

# Talking Business

September 2020

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## Paul's Corner

The second lock down has felt harder. We are all missing seeing our family and friends. I know I am missing the little activities we took for granted such as taking the dog for a walk beyond our local streets, dressing up to eat out or skipping out of town for a weekend getaway.

However, all of these activities are little things. They can wait. There are many Australians who are battling this pandemic firsthand in particular healthcare workers. We must remain strong for them and remember why we are doing this.

If you're struggling to cope with the latest restrictions, please know you're not alone and there is help available. Please reach out to one of the many support services available such as Lifeline by calling 13 11 14.

In this September issue, we spoke to local yogurt manufacturer, Chobani, who have been looking after their customers and staff with some great well-being initiatives, you can read this story on page 6.

A local Gelatery named Augustus Gelatery recently opened its doors on Lonsdale Street. We checked in with them to see how they are settling in which you can read about on page 4.

On page 13, we explore the Take2 Program which focuses on giving every home, business and organisation the information they need to reduce their greenhouse emissions and plan for a low carbon future.

We have enjoyed collating these local business stories. We hope you find pleasure in reading this issue of Talking Business.

Take care,

**Paul Kearsley**  
**Director of Business, Engineering**  
**and Major Projects**

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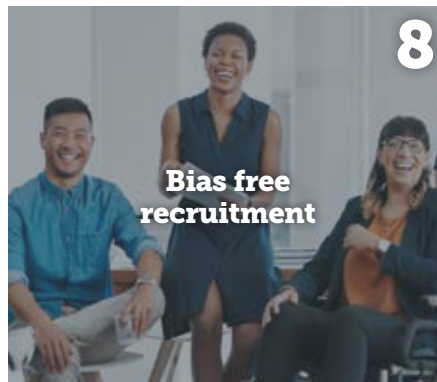
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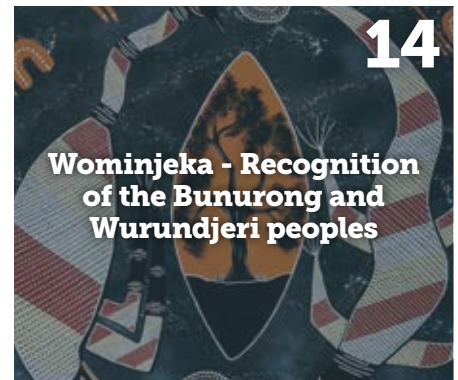


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# Nationwide 'Go Local First' campaign encourages community to shop local

A national campaign encouraging Australians to support local businesses is hoping to stimulate the economy and keep jobs.

Early 2020 data showed our city supported 98,000 jobs and had an economic output of more than \$39 billion. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted local employment with the Greater Dandenong unemployment rate estimated to have increased by at least 4 per cent in recent months. The hardest hit businesses were in the retail trade, and accommodation and food services.

While many businesses have adapted their offerings to suit the current circumstances, some are relying on the ongoing support of loyal customers to get them through.

The Go Local First campaign is funded by the Australian Government and supported by the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA). Go Local First promotes the idea if we buy and spend locally, we keep local jobs.

By supporting our local economy we can help the nation's economy recover in the long term.

Research commissioned by COSBOA shows that Australians are spending more at local businesses since the introduction of COVID-19 lockdowns in March, but ongoing restrictions are preventing many from doing more.

Greater Dandenong is home to thousands of small business. Collectively they make a significant



Local business - Rob's British Butchers located at 177 Lonsdale St, Dandenong.

economic and social contribution to our community. These are businesses where our children get their first jobs. They support local charities, sporting clubs, kindergartens and schools. They remember our names and our regular orders.

They are the heart and soul of our community and they rely on our business.

There are businesses we rely on everyday, from the local café to bakers, butchers and greengrocers. There are also businesses that we turn to less frequently, including tradesmen and accountants. By keeping these businesses afloat you are supporting local families.

The City of Greater Dandenong's Economic Development Team has been running a campaign named Great Bites - Open for Business which lists local food businesses who continue

to serve coffee, snacks and take-away meals throughout the two lockdown periods Victorians have faced to date.

This campaign has been supported in other mediums including the Council community magazine, Greater Dandenong Council News.

In this publication Council encouraged residents to back local by showing their support online. Residents have been asked to show their support by sharing and tagging their stories on social media with the tag #golocalfirst and if it's a food business to also use the tag #greatbitesopenforbusiness.

**Further information and to find out how your business can get involved visit:**

[greaterdandenong.com/greatbitesopenforbusiness](http://greaterdandenong.com/greatbitesopenforbusiness)  
[golocalfirst.com.au](http://golocalfirst.com.au)

## \$50 Million Dandenong South Intermodal Terminal given green light

Salta Properties and the Victorian Government have signed an agreement to jointly fund the Dandenong South Intermodal Terminal.

The Federal Government and the Victorian Government will jointly invest \$28 million on government owned land to connect rail to Salta's site boundary as part of its

objective to retain Victoria's status as the number one destination for containerised freight in Australia. Salta will concurrently invest more than \$50 million to construct the Dandenong South Intermodal Terminal to be located on Salta's 180-hectare Nexus Dandenong South Intermodal Estate. Work will start early in 2021 on what will become Melbourne's biggest

Intermodal Terminal, enabling the efficient movement of thousands more containers through the Port of Melbourne (POM).

**Further information visit:**

[premier.vic.gov.au/more-freight-trains-melbournes-southeast](http://premier.vic.gov.au/more-freight-trains-melbournes-southeast)

[salta.com.au/projects/nexus-industrial-dandenong-south/](http://salta.com.au/projects/nexus-industrial-dandenong-south/)

# Frozen delight on Lonsdale Street

You'd be forgiven for thinking you landed on the streets of Italy when strolling past restaurant, Oro Bianco. You can smell the mouth-watering woodfired pizzas produced by owners Megan Harper and Kappa Hegazy. Before you've recovered you can't help but stop by their new neighbours, Augustus Gelatery. The name says it all, this business sells a delicious range of 36 flavours of gelato.

On the other side of Oro Bianco you'll find Robs British Butcher. A perfect reminder you're certainly not in Italy or England, but in fact walking along Lonsdale Street in the vibrant City of Greater Dandenong where cultures collide in the most beautiful way.

The power of food is incredible. It holds an ability to bring people together through good times and bad times, to break down barriers and inspire new ideas and creations.

Greater Dandenong has become known for this merging of cultures with so many different eateries on offer. In Dandenong alone you will find Little India along Foster Street,

the Afghan Bazaar on Thomas Street and of course the historic Dandenong Market with its wide range of cuisines on display.

Noble Park is seeing some great African restaurants pop up on Ian street and Springvale has long been known as the place to secure a famous Vietnamese Banh mi roll.

It was a no brainer for owners Giulio Barrese, Aprim Michael and Joe Versace to select Dandenong as its next place to set up an Augustus Gelatery store. The business is located at 173 Lonsdale Street.

Versace said,

"Dandenong has such a multicultural community that we knew it would be well received. The gelati is amazing with 36 flavours and something for everyone."

"Augustus aims to satisfy everyone's childhood fantasies of gluttony and excess in the simplest and most satisfying form - Gelato!"



The frozen dessert venue opened its doors on 27 June. The COVID-19 pandemic has dampened the excitement of the grand opening but they hope to offer the community fun for their taste buds during a very serious time.

Since opening, the Augustus Gelatery team have been welcomed with open arms by next-door neighbours and owners of Oro Bianco.

Harper said,

"We love having an Italian gelatery next door. We are dreaming up a few cool collaborations in time for summer trade."

These two businesses are proving once again, the strength of the Greater Dandenong business community where collaboration is ripe and opportunities endless.

**COVID-19 has resulted in businesses amending opening hours to meet restrictions. See individual websites for the latest opening hours and takeaway options.**

# Social procurement a win-win



Like many businesses, the social enterprise community have had to reshape their business models to keep doors open. This is indicative of the innovative and agile nature of the social enterprise sector.

A survey of social enterprises conducted this year by Social Traders reveals 57 per cent of social enterprises have experienced significant or drastic revenue declines since March. Promisingly, 96 per cent stated they have continued to trade.

There is also a strong appetite to grow, with 75 per cent of social enterprises suggesting they have the capacity to increase their social impact footprint.

However, growth is only realistic with the right policy settings and support, such as Government-mandated procurement targets and grants to grow or adapt their business.

Social Traders Managing Director David Brookes said,

“The social enterprise sector was a ready-made solution to getting the most vulnerable people in our communities back into jobs and so mechanisms to support growth are critical in the recovery from COVID-19.”

Social Traders know social procurement can work.

Brookes continued,

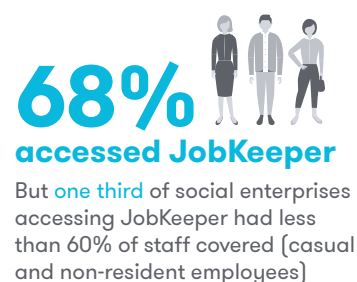
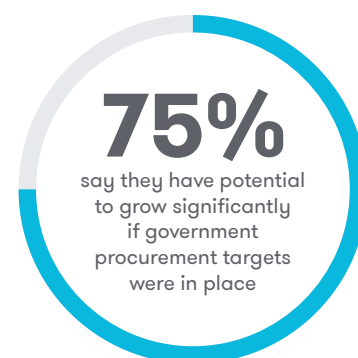
“In two years prior to the pandemic, the Social Traders marketplace enabled the creation of more than 700 jobs for people from disadvantaged communities.”

Embedding social enterprise into supply chains is a proven solution to long-term unemployment that uses sustainable market activity and frees up Government resources needed elsewhere.

Twelve months ago, the City of Greater Dandenong adopted a new procurement system, VendorPanel as the new E-Tendering portal for public advertisements. This platform is an innovative Source-to-Contract platform used by government, public agencies, corporates and small to medium business. The aim of the platform is to allow users to identify and engage with suppliers, run better organisation-wide procurement processes and drive positive social outcomes.

City of Greater Dandenong Contracts Team Leader Gerard Vellin stated,

“Council will be able to use VendorPanel to seek quotes from the Local Marketplace, Public Marketplace, City of Greater



Dandenong annual suppliers, Department of Premier & Cabinet supplier lists, MAV procurement supplier lists, Procurement Australia supplier lists, Social Traders Verified Marketplace lists and Kinaway Verified Marketplace lists.”

A training program is currently being implemented for Council Officers and once complete, will enable all staff to utilise the VendorPanel System.

Vellin continued,

“This platform will significantly improve on our ability to report on local, social and indigenous procurement activities.”

Buying from social enterprise offers a double-value spend, government and businesses buy goods or services they need and at the same time they’re also buying priceless social impact.

If you’re a Social Enterprise we’d love to hear about your experiences during this global pandemic. Send your response in via email to [business@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@cgd.vic.gov.au)

**For Council contract opportunities visit:**  
[greaterdandenong.com/tenders](https://greaterdandenong.com/tenders)

**Further information on Social Traders visit:**

[socialtraders.com.au/](https://socialtraders.com.au/)

# Chobani paying it forward, one yogurt pot at a time

*“It was such a rewarding experience to bring a little cheer to people in these tough times and our value of giving back is more important than ever.”*

In these hard times, we all have a role to play in making people smile.

Local yogurt manufacturer, Chobani, understood this responsibility. In March Chobani initiated a campaign to give away 50,000 free pots of yogurt to Aussies who needed it most during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The new initiative was inspired by a special delivery the team organised for an 88-year-old yogurt lover in Frankston. Maria couldn't get out to the shops to purchase her favourite yogurt, so the team brought her favourite yogurt directly to her. Many more Australians experienced

the same joy as 50,000 pots of Chobani yogurt were delivered over March and April based on a public nomination system.

Recipients of the surprise deliveries included hospital staff, people with serious illnesses, young families and Aussies who have lost their job during this pandemic.

Chobani received so many wonderful entries during the first giveaway, they decided to do it all again with their 'Chobani Flip' yogurt. In this second round they received a further 20,612 nominations in just over three weeks.

Chobani Australia Managing Director Lyn Radford said,

“One of our key values at Chobani is Giving Back, and given the enormous challenges facing our communities, our country and the world as a result of COVID-19, now, more than ever, it's important that we give back in any way we can.”

Radford continued,

“I was also lucky enough to get out in the CHOvan (our delivery van) and deliver some of our amazing yogurts to people in the community.

“It was such a rewarding experience to bring a little cheer to people in these tough times and our value of giving back is more important than ever.”

One of the recipients, Winsome Yu, was so thrilled posting on Facebook to express gratitude,

“.. Today was the day! With a knock at the door and two fine young gentlemen armed with four boxes of Chobani Flips, we are so touched to learn that Super S1 (one of Noah's carers) nominated our family and that our family's story was worthy of being selected to be one of the many to be receiving some love and kindness in the form of delicious yogurt that we LOVE...”

It's not just their consumers the yogurt manufacturer takes pride in looking out for, with a staff of 285 in their care, it is even more vital they effectively communicate and engage to keep staff connected - regardless of where they are working.

Some of the initiatives Chobani have introduced include livestream comedy performances and inter-team trivia challenges. They have engaged with local entertainers who have been impacted by COVID-19, such as comedian's who had their comedy shows cancelled and Trivia hosts who can't run the local pub Trivia.

Their People and Culture team also developed the Chobani Wellness Program, to provide support to employees and their families. The program provided a range of practical resources and tools focusing on physical and mental wellbeing.

They've also delivered care packages containing goodies like yogurt, hand sanitiser, kombucha, healthy snacks, pot plants and games to all employees.



Managing Director, Lyn Radford.



Lucky Chobani recipients Abigail, Noah and Isaiah.



# Bias free recruitment

Without knowing, we are all guilty of being biased. Psychologists explain our unconscious biases are simply our 'people preferences' and we naturally favour those who look like us, sound like us and are interested in the same things. We make snap judgments and rely on our gut instinct on a daily basis – we call it intuition.

Employers are also guilty of bias in the workplace. Relying on both conscious and unconscious bias is not an effective process, nor is it logical, modern or sometimes even legal.

When thinking about recruitment, employers are at risk of letting talented people slip through the selection process as a result of both conscious or unconscious bias. A candidate's name, age and gender does not provide any information as to whether a person can perform a role.

Biased views can refer to other categories including but not limited to race, sexuality, weight, social class, country of origin and political views.

Psychologists have highlighted three main types of bias that are apparent in the workforce:

- **Affinity Bias** (where we ignore negative traits of people we like and focus on the faults of those we don't)
- **Social comparison Bias** (where we favour those we consider to be in 'our group')
- **Confirmatory Bias** (where we seek facts that will confirm our pre-existing perceptions).

Whether our observations stem from our upbringing or social environment,

such prejudices affect our perceptions of competence which can lead to candidates suffering and organisations being deprived of great talent.

VicHealth state supporting cultural diversity in the workplace can enhance:

- Innovation
- Creativity
- Productivity
- Staff health and well-being
- Financials (less staff absenteeism)
- Company reflection of the general population

Research by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and Deloitte demonstrated actively cultivating diversity and inclusion can improve business performance. When employees felt included and thought diversity was supported at work there was shown to be an increase in their ability to innovate (83 per cent uplift), a responsiveness to changing customer needs (31 per cent uplift) and team collaboration (42 per cent uplift).

Looking locally, residents of the City of Greater Dandenong hail from over 157 birthplaces and 64 per cent of its population were born overseas. Many of those who have immigrated to Greater Dandenong have origins in parts of the world with recent histories of conflict, violence and displacement. These life-altering experiences can bring along a lot of trauma but also it has the potential to bring great wisdom, often from a very young age.

Whilst we might be prone to conscious or unconscious bias at

times, we can also become aware of these patterns in our behaviour and seek to change.

***"The best way we can reduce our conscious and unconscious bias is to educate ourselves."***

So what can employers do to help reduce the amount of unconscious bias in their recruitment process?

One local option is via Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre (CSJC) who offer affordable online and face-to-face Bias Free Recruitment training to ensure you and your team can start to recognise unconscious bias and therefore maximise your talent pipeline.

CSJC Manager Andrea O'Bryan stated,

"The CSJC team believe a job ready community is an asset for local industry and we welcome any opportunity to support businesses by referring job ready local talent to become part of your team."

O'Bryan continued,

"The best way we can reduce our conscious and unconscious bias is to educate ourselves."

**This article was co-written with Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre.**

**To learn more about bias free recruitment why not investigate some of the below links.**

**[chisholm.edu.au/skills-and-jobs-centre](http://chisholm.edu.au/skills-and-jobs-centre)**

**[humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au](http://humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au)**

**[vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au)**

**[fairwork.vic.gov.au](http://fairwork.vic.gov.au)**



# Local mask manufacturer attracts interest from large brands

*“If you look at any economically successful country in the world, you’re looking at a country that has a healthy, robust, industrialised sector, you have a country that’s manufacturing.”*

A local manufacturer has risen to the challenge of making personal protective equipment (PPE). Until now this was only available from overseas - and it’s caught the eye of some big brands.

Micro Plastics in Dandenong South recognised the need for a locally produced reusable face mask in response to the COVID-19 crisis. After undertaking extensive research and development, retooling and experiencing a materials shortage earlier this year, Micro Plastics has bounced back and secured the coveted P1 and P2 respirator rating. This means the masks sold retail under the name “MP Aussie Products” filter at least 94 per cent of airborne particles, including biologically active airborne viruses and bacteria.

Micro Plastics Managing Director, Russell Lacey said,

“We are the only producer of reusable face masks in Australia which are P1 and P2 certified. The others currently available on the market are overseas imports.”

The announcement comes at a time when there has never been more community and media focus on Australian made products.

Mr Lacey continued,

“We’re in negotiations with some major distributors who want to highlight Australian made products.

Currently, we’re gearing up to produce 10,000 units per week.”

CEO of South East Melbourne Manufacturing Alliance (SEMMA), Vonda Fenwick supports the continued growth of local manufacturing.

Fenwick said,

“Australian local manufacturers are exactly that, local. They use local suppliers and create local jobs.

Fenwick continued,

“If you look at any economically successful country in the world, you’re looking at a country that has a healthy, robust, industrialised sector, you have a country that’s manufacturing.”

The Australian Made Campaign (AMCL) has recently welcomed SEMMA as its newest Campaign Associate to support the continued growth of Australia’s local manufacturing sector.

As one of Australia’s peak independent industry groups, SEMMA represents over 200 leading manufacturers in Melbourne’s South East. Through the promotion of its members’ capability and potential, SEMMA plays a critical role in ensuring the regions manufacturing sector remains vibrant and sustainable.

Australian Made Chief Executive, Ben Lazzaro, said the partnership



supports the continued growth of local manufacturing on the global stage.

Lazzaro said,

“Australian manufacturers produce some of the best products in the world, celebrated both here and overseas.

Melbourne’s South East produces everything from yoghurt to trains, to buses, bolts and everything in between.”

**To learn more visit the respective websites listed below.**

**[semma.com.au](http://semma.com.au)**

**[australianmade.com.au/](http://australianmade.com.au/)**



# Murray River Organics secures deal with Coles

Local Dandenong South business, Murray River Organics Group Murray River Organics Group (MRG) has launched, in partnership with Coles supermarkets, the Murray River Organics brand in the breakfast cereals category.

Eight new products will be sold across 800 Coles stores with estimated revenue expected to be in the \$5-6m range per annum.

The launch will be backed by a new communications program including new website, Instagram, and Facebook platforms as part of the launch of the Murray River Organics brand into the Australian consumer market. Instore activation with Coles will also form an essential part of the program to drive awareness of the brand and products.

Murray River Organics Chief Executive Officer Valentina Tripp said,

“We have made significant investments over the last nine months to develop the Murray River organics brand proposition ensuring it is aligned to the company’s strategy and purpose.

We believe the brand is authentic, has integrity and delivers accessibility for organic products to Australian consumers.”

Tripp continued,

“What’s also important is MRG’s products carry the Australian Certified Organic BUD logo with the Australian Certified Organic Standard - considered to be one of the most respected and rigorous standards in the world.

This symbol is widely recognised as having integrity and what consumers

look for when they are purchasing organic lines.”

The Australian organics market is estimated to be worth \$2.6b with approximately 65 per cent of Australian households now buying some sort of organic product or produce yearly, with annual growth of five per cent.

The global organics market is estimated to be worth over \$100b and provides significant opportunities to grow the consumer facing Murray River Organics brand that leverages MRG’s established export capability and distribution system.

**This article was first published online via Food Magazine [foodmag.com.au/murray-river-organics-gets-deal-with-coles/](http://foodmag.com.au/murray-river-organics-gets-deal-with-coles/)**

# Springvale Community Hub grand opening put on hold during pandemic



Then: Springvale Library, 1973.



Now: Springvale Community Hub, 2020.

*“The Springvale City Hall underwent its first major refurbishment since opening in the late 1960s and reopened in 2017 as stage one of this project. Now this whole precinct is one we can all be incredibly proud of.”*

The opening of the much-anticipated Springvale Community Hub has been placed on hold as COVID-19 restrictions are ramped up (at time of printing).

This indoor and outdoor space has been several years in the making and is set to encourage connection and become the new community heart of Springvale. While Council is keen to welcome the community to the new space, the health and safety of residents remains the top priority and safety precautions remain in place.

The hub includes:

- Flexible community spaces
- A modern, state-of-the-art library
- Onsite Café
- Customer service area
- Giant Urban Screen
- Plentiful parking.

The outdoor space is being completed, but already includes an extensive children’s play area, lawn area and large urban screen just

like the one in Harmony Square, Dandenong. A high speed optical fibre link between Harmony Square and Springvale Community Hub’s Urban Screens means interactions and content sharing between these public spaces, the Drum Theatre and Springvale City Hall can all happen in real time.

Other thoughtful details which add to this Hub include updated community boards at Multicultural Place and Springvale Station to help the community find their way between the different sites. There are other marketing initiatives in the pipeline led by the Business and Revitalisation teams to showcase Springvale and what it has to offer residents and visitors alike.

After a competitive tender process, there will also be a café onsite at the new facility.

Mayor Jim Memeti said he was thrilled to see the site transform into an amazing place for the whole community.

“The Springvale municipal offices were demolished in July 2015, and I have watched alongside the wider community as this site has taken shape over the past five years.”

Mayor Memeti continued,

“The Springvale City Hall underwent its first major refurbishment since opening in the late 1960s and reopened in 2017 as stage one of this project.

Now, this whole precinct is one we can all be incredibly proud of.”

## Did you know?

- The new Springvale Community Hub is expected to have more than 770,000 visitors each year.
- The hub is home to seven community rooms and three meeting rooms available for programs and venue hire.
- Deployment of speakers around the landscaped area means movie nights can now be presented in surround sound.

# A word from SEBN

To our SEBN family

*We won't bore you with platitudes about the virus - suffice to say the State of Disaster announced in August and subsequent decisions taken to suppress the virus have impacted us all - some more than others.*

*Whilst we don't have a magic wand, we want you to know that we are here to support you in any way we can; helping you to get temporary workers from those who had to close or let people go; needing support with re-inventing products or managing through this crisis or maybe you just want an independent ear? Whilst we have extensive experience, we also have specialist expertise at our disposal and can provide 1-1 support, particularly across any manufacturing issues, or we can connect you to a broader range of organisations and / or government departments to assist both professionally or personally.*

*There is always a positive to come out of disaster and as a business colleague recently commented to me:*

*'It has been interesting to see the accelerating uptake of technology and the willingness of people to adapt. We have all had to question and change how we do things including how we relate to others. I have noticed also that clients are more open to new ideas and trying new things. We just have to hang in there and we will come out the other side.'*

*SEBN has continued to deliver sessions on-line to its suite of networks, so if you're part of the manufacturing industry or a woman in business and not already on our database, you can read more about our activities or join via our website – [greaterdandenong.com/sebn](http://greaterdandenong.com/sebn).*

*If you are working from home – or in between work due to the closure of your business but would like to stay in touch, then update your details with us and be connected.*

*We may not return to 'business as usual' in the foreseeable future, but hopefully most will adapt to 'business as unusual' and learn to survive - and thrive - in a different environment. We are incredibly sorry for those of you who have been unable to continue operations during the lockdown – our thoughts are with you and again, we are here if there is anything we can do to help.*

Keep safe,

Sandra George  
Manager South East Business Networks (SEBN)

**Note:** Our partner organisation, SEMMA (South East Melbourne Manufacturers' Alliance) has been advocating tirelessly on many issues impacting manufacturers at this time – and at every opportunity.

**Further information:**  
[semma.com.au](http://semma.com.au)

## Targeting skills through micro-credentialing

Businesses have an increasing need for specific skill-sets in their workforces and look to the training sector to provide the upskilling required. Training has traditionally been delivered via a full qualification but the need for short, low-cost online courses is driving a new approach to certification.

SEBN is active in advocating for a micro-credentialing certification style where training is delivered as 'bite-sized' chunks with learners illustrating their proficiency in a particular skill rather than completing an entire qualification. Chisholm Institute is also active in this space which aims to make it easier for employers to quickly develop the critical skills their workers need with the workers gaining a credential for the studies they have completed. This new approach to professional development is generally transferrable as it gains broader recognition among employers.

## Work readiness

One of the goals of the SEBN Community Revitalisation project is to drive the conversation around what it means to be 'work ready'. Stakeholders in the employment space have widely varying views of what the term means and the elements that a jobseeker needs in order to satisfy that criteria.

The Community Revitalisation team have been engaging with employers, job seekers and employment services to come to an agreed definition of 'work readiness' and support better matches between employers and jobseekers.

**If you would like to see the draft document and provide feedback, please contact Jennifer Ebdon via [jebdon@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:jebdon@cgd.vic.gov.au)**

# Have you signed up for the TAKE2 Pledge Program?

We've taken Victoria's climate change pledge.



The TAKE2 program supports individuals, business, government, educational and community organisations to take meaningful action to reduce climate change.

Delivered by Sustainability Victoria and launched in 2016, the program is one of the most comprehensive pledge programs (of its kind) in the world.

TAKE2 is a pledge program showing every Victorian how to take action on climate change.

The goal is to give every home, business and organisation the information they need to reduce their greenhouse emissions and plan for a low carbon future.

Why get onboard?

By signing your business up to the TAKE2 program, you will help Victoria reach net zero emissions by 2050.

A few of the categories in which your business can tackle to combat climate change include:

- Buildings and equipment
- Transport and fleet
- Waste reduction
- Purchasing and supply chains, and
- Business leadership.

The benefits can include saving money from lower energy bills and/or operating costs. You also become part of a powerful network of over 13,000 TAKE2 members.

Some of the local businesses who have already made a pledge include;

- Australian Paper Recovery
- Boge Elastmetall Australia
- CarbonetiX
- Carrier Australia Pty Ltd
- Ellis Air Conditioning
- Freight People
- GlassCo Australia Pty Ltd
- Grosvenor Engineering Group Pty Ltd
- Haulaway
- JC Kerr Pty Ltd
- KS Environmental
- Smart Recycling
- SUEZ.

**To learn more about the program visit: [sustainability.vic.gov.au/campaigns/take2](https://sustainability.vic.gov.au/campaigns/take2)**

## Claiming running expenses when working from home

If you run a home-based business, you have three different options when claiming running expenses:

### **Temporary shortcut rate of 80 cents an hour**

The temporary shortcut rate is 80 cents an hour for all your running expenses from 1 March until 30 September 2020. This shortcut method is an all-inclusive rate so you can't claim any other expenses for working from home.

### **Fixed rate of 52 cents an hour**

The 52 cents an hour method covers heating, cooling, lighting, cleaning, and the depreciation of furniture and furnishings.

### **Any other method**

You can use any other method as long as it's reasonable in your circumstances, you exclude your normal (private) living costs and have records to show how you calculated the business expense.

Remember you can only claim deductions for the portion of your expenses which relate to running your business. For more information, visit [ato.gov.au/homebasedbusiness](https://ato.gov.au/homebasedbusiness)

### **Having difficulty meeting your tax and super obligations?**

Your business starts with you. Make sure you are looking after all aspects of your health including your mental wellbeing. It's okay to ask for help.

**For more information, visit [ato.gov.au/smallbizmentalhealth/](https://ato.gov.au/smallbizmentalhealth/)**

## Members supporting members providing a ray of sunshine in a challenging landscape

A brief word from your Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce.

Whilst it is not 'business as usual' with the Chamber, let's be honest, where is at the moment?

The Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce is currently working on initiatives to assist its members with the latest being virtual networking nights via Zoom.

A special shout out to the Platinum Partners for their ongoing support and adapting to this new environment and continuing to host these sessions.

The Chamber is working with all members to provide additional online training.

Executive Officer of the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce, Tiffany Murray, stated,

"This online content is supplied by our members, for our members.

It's wonderful to see our business community coming together to support one another in a time of need."

To date, a number of webinars have been run covering a wide range of topics including how to lead in a crisis, book-keeping on Xero, tips on working from home, how to manage a team remotely and more planned for the coming months.

**Further information**  
[greaterdandenongchamber.com.au](http://greaterdandenongchamber.com.au)



## Wominjeka Recognition of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples



A large scale artwork overlooks Harmony Square and recognises Greater Dandenong's links to our nation's first people.

Installed in July, the striking artwork was created by Dandenong-based Aboriginal artist Ian Harrison.

The artwork celebrates the Aboriginal concept of 'wominjeka' (welcome) and reflects Council's recognition of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin nation's custodianship of the land where the City of Greater Dandenong sits.

The design of Wominjeka reflects local narratives relevant to Dandenong and includes a local shield depicting the emu and goanna.

More of Ian's work can be seen locally, including at Drum Theatre. Harrison also recently completed a project at Tirhatuan Park where reclaimed red gum branches were painted with traditional Aboriginal iconography.

## Stage four restrictions enforced

In August the Victorian Government announced a State of Disaster and enforced stage four restrictions for our safety.

What can you do to help? Stay informed. Keep updated on the information and advice about current restriction levels in place throughout Victoria. Stay safe by regularly washing your hands, keep at least 1.5 metres from other people, and stay home unless you have a legitimate reason (one of the four permitted) to leave your home.

**For the latest updates please check the Victorian State Government website:**

[dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19](http://dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19)



# What we can learn from our disability sector during this pandemic

I often confuse people because I call myself a woman of privilege. I run a successful business that I have been able to run more successfully from the home I own. I have a safe place to live, with food on my table, and I live on the back of a golf course, which I am able to use for my one hour exercise per day.

Why wouldn't I be? Well, I can't walk. I had polio when I was a child and as a result I also have a terrible immune system and weak lungs. People don't expect me to be happy, let alone successful.

Many in the disability community, including myself, are now revelling in this new era of working which has enabled us to participate more meaningfully in our workplaces and in society.

Who knew it would take a global pandemic for this concept to come to life?

The lockdown hasn't prevented me from working, in fact its improved my work environment. A few of the benefits of this new environment for the disability sector have included:

- A vast reduction in commuting times

- Flexibility to work at your own pace and your own hours
- Online workshops and meetings having more options for customisation - such as option to use closed captions, live chats and ability to limit background noise.
- Levels of socialisation
- More included – many of my peers with disabilities who were already working from home or working part-time have found they have felt more included in workplace meetings and decisions than ever before.

I can attend meetings anywhere from my home office. In the last fortnight I have attended a conference in Bangalore, had three meetings in London, co-facilitated training women on the Pacific Rim with a colleague in London, who I have never met in person, and spoke at an Indonesian Conference about COVID19, disability and the NDIS. All from my own home.

Around 4.3 million Australians – or one in five – have a disability. And yet, only one in two Australians with disabilities are employed, compared with eight out of 10 of the general

population. That is millions of people who have the capacity to contribute if only they had the opportunity to do so.

How we work has needed to change for a long time.

People are asking when we'll see our society 'go back to normal' but 'normal' was exclusionary, divisive and simply wrong. There are whispers of a 'new normal' instead which is providing hope for many and driving us through this pandemic.

This 'new normal' takes the disability sector seriously, acknowledges people who live in rural and remote communities can actively participate in the global workforce and people with parenting and caring responsibilities have choices on how they work.

The new normal is exciting. People with disabilities have proven to be resilient, adaptable, and can pivot to suit circumstances. Mainstream businesses have a lot to learn from us and we've been patiently waiting to share.

*This article was written by guest contributor, Tricia Malowney OAM – disability and human rights advocate, who shares her experience working from home during this pandemic.*

## From paper to pixels...

Did you know the Talking Business magazine is available electronically?

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