, Chamber Business Award Sponsor)

Wildflower Meadow blooms



Council's Parks team have developed a delightfully whimsical wildflower meadow as a key gateway statement to pedestrians arriving in the Dandenong activity centre from the train station.

The project is a great example of how interventions in smaller spaces can humanise cities thereby improving walkability and creating unique, loved spaces.

Place Manager Activity Centre's Revitalisation, Jenny Pemberton-Webb, said: "The wildflower meadow requires less maintenance and more visual interest than regular lawn grass, the wildflower meadow attracts birds and insects which increases the diversity of flora in the urban area."

"The concept rejuvenates the lawn area of Settlers Square and adds

an unexpected experience for passers-by, many of whom have taken photos of the much-loved place and posted them on social media".

"With concerns about climate change, urban areas heating up and how to improve plant diversity in built up areas, this meadow connects us with the joy nature brings," said Ms Pemberton-Webb.

It adds an extra layer of colour and vibrancy to the surrounding precinct supporting changes in Little India that has seen shop fronts upgraded and street art added.

Settlers Square is located in Foster Street Dandenong directly opposite the Dandenong Station. The area is high profile and has more than 15,000 people per week passing through.

Local gym shines at national level

F45 Dandenong continues to demonstrate its credentials, recently winning an award and placing second at a national competition.

Hamlet Armenian and Josh Schmidt opened Dandenong F45 in September 2017 after falling in love with the 45-minute, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) program.

The long-time friends had competed in elite sports together and both have a business background. The F45 franchise only allows for one gym in each area and they assessed Dandenong as the most viable and convenient.

“It was slow when we first opened but the F45 brand is strong and we offer free trials,” says Mr Armenian, who studied Health Science at university.

“At the beginning we targeted local businesses, did flyer drops, and organised cross promotions with local cafés. Facebook and Instagram are important marketing tools for us, and we’ve found positive and fun posts have the best response.

“We aim to create a fun and motivating environment. One first-time client sat in their car for 20 minutes before deciding to come in; a video on our website helped them realise it’s a safe and friendly space.”



After reading reviews online about the supportive trainers and members, and the safe nature of the environment, she mustered the courage to come in.

F45 now employs six staff and has continued to excel, winning “Division Champion” in September 2019 for Melbourne’s south east at F45’s world conference.

The branch also took a team of its members to the ‘F45 Playoffs’ in Sydney in November 2019 and

placed second against Australian and international competition.

At a club level, Mr Schmidt says the focus is for members to compete against themselves rather than others.

“We measure our performance through member retention, the positive impact on individuals and our reviews and feedback.”

Mr Schmidt and Mr Armenian plan to open F45 Noble Park in March and will offer dual memberships to provide more training options for its clientele.

Dignified donations from hygiene manufacturer



James Merlino, Minister for Education; Caitlin Patterson, Executive General Manager, Retail Consumer Marketing; Premier Daniel Andrews; Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Women; and Heather Thompson, Principal at University High School.

Recent international changes in the recycling industry have put waste disposal high on the agenda across the globe.

Leading the way is local manufacturer Asaleo Care which

has taken the initiative to tackle two major community issues head-on. For the last 40 years, the company has been the only manufacturer of feminine hygiene products in Australia and is committed to human rights.

As such, they have identified a way to save on landfill and support Australia’s vulnerable and at-risk women.

Strict presentation requirements for their products would previously see those with imperfect packaging making their way to landfill as waste. But Asaleo Care now donate these items to a notable women’s cause, Share the Dignity.

Today, the company is Share the Dignity’s largest donor during its annual Dignity Drive, making significant contributions of sanitary items to those most in need.

CEO and Managing Director of Asaleo Care, Sid Takla, said: “Our aim is to provide care, comfort and confidence every day to girls and women, and we’re proud of our contribution to help end period poverty.”

Last September they were also announced as the exclusive supplier to the State’s initiative to provide sanitary pads and tampons free of charge to public school students across Victoria.



How business leaders can support employees during and after Australia's bushfire crisis

Returning to work after the summer break is usually an exciting time filled with anticipation of what the new year will bring.

Unfortunately, a large amount of people started the working year in sad circumstances, as our country grappled with the bushfire crisis.

Precious lives lost, many lives ruined, towns and communities shattered. The true cost of these events will only continue to unfold over time, our horrified eyes glued to the media coverage.

It is easy to feel helpless as we watch our firefighters (and those from overseas) fight these raging fires.

As leaders and businesses, what can we do to support our workers and team members during a time of helplessness?

Acknowledging the tragic and dire situation is key. Giving your employees time and space to be sad is also vital.

Here are a few other tips on how you can support your teams through a national disaster.

1. Provide access to counselling services

There will be many Australians who will experience trauma due to these recent events. As an employer, you have a duty of care for your team.

Unfortunately, mental health stigma is still a very real thing. Make sure you share your employee assistance program details with your employees as a reminder that there is confidential professional counselling and resources for them. Remember to keep this front of mind even after the immediate threat passes.

2. Offering greater flexibility in leave entitlements

Giving your employees leave if they or their families have been adversely impacted by the fires will be enormous support and help. The last thing someone in this position should worry about is the security of their job.

You will often have to offer this proactively as employees who have just had a break may not feel comfortable asking for more time off.

3. Build a culture of community and trust

Give your employees space and psychological safety to feel sad and talk freely about the current situation, their personal situation. Every piece of support they can get will be of assistance.

To help combat the feeling of helplessness, consider how you can contribute to community initiatives as a team. Whether that's raising money, volunteering time or simply increasing awareness.

4. Reach out to and support partners

It is easy to turn our attention inwards at these times. It's human nature. However, I implore you to reach out to your business network of partners or associates who might be affected by this crisis. Offer what support you can.

Many Australian businesses have a long road of healing and rebuilding ahead and our community must rally together to support them.

This article was written by Alex Hattingh and was first published on LinkedIn.

Bushfire tax relief and assistance



The Commissioner of Taxation Chris Jordan recently announced an extension of a tax assistance package for people impacted by the devastating bushfires in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania as part of the whole-of-government response to the disaster.

Approximately 3.5 million businesses, individuals, and self-managed superannuation funds in impacted local government areas will now have until 28 May 2020 to lodge and pay business activity statements and income tax returns.

Mr Jordan said he hoped the additional time – on top of the two-

month extension already granted – would give people the breathing space they need to recover and start to rebuild. “If you’ve been impacted by these bushfires, we don’t want you to be concerned about your tax affairs. Now is the time for you, your family and your community. We’ll help you sort out your tax affairs later.”

Additionally, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is fast tracking any refunds that are due to taxpayers in the impacted regions.

“If you run a business and you’re expecting a refund on – for example as a result of GST credits due to large purchases to replace stock – I

encourage you to try to lodge or ask your tax professional to lodge your activity statements on your behalf. Refunds generated by lodging may provide some helpful temporary cash flow relief during these difficult times,” Mr Jordan said.

The ATO will continue to assess the impact of the bushfires and will keep the community informed as it receives more information on additional impacted postcodes and available support.

Visit ato.gov.au for information about assistance.

Melbourne Cable Park is a winner!

Melbourne Cable Park, world class outdoor adventure centre won two accolades in the recent RACV Victorian Tourism Awards.

Based in Bangholme, the Melbourne Cable Park won the Gold Award for Excellence in Accessible Tourism and the Silver Award for Adventure Tourism, a first for a business in the City of Greater Dandenong.

Ian Clark, Owner/Operator said “We love bringing tourism to the City of Greater Dandenong and look forward to building on our awards in the years ahead.”

On behalf of the City of Greater Dandenong Council and the community, we would like to congratulate Ian and his team at Melbourne Cable Park for bringing such a fantastic venue to our city.



Focus on Manufacturing

Why not make 2020 the year your manufacturing business becomes involved in our key network groups?

SEBN focuses only on the manufacturing sector and women in business. Operating for more than 25 years, these two key areas of focus have delivered services that have had a positive impact on both the business sector and the community in general.

This region is now the strongest manufacturing region in Australia.

Participation in most SEBN networks is free of charge and open to business located across the south east region of Melbourne.

SEBN networks attract participants from all levels of business and many companies have employees joining different network groups, taking the learnings back to the organisation

and cross-fertilising new ideas and technologies.

So, if you aren't already a member of the SEBN family, and often wonder if others are experiencing the same challenges as you, then why not put your toe in the water and come along to a session or two and reap the benefits?

Contact SEBN@cgd.vic.gov.au today.

Interested in capability development and sharing learnings with your peers?

If so, then get involved with SEBN – from CEO to Production and activities for all.

Specific networks that meet regularly to enhance and embed learnings include:

- Manufacturing Leadership for CEO / Senior Management
- Manufacturing 'Xcellents' for production managers / shop floor
- South East Quality & CI Network (SEQN) for continuous improvement
- Workplace Health & Safety
- Developing Young Leaders
- CEO Series
- CEO Mentoring
- SE Women in Business

All enquiries to sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au or SEBN Manager sandra.george@cgd.vic.gov.au



Successful manufacturer makes SEBN a family affair

The Norden Group celebrated its 60th anniversary in December at the Dandenong Club where City of Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti presented a plaque to the company. Council recognised Norden Group for its outstanding contribution to the local economy and community.

With 60 years of success to date, Norden has set the bar in terms of its standards and community involvement.

The design, engineering and manufacturing business works primarily in the transportation industry, with three main divisions:

- Norden Conversion – modifying vehicles for wheelchair access.
- Norden Hydraulics – creating entire fluid and conveying kits, with Bombardier among its clients.
- Norden RV – motorhome access equipment including electric steps and levelling systems.

The Group has a proud history, with its Managing Director, Robert Anson, saying the business grew from its reputation for doing the job correctly, safely and with a high level of quality.

His father, Ron, established the company in 1959 with Robert involved from the tender age of nine.

"I went on to do a basic apprenticeship in hydraulics and pneumatics at night school, then worked for John's Hydraulics in Clayton," said Mr Anson, who officially began with Norden Group at 21 years of age.

"Similar to my upbringing, my five sons all worked at Norden in the school holidays growing up. My eldest is now an electronics engineer and still works with us."

The company shares its success with the local community, consistently sponsoring Council's 'Take a Swing for Charity' Golf Day, as well as supporting Villa Maria Catholic Homes, National Breast Cancer Foundation, and Life Education Australia - among others.

"It's about giving back and supporting communities wherever we can," Mr Anson says.

Norden Group is currently working on prototyping and development work for converting a Toyota Hiace commuter bus, with the goal of becoming a second stage manufacturer of the vehicle.

"We're working to be signed off as an approved manufacturer. It's a long process but we're aiming to achieve the accreditation by March."

The Group has been involved with South East Business Networks since its inception in 1992 with three generations of the Anson family benefitting from the program.

Mr Anson describes SEBN as "second to none" and says the organisation is great for business development and networking.

"They have helped me and my father over the years to learn and grow. I'm currently in a CEO group with my son, Ryan, and it's excellent.

"I've sent two of my sons and one of our engineer/apprentices to the Young Leaders group and it's really helped grow all three of those boys into adults – they don't let anything stop them now," Mr Anson said.

norden.com.au

Regional Schools Community Project



This Is IT Schools (TIIS) a not-for-profit organisation created by three Dandenong business owners, aims to make the perfect match – repurposing laptops from business for use by students in secondary education. Not only does this provide top of the line technology for students, it gives new life to a device destined for landfill or shredding.

Each laptop is donated to TIIS who then wipe and repurpose the laptop and award it as an IT Scholarship to students nominated by their schools.

Simon Whitely, CEO, Corex Australia; Todd Hartley, Managing Director, Hilton Manufacturing and Tyrone Landsman, CEO, Future Recycling were looking for additional ways to engage with and support local communities. In collaboration with Andrew Simmons from SELLEN and Sandra George from City of Greater Dandenong (CGD) South East Business Networks, the idea of focusing on supply of high-end laptops was born.

The official launch of This is IT and handover of the first group of computers was held at the City of Greater Dandenong on 7 February. Mayor Jim Memeti welcomed attendees from 14 secondary schools across the region, who were joined by more than 30 businesses and two young rugby players from Melbourne Rebels who assisted the NAB and the City of Casey in the handover.



Andrew Simmons spoke of how the idea emerged and the amazing passion of the three founding businesses in tapping into their networks to help bring the idea to life. Paul Woods from the NAB also spoke about why they had decided to donate their first group of laptops – and how much further they hoped to take their involvement. The City of Casey donated 100 laptops which were handed to schools and scholarship recipients within their locality and CGD have more than 100 laptops to be made available over the coming months.

All businesses at the launch were encouraged to commit their support to This is IT - a project that has the potential to have enormous impact both socially and environmentally.

In a lovely piece of timing, one of the scholarship recipients was having his 13th birthday and with a gentle nudge, a room of around 150 people burst into song with 'Happy Birthday to You.'

For details about how your organisation can support this outstanding project – visit thisisit.org.au or email sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au



Heading towards \$500,000 for Charity!

At the time of going to print, preparations for the 11th Annual 'Take a Swing for Charity' golf day were well under way.

A Council-Industry partnership event, golf enthusiasts will tee off at Victoria Golf Club Wednesday, 26 February. Thanks to a small group of sponsors and many supporters - both playing - and non-playing, nearly \$450,000 has been raised to support local communities.

This year's recipients include Taskforce, who plan to establish a social enterprise coffee van outside the Dandenong Court, training jobseekers as baristas and supporting them into employment - and the Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

We'll bring you the results in the next edition.

Major Sponsors



International Women's Day Celebration Thursday 5 March, 7.15am



How much impact can one person have?

This year's International Women's Day campaign theme #EachforEqual, speaks to individual action for maximum impact for all women.

The achievements of this year's keynote speaker, Annabelle Chauncy OAM, Founding Director and CEO of School for Life Foundation, embody this theme in every way.

Venue: Highways, Corner Princes Highway and Corrigan Road Springvale 3171



New Women in Business initiatives in 2020

SEBN Women in Business (WIB) and the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce traditionally partner to present an event for the annual International Women's Day.

During 2020 we will be exploring a stronger alliance with the Chamber and deliver new initiatives – increasing the personal and professional offering to women from all business sectors as well as those from the broader community.

Business events 2020

	CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG RUN BUSINESS EVENTS	EXTERNALLY RUN BUSINESS EVENTS
MARCH	<p>4 March Information session: Winning business contracts using Vendor Panel Dandenong</p> <p>5 March SEBN International Women's Day #Eachfor Equal Highways, Springvale</p> <p>18 March Who Gives a Crap? A business success story Victory Offices, Dandenong</p> <p>24 March Information session: Winning business contracts using Vendor Panel Dandenong</p>	<p>12 & 26 March Commercialising your business Monash City Council</p>
APRIL	<p>2 April Information session: Winning business contracts using Vendor Panel Springvale</p> <p>9 April Small Business Bus Harmony Square, Dandenong</p> <p>22 April Creating a food empire: The Carman's Story Brick Lane Brewing</p> <p>27 April Tax essentials for home-based business Greater Dandenong Libraries</p>	<p>21 April Engage real followers on Instagram Kingston City Council</p>
MAY	<p>11 May How to turn an idea into a business Greater Dandenong Libraries</p> <p>18 May Business planning essentials: How to get it right the first time Greater Dandenong Libraries</p> <p>27 May Small Business Bus in Small Business Bus Parkmore Shopping Centre, Keysborough</p>	<p>6 May Winning Government Business Monash City Council</p> <p>19 May Ride sourcing and Tax Frankston City Council</p>

*Bookings, locations and further enquiries relating to these vents please visit the respective organisations website.

Have Your Say – help shape our new Climate Change Strategy.

Climate change is here, and its impacts are already affecting our environment, our society and our economy. Council has acknowledged we are in a climate emergency as it is an issue that will increasingly impact the City of Greater Dandenong and our community.

Council's draft Climate Change Strategy provides a strategic framework for Council and the

community to achieve its vision of becoming a resilient, net carbon city.

The strategy aims to develop a whole of Council response to climate change, building on existing programs and activities to reduce emissions and increase resilience, at both a Council operational and community level.

You are invited to have your say on the draft Climate Change Strategy.



For further information:

Visit: greaterdandenong.com

Email: sustainability@cgd.vic.gov.au

Call: 8571 100

Springvale Community Hub nears completion

The new “community heart” of Springvale is scheduled for completion soon after four years of planning and development.

Paul Kearsley, Director Business, Engineering and Major Projects for City of Greater Dandenong, says the new Springvale Community Precinct on Springvale Road will be a vibrant meeting place.

“The transformation of the original Springvale precinct has seen the creation of inviting and functional spaces where people of all ages, backgrounds and interests can feel welcome.

“From the beginning and throughout the various stages of this project, we’ve involved the community and have invited their feedback on how to support their needs.

“As a result, we feel the Precinct perfectly reflects the community with the diversity of its offering – whether for learning, playing or relaxing - and anticipates their future needs with modern design and technology,” says Mr Kearsley.

The project has been delivered in two stages with the first – the Springvale City Hall and Supper Room redevelopment – complete. This major renovation has turned the town hall into a more functional facility while preserving its overall design character.

Stage two of the project began in July 2018 with the construction of the two-storey Springvale Community Hub, which includes:

- a sustainably designed, state-of-the-art library featuring new technologies and equipment
- flexible community meeting spaces
- a play area, plaza and sports area
- a new learning and activity hub
- a customer service area
- plentiful parking
- a café and
- extensively landscaped outdoor green spaces suitable for community events and social gatherings.



“We feel the Precinct perfectly reflects the community with the diversity of its offering – whether for learning, playing or relaxing”

The new building will achieve a 5 Star As-Built Green Star rating with many innovative measures such as: net zero emissions, rain and stormwater harvesting for flushing and irrigation and water-saving fittings and fixtures.

Plans are underway to celebrate the official opening of the Springvale Community Precinct through a community event with the date to be announced.

The entire project is scheduled for completion in September 2020. This will include a multi-purpose courts area and further landscaping.

greaterdandenong.com/springvaleprecinct

From paper to pixels...

Did you know the Talking Business magazine is available electronically?

To swap to a digital version email
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