

Talking Business

June 2021

► **Making Springvale
even more Sensational**

Page 3

► **Building a better
Greater Dandenong**

Page 9

► **Driving force in
Dandenong expands
again**

Page 13





Paul's Corner

Welcome to the June edition of Talking Business for 2021.

We are already half-way through the year and the way in which we work and do business is continuing to evolve. We have seen a steady return to work and this is an important step in re-establishing connections with our colleagues and strengthening our ties within the community. Returning to our regular place of work also provides an opportunity to support our small businesses, particularly our hospitality venues. If you can, I encourage you to pick up a coffee, or have a bite to eat at a local café and continue to support these small businesses.

In this edition of Talking Business, we have an inspiring story on the Parker Family Group. Bruce Parker speaks to us about how his business started and what contributed to the success of his business which has been operating for 50 years.

This issue also features a snapshot of Greater Dandenong's tourism sector. We hear from a business who shares their experience on how they positively adapted their business model over the last 12 months. Also included is a heart-warming story on the efforts of a well-known local business and its owner's tremendous fundraising efforts for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.

On page 15 we outline the details of Councils Better Approvals Project. This project aims to streamline processes when establishing a new business and save you time and money. In addition to this article we talk about another Council initiative, the Ignite Greater Dandenong program. This program is ideal for individuals who are about to start their new business venture, or who have recently started their business.

We hope this quarter is productive for you and your business. Remember if you need support please don't hesitate to reach out to our Greater Dandenong Business team via business@cgd.vic.gov.au or 8571 1550.

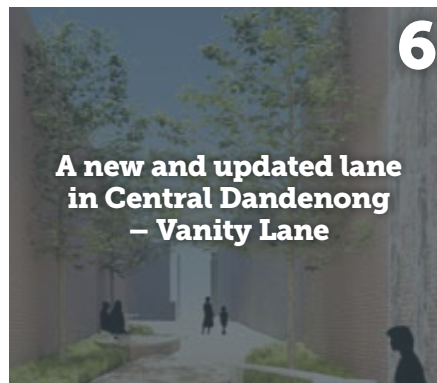
Paul Kearsley
Director Business, Engineering
and Major Projects

FEATURES



4

Accommodation's entrepreneurial Quest for connection



6

A new and updated lane in Central Dandenong – Vanity Lane



9

Building a better Greater Dandenong



10

Dandenong Market Traders Stories



12



13

Driving force in Dandenong expands again



15

Start, run and grow your business

Cover: Future Made Manufacturing Campaign - see page 12.

Information was correct at time of publishing. Please check our website for up to date information.



Making Springvale even more Sensational

Construction has begun to transform Springvale Boulevard into a vibrant and iconic gateway to Springvale where people can shop, relax and connect.

MACA Infrastructure has been awarded the construction contract for the project, which involves a full streetscape upgrade of the road and footpaths located on Springvale Road between Balmoral Avenue and Windsor Avenue.

Mayor Angela Long said the project will be a great asset for Greater Dandenong and provide many benefits to the community and local businesses.

“This project will deliver on the community’s aspirations for the area, including improved pedestrian movement and safety, enhanced shopping and dining experiences, new opportunities for people to connect and relax, and opportunities for community celebrations,” Cr Long said.

The boulevard will feature widened footpaths, new garden beds and trees for year-round shade, more seating, improved street lighting, and high-quality, thought-provoking

design elements that reflect the diverse cultures of Springvale.

“Together with the recently completed Springvale Community Hub, Springvale Boulevard will enhance the future prosperity of Springvale Activity Centre as a leading cultural destination of Melbourne,” Cr Long said.

“Together with the recently completed Springvale Community Hub, Springvale Boulevard will enhance the future prosperity of Springvale Activity Centre as a leading cultural destination of Melbourne.”

As a complex and major construction project spanning approximately 12 months, local impacts will include traffic management for pedestrian and motorist safety, noise, dust and other activities.

To minimise disruption, some construction works will take place overnight and will comply with Environment Protection Authority requirements. Pedestrian access

to shops will be maintained throughout the project, and signage will be installed to promote local businesses continuing to open for trade.

Springvale Road traders and staff will be offered free, all-day parking at the ‘Number 8’ Balmoral Avenue multi-deck car park during construction.

Traders and community members are encouraged to stay up to date with the project works via Council’s website and social media channels to receive notification of upcoming works and interruptions.

Construction is expected to be completed by mid-2022.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/springvale-boulevard

A snapshot of our Greater Dandenong tourism sector

Tourism is not new to Greater Dandenong, but it is new to Talking Business. We now have a regular segment sharing the tourism offerings we have in our city. This will include articles on our tourism operators, what's happening in our accommodation venues and let's not forget the adventure/action venues across our municipality.

If you're a local tourism operator and have a story you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you or if you have a tourism question, send an email to our Food Enterprise and Tourism Officer, Helen Beekmans via helen.beekmans@cgd.vic.gov.au.

Accommodation's entrepreneurial Quest for connection



Like many accommodation providers Quest Dandenong's traditional clientele is the corporate traveler. Unsurprisingly, travelers were scarce during 2020. So, like many businesses they looked to alternative markets to help fill their rooms.

Quest Dandenong found many of these new guest experiences to be mutually fulfilling. They brought

some lovely people into the hotel, who helped keep spirits up and provided some additional revenue for the business.

Here are a few examples:

- Through their Local Heroes program, Quest Dandenong accommodated a volunteer worker and her dog from the Australian Animal Protection Society in Dandenong, who otherwise needed to commute for two hours daily to perform their important animal care work
- They took a number of stranded interstate workers under their wing and provided them with a home away from home while separated from loved ones
- In partnership with the Dandenong Hospital the hotel accommodated medical staff for extended periods
- The hotel hosted a large group of aged care nurses, who selflessly came down from Queensland at the peak of the virus to work at a local Aged Care Facility

- Quest strengthened their relationships with several community welfare/care groups by providing crisis accommodation to a wide range of their clients
- The hotel also hosted a student from Victoria University studying midwifery and nursing at Monash Health.

Given the circumstances of many of these bookings, they were provided at reduced rates.

This provided some utilisation of rooms, but more importantly created employment opportunities, lifted staff morale and supported the community during the crisis.

Greg Harding, Quest Director said, "As we transition towards a post COVID environment these new relationships and experiences will benefit us through greater connection with our community and a broader view on potential clientele for us to welcome into our property. 2020 gave us a lot of questions and learnt opportunities."





Good deed for Good Friday appeal

Our very own local celebrity, Robert Boyle of Rob's British Butcher went to great heights to take part in the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal earlier this year.

Neil Mitchell from 3AW was running a special fundraising event on the Melbourne Observation Wheel. The concept was to raise a minimum of \$5,000 for the Royal Children's Hospital.

Rob only had 24 hours to prepare for the challenge, so the pressure was on from the get-go. The team from Rob's British Butcher engaged on their social media and made many

calls to their suppliers, their customer base and all their networks from across Melbourne to donate to the Good Friday Appeal.

With a mix of large and small donations being received, Rob's fundraising efforts quickly reached \$7,000 and it continued to rise. By the end of the day Rob raised over \$18,000 with a mulching business from Pakenham donating a generous \$10,000.

Congratulations to this local business, to Rob and his team for taking part and contributing to the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. This is another demonstration of the generosity and spirit of our local business community, who think of others even when they themselves may be going through troubling times.

Did you know?

3,000

jobs in Greater Dandenong support tourism

45%

of all the culturally themed tenancies in Dandenong are Middle Eastern

30 years

Little India has traded as a cultural precinct

5 million

the number of people who visit the Dandenong Market each year

21 years

The Afghan Bazaar has traded as a cultural precinct



There is so much to do and see in **Greater Dandenong**

A new and updated lane in Central Dandenong – Vanity Lane

A new pedestrian laneway has been designed to link Lonsdale and Thomas streets in central Dandenong.

The new lane will be created at 275 Lonsdale Street at a site damaged by fire and later purchased by Council. The site is located next door to the Chemist Warehouse. The design of the new lane celebrates the historical significance of the site which was a retail pharmacy between the late 1800's to the 1980's and was associated with several notable families and individuals.

The Couve family ran the pharmacy from 1911-1919. During that time their two sons were enlisted and sent to Gallipoli where sadly they were among the first Dandenong boys to be killed in action. Their deaths prompted the Roll of Honour in the Dandenong Town Hall, which has been on continuous display ever since. Their sister pursued a life long interest in botany and produced a collection of 1000 botanical specimens which is in the State Botanical Collection at the National Herbarium of Victoria.



The longest serving pharmacist, Charles McKeon, owned the shop from 1952-1976. His son Simon did not follow into the family's business, but established his own path and in 2011 he was awarded Australian of the Year and appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his charitable and community endeavours.

These stories are among those to be celebrated in the lane, together

with medicinal plants and greenery creating a garden effect.

During consultation on the project, respondents asked for a safe, clean and bright laneway that would help tell local stories and give the community pride in the local area. Construction of the lane will commence in 2021.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/vanity-lane-project

Record-keeping requirements

To support contact tracing, some businesses, workplaces and premises must request that each person who attends the premise for more than 15 minutes (including staff) provide their:

- name
- phone number.

The list of the industries can be found at coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checking-qr-codes.

Businesses must keep a record of those details and the date and time the person attended the facility. Where the patrons spend most of their time in a single space (i.e. a dining room or a cinema), a record of the space used should also be kept. There is no need to keep multiple records if patrons move through multiple spaces. Records can be kept electronically or in hard copy and should be kept for 28 days.

The record keeping requirement applies to all persons attending a facility or venue for longer than 15 minutes, which may include staff, customers, maintenance and delivery workers.

Please note additional record-keeping requirements may apply to meet your OHS obligations in certain industries. For more see the WorkSafe Victoria website.

For businesses required to keep records, how long do records need to be kept?

Records must be kept for 28 days. This makes it likely that records will be available should contact tracers need to look back into who was potentially exposed to a confirmed case.

Should the records be destroyed after a certain period?

Records should be destroyed as soon as practicable after 28 days from the date of the service provided to the individual. This only applies to services where records are not

normally kept, as this is a special type of record-keeping introduced by the Victorian Government directions. Records that would ordinarily be made for health or other purposes should not be destroyed under these directions, as they have their own statutory periods for required retention.

Which workplaces and premises are required to keep records?

Most customer-facing venues and facilities are required to use the free Victorian Government QR Service for electronic record keeping. From 28 May 2021, venues and facilities currently using a Victorian Government Application Programming Interface (API) linked digital record keeping system must use the Victorian Government QR Service. For instructions on how to switch, please go to QR code app, API and digital record keeping for contact tracing.



efm Warehousing increases Dandenong footprint ahead of further growth

efm Warehousing will expand its capacity at a new site in Dandenong South from June 2021. The 15,600 sqm distribution facility at the Rubix Connect Estate will enable the business to experience double digit growth next financial year.

Andrew Swain, General Manager – Commercial, said efm Warehousing had experienced significant growth since it launched in 2005.

“We’re a smaller player in the market so we aim to offer more flexible solutions than some of the larger companies in our space – but we also have the backing and governance from a larger corporate structure to present customers a lower risk option,” Mr Swain said.

“Our growth has been very much customer led, which is how the warehousing arm of the business began; we wanted to add more value for customers utilising the group’s 4PL [fourth-party logistics] transport services and this was something they were requesting to help simplify their supply chain.”

“We will be consolidating our two Dandenong South facilities into this larger site, which will streamline our operations and provide customers with more efficiencies, better technology and greater value.”

The company opened its first facility in Dandenong South in 2007 and now proudly services customers such as Swisse Wellness and Multigate Medical Products across its various warehouses, which are also located in Brisbane and Altona with ambient and temperature-controlled capabilities.

The new building is expected to achieve a 6 Star, Green Star Rating and will have capacity to store 18,300 pallets. Other features include a 2,500 sqm undercover super awning for all-weather loading, EFSR sprinkler system, office space and 107 car spaces. The Rubix Connect Estate currently houses leading distributors such as Amazon and Woolworths.

Learn more: efmlogistics.com.au/warehousing



Chobani to expand Dandenong South manufacturing site

Leading food manufacturer Chobani has commenced construction on its storage and production site expansion in Dandenong South. The new 21,000 sqm warehouse, which backs onto Chobani’s existing production site, will enable the company to grow further and expand past dairy products.

“Chobani has an aggressive, long-term plan in Australia to significantly increase the business,” General Manager Operations, Steve Butler said.

“Having launched its first oat-based product last year, Chobani Australia is currently preparing to establish local manufacturing capabilities for plant-based products as we journey towards becoming a modern food company.”

The development, scheduled for completion in May 2022, is set to include a state-of-the-art pilot plant to further enhance Chobani’s current research and development capabilities.

The new facility will allow for Chobani to merge operations currently spread over four sites under one roof, while increasing well over 100 per cent of its current footprint.

“We will consolidate operations across Chobani and Gippsland Dairy brands by bringing our office, logistics and warehouse storage to one location,” Mr Butler said.

“We will be refurbishing an existing warehouse on the site while also building a brand-new refrigerated warehouse and office.”

Chobani has called Dandenong South home since arriving in Australia in 2011 and the local arm currently exports to Singapore, Malaysia and the Maldives.

“Manufacturing is vitally important to the Australian economy and Chobani Australia is committed to continuing to adapt and evolve. We look forward to continuing to contribute to the local community, as well as the ongoing safety, security and continuity of Australia’s food supply – and what better place to do that than in Greater Dandenong?” Mr Butler concluded.

Learn more: chobani.com.au

Small Business Bus visits Harmony Square

The Victorian Government's Small Business Bus is a business concierge service which provides one-on-one coaching to individuals who are planning, starting or growing their business.

The bus visited Dandenong in April and helped local business owners by giving them expert advice and knowledgeable guidance.

With the collaboration and support from Greater Dandenong City Council, business owners had the opportunity to speak to representatives from the Economic Development team, the president of the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce and an expert from Family Business Australia. Free one-on-one wellbeing coaching sessions were also offered by Eastern Financial Counselling Services (EACH) during the bus visit.

More than 15 businesses received assistance which created a valuable opportunity for people to ask questions and engage with business experts and other key industry associations.

Council will be scheduling more bus visits to the Greater Dandenong municipality in the second half of 2021. Details to be published on our website.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/greater-dandenong-council/events/small-business-bus-dandenong



Greater Dandenong has been working with our hospitality businesses to have a stronger outdoor dining presence across the city. We understand the immense impact COVID-19 has had on the hospitality sector so offered greater support.

Permit fees were waived for two years, internal processes streamlined and Expressions of Interest sent out for free outdoor screens and umbrellas.

Community engagement was also undertaken across the city to gain an insight to what the industry was needing.

With winter upon us, we are now looking at different offerings for outdoor dining. We will continue to engage with the industry to get their valued feedback on what is working and how we can continue to accommodate the needs of not only

the businesses, but the community across the city.

Businesses can register their interest for outdoor screens and umbrellas by completing the form on our website.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/outdoor-dining

How can you help?

We encourage visitors, residents, workers, moving around Greater Dandenong to support our local cafes and restaurants by buying coffee, meal or a drink or two. Our city is open for business. Over the coming months you will see more outdoor dining options to enjoy. Take a moment to think about spending your dollar locally. Every dollar spent helps support and employ local residents, family and friends.

Help for Small Businesses from the ATO

Make the switch to Online services for business.

Online services for business is now live and the default way businesses interact with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) online. Take advantage of new features such as organising a payment plan, the ability to switch between businesses with a single log in, access to copies of income tax returns, and viewing your communication history.

Learn more: ato.gov.au/OSB

Small Business support

The ATO supports small business at tax time and beyond with its one-stop shop for reliable expertise and information. The page includes guidance for returns and access to business management resources including webinars, videos and podcasts.

Learn more: ato.gov.au/SBsupport

Small Business Tax Time Toolkit

Have you checked out the ATO's tax time toolkit for small business? This helpful resource for businesses and agents includes directories and guides, with topics including home-based business expenses, motor vehicle expenses and support available if your business has been affected by COVID-19.

Learn more: ato.gov.au/SBtaxtimetoolkit

Building a better Greater Dandenong

Abbotts Road Upgrade

Preliminary preparations and works have recently commenced to widen Abbotts Road. The road will be widened between Taylors Road and Cranbourne railway line.

The works will include widening of Abbotts Road to two lanes in each direction and a new pedestrian path. An upgrade of underground services, relocation of overhead powerlines and street lighting upgrade is also being undertaken. These works will improve traffic flow, reduce congestion and improve access to this very important freight link.

To avoid delays whilst these improvement works are occurring, please seek an alternative route or plan additional time for your journey.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/works-and-projects/abbotts-road-upgrade

Pound Road West Upgrade

Major Road Projects Victoria (MRPV) has awarded a delivery contract for the Pound Road West Upgrade to Seymour Whyte. The upgrade will improve connections in Dandenong South to make it quicker, easier and safer to get to where you need to be.

In addition to extra lanes and safety improvements, the project includes the construction of a new bridge over the Cranbourne rail line to remove the dead ends at Remington Drive and Pound Road West. The new bridge will provide a second connection between Abbotts Road and South Gippsland Highway, improving access to the freeway network and reducing travel times and cost for businesses.

The Frankston-Dandenong Road Bridge over the Cranbourne and Pakenham rail lines will also be strengthened and resurfaced.

Learn more: roadprojects.vic.gov.au/pound



Douglas Street before.

Douglas Streetscape Upgrade Project

As part of City of Greater Dandenong's streetscape program, works will involve upgrading the footpath along Douglas Street between Buckley Street and Stuart Street.

These works continue the Douglas Streetscape upgrade undertaken in 2016 and complements the level crossing removal project with the ongoing enhancement of the Activity Centre.

Works Include:

- Site preparation including demolition
- Asphaltting and kerb works
- Road and threshold treatments
- Reinstatement and line marking of car parking bays
- Additional landscaping and planting of trees.

Works information

Preparation works on Douglas Street has commenced and completion of construction is expected by the end of July 2021, weather permitting. Works

will generally occur between 7am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Pedestrian access to shops will be maintained at all times during construction other than when works will be required directly outside of shops. Businesses will be notified of those times accordingly. However, there will be limited car parking on Douglas Street available during construction.

This project has been partially funded by the Victorian Government through the Suburban Revitalisation Program that is overseen by a newly appointed Noble Park Revitalisation Board. The Board consists of business, local government and councillor and state government representatives. Part of the investment through the program has funded the Douglas Street Streetscape Improvement project to the value of \$310,000 with the balance funded through Council's capital improvement program and subject to council's budget process.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/works-and-projects/douglas-street-streetscape-upgrade-project



Douglas Street after.

DANDENONG MARKET

TRADER STORIES

Dandenong Market first opened its doors to traders and customers in October 1866. Since then, it has supported business owners and the community through both World Wars, the Great Depression and most recently, COVID-19.

A haven for small businesses, Dandenong Market has continued to grow with more than 200 family-run stalls and businesses, many of which have been passed down through generations.

Many traders have worked side-by-side with family members for their entire lives, learning the ins and outs and eventually taking the reins from retired parents and introducing modern business techniques as savvy millennials.

In this issue of Talking Business, we asked Dandenong Market to share some of the stories of traders whose family has formed the foundations of their successful businesses.

These stories were contributed by Dandenong Market. Learn more: dandenongmarket.com.au



Dennis and his daughter, Jess Schwarze.
Photo credit: Norm Orloff, News Limited

Schwarze Seafoods

Schwarze Seafoods has provided fresh, high quality Australian and New Zealand seafood to the Dandenong Market community for more than 85 years.

The business was most recently passed down to current owner, Dennis Schwarze, who is the third generation to own the popular market stall.

Dennis came to own Schwarze Seafoods following the passing of his father Merv who inherited the business from Dennis' grandmother Alice. Originally operated as a fish

and chippery, Schwarze Seafoods has solely provided fresh seafood since the early 1990s.

Dennis, who spent much of his childhood at Dandenong Market, created fond memories helping at his family's shop in his youth.

"Dandenong Market has been my home practically all my life. I am so lucky to be a part of it," said Dennis.

Despite now being in his 60s, Dennis has remained eager to continue operating his business. The work-a-holic has persisted to hand pick his product fresh each Market

day in the early hours of the morning – a task he has done since joining the business when he was just 16.

These days it is fourth generation Schwarze, Dennis' daughter Jess who operates much of the business.

Jess has worked for her dad for almost 20 years and admires his dedication to his business.

"He is the hardest working person I know," she said.

Schwarze Seafoods is located in the Meat, Fish and Deli Hall and is open every Market day from 7am-4pm.



Left to right: Will, Sam and Constance Vavasis

Perfect Coffee, Sam's Spice and Grocery and Peanut Market

Meet the man behind three successful Dandenong Market small businesses, Sam Vavasis.

Managing Perfect Coffee, Sam's Spice and Grocery and Peanut Market, Sam's story began almost 50 years ago.

Sam and his family emigrated to Australia from Greece in 1956 and instantly fell in love with the country.

Eventually settling in Melbourne, Sam's parents established the first nut stall at Dandenong Market in 1974. The very humble business consisted of six sacks of nut shells set up on the curb next to a donut van. As a young boy, Sam worked in the stall to help his parents who spoke little English and eventually joined the family business full time.

The six sacks of nut shells eventually became Peanut Market, a stall

which currently stocks over 400 nut varieties.

"If more than two customers ask for a product we don't have, we order it in," said Sam. And for good reason. This business strategy has resulted in a loyal customer base which visits the stall weekly.

In 1996, Sam capitalised on his love for coffee opening café Perfect Coffee.

Almost 15 years later, Sam established his third business Sam's Spice and Grocery.

All three businesses are owned by Sam who now receives help from his two children, Will and Constance.

Will has big dreams for the business. Further exploring an online space, considering further retail stores and increasing the focus on customer experience are all on the to-do list.

"Dad has taught us everything we know about business including the importance of quality customer service and maintaining relationships with key suppliers," he said.

Sam's daughter Constance is providing a modern twist to the family run business. Born in the digital generation, she has increased activity on social media and launched an online website for their brand.

"While customers still love shopping in-store to experience our produce in a sensory way, being online has given those who can't visit us a chance to shop," said Constance.

"Customers who have moved interstate are so happy that they can continue to buy their favourite products!"

All three businesses are open 7am until 4pm every Market day.

Maddie Wrench
Communications and Events Officer
 T 03 9701 3850 M 0403 507 151
 E mwrench@dandenongmarket.com.au
dandenongmarket.com.au f t i

DANDENONG
MARKET
Fresh & Vibrant Since 1866



Why not join your peers in a manufacturing network?

We share with each other and learn from the best!

SEBN Network Groups | Roundtables include:

- Manufacturing Leadership
- Workplace Health & Safety
- South East Quality Network
- Manufacturing Xcellence
- Developing Young Leaders
- Waste | Sustainability
- Export | Globalisation
- CEO Mentoring Program

Groups meet monthly and are open to all manufacturers across the region.



SEBN Women in Business

Embrace the opportunity and get involved in SEBN's women in business activities:

A new program has been developed for 2021 and 2022 for our Women in Business network across four key themes of Connection | Communication | Personal Brand | 'Out of the Box'.

Join now – sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au

Showcasing Women in Business Events Series featuring special guest speakers who have succeeded in their field of business.

For further information please contact sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au



It's talent time

After more than 12 months of focus groups with local young people, our Future Made campaign had its first outing at the SELLEN Try-a-Trade & Expo in April. Designed by young people for young people, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the breadth of career options in manufacturing, using the images and language that resonate with the target audience - your future workforce.

Funded by Council, this campaign will have high visibility over the coming months as street flags, banners and posters send out the message to young people and their influencers – a career in manufacturing has your Future Made.

We have an array of promotional material available, including business cards and posters. If you would like to help promote this campaign, please contact sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au

Having difficulty attracting and retaining good staff?

On 10 June SEBN is hosting Craig Taplin from Momentis - an expert in the field of people practices, talent assessment and succession planning to address this issue and provide you with tips and ideas on how you can recruit the right people for your organisation.

For further information/registration please contact sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au



SEBN Manufacturing Export Access Program (EAP) - starting soon

The US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the heightening trade war between the US and China as well as disputes between China and Australia have prompted a call to diversify Australia's export activities.

Accordingly, adopting an export focus is seen as key for the survival of Australian manufacturers of all sizes and industries.

SEBN's Program has been designed to develop a specific roadmap for participating businesses based on their capabilities and requirements.

For further information please contact sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au

Driving force in Dandenong expands again

For 50 years, Bruce Parker has been the protagonist behind a group of after-market vehicle businesses. Now known as the Parker Family Group, one of its arms, Nason Engine Parts, opened a new multi-million-dollar warehouse facility at the end of April in Dandenong.

Nason's new development

"Nason's business has expanded exponentially throughout the country, requiring a doubling of our warehouse space in Victoria, which is the head office, and also the import facility for other Australian locations," says Bruce.

"The Mayor officially opened the warehouse at a special event, and we were honoured to have other senior representatives in the industry attend, including from Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association, the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, Motor Trade Association, as well as our major suppliers and SEBN."

The new purpose-built extension and office complex took 18 months to build in Dandenong South.

"The best move we ever made, back almost 40 years, was to move to the Dandenong South industrial area, which has been planned very well and is a credit to the Council. All the road structure is the right width, power and water are all integrated, and SEBN is constantly running network sessions for manufacturers. This keeps us connected and up to date with new ideas and technologies.

Our businesses are located throughout capital cities and I'm not aware of anything approaching SEBN in other states," Bruce explains. We are also members of SEMMA and benefit from their manufacturing advocacy as well as buying deals.



Mayor Angela Long touring the Nason Distribution Centre with Directors Daniel and Bruce Parker

From tin shed to national distributor

The other two business units in the Parker Family Group – HM GEM Engines and Premier Machinery & Components – are led by Dean Taylor and Bruce's son, Daniel Parker, respectively.

Bruce, who had completed an apprenticeship as a mechanic, says he originally began in the automotive industry in a "tin shed" behind his mother's house in East Doncaster.

"When I got out of the army around 1970, I began a small business rebuilding engines and was then asked to join a similar company called Head Mod Engineering," recalls Bruce of the company that eventually developed into HM GEM Engines, a national supplier, through acquisitions.

"During the school holidays, Daniel and his brother, Michael, used to work at HM Engines and I think it's fair to say they used to do the dirty work in the dismantling area. Daniel will probably tell you that I pushed him into the engineering industry but I'm proud of how he's made his own way in business, initially taking an apprenticeship with another company – ACL – as a fitter and turner and tool making."

After seven years with ACL, Daniel undertook a working holiday around Australia before returning to Dandenong and starting the Premier Machinery & Components arm of the family business, ultimately purchasing and owning it.

"I didn't want a gift – I wanted to make it my own and I paid off the business after many years," Daniel

says of the business that is now the sole distributor for eight companies.

Bruce acquired Nason Engine Parts in 1991, which is now the largest distributor of internal engine parts in Australia, headed by Australian General Manager Paul Magri. Nason's clients include Repco and Burson Auto Parts with a branch in almost every capital city of Australia.

An equal-opportunity employer

The Parker Family Group is an award-winning employer and Bruce says they consider all their employees to be family.

"We're constantly hiring young people to train up as engine-parts specialists, but we also focus on employing people with disabilities," Bruce says.

"We work with Dandenong Valley Job Support to recruit people, with a policy of every non-skilled role being offered to a person with a disability, for which we were recognised with the Prime Minister's Employer of the Year four years in a row.

"We also don't make people retire, and recently had someone working with us part time at 85 years of age."

nason.com.au



Left to right: Geoff Gwilym, Mayor Angela Long, Paul Magri, Bruce Parker



In this issue of *Talking Business* we hear from the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce on their first in person networking event in over 12 months and the new-look 2021 Greater Dandenong Chamber Business Awards. Nominations for the Business Awards are now open, and the program is free to enter.

These stories were contributed by the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce. Learn more: greaterdandenongchamber.com.au

Networking event with a foodie twist

Following easing of restrictions earlier this year the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce held their much-anticipated Foodies Tour in March.

With support from the Economic Development team at Greater Dandenong City Council, the Chamber hosted approximately 40 people on a guided walking tour of Dandenong's amazing food districts. Gathering in Harmony Square, patrons visited the Afghan Bazaar Cultural Precinct and continued into the Little India Precinct on Foster Street, getting familiar with the area and meeting

with traders. The final stop included dinner at Pamir Restaurant in Lonsdale Street. Then, as every good food experience should finish, dessert followed at Augustus Gelatery.

Feedback from attendees on the evening was extremely positive with many asking when the next food tour event would be scheduled. Others were impressed by seeing and hearing the information on developments happening in central Dandenong.

Lisa Moore, President of the Greater Dandenong Chamber commented, "Like many industries, Dandenong's hospitality industry has really

struggled from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are strongly passionate and committed to assisting the local business community to bounce back from these unprecedented times. With more events like this planned, we are determined to ensure Dandenong continues to be a thriving place in which to live, work and play!"



Your time to shine and be recognised!

Nominations for the 2021 Greater Dandenong Chamber Business Awards are now open.

The Awards Program is free to enter and aims to provide local businesses with recognition for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the Greater Dandenong area.

The Chamber encourages all eligible businesses, no matter how small or large to make 2021 the year they put their business in the spotlight by nominating for the Awards. You can enter the awards by nominating for a specific industry Awards category. The winners of each category will go into the running to win the prestigious Greater Dandenong Chamber Business Award.

Successful nominees will have their business presented at one of two (online) Showcase events during the year. The Chambers focus is on your business, your story, and promoting you. Winners will be announced at the final awards presentation event, where finalists will be acknowledged, and winners celebrated.

The Awards recognise significant achievements in the areas of small business, new business, tourism

and hospitality, innovation and sustainability, manufacturing and construction and corporate social responsibility, enhancing Greater Dandenong's reputation as one of the most workable places.

Do you know an inspirational business operating within the Greater Dandenong region? Then why not tap them on the shoulder and encourage them to enter the awards.

"After a tough year, our 2021 awards will really shine a light on the amazing resilience of the Greater Dandenong business community. Being recognised as a nominee or winner could really help raise your businesses profile, regather momentum and connect with other local businesses who have faced the same challenging times" said Lisa Moore.

Learn more: greaterdandenongchamber.com.au/awards-information



Pictured left to right: Previous award winners, Kelly Nunn, Megan Petty from Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and Paul Wood from NAB



Hands up for easier permits and registrations from Council

Planning a new business or expanding a business? Wondering what type of permits your business may need and hoping the process is easy?

Council understands that it can be difficult to know where to start. That's why Greater Dandenong City Council, in partnership with Small Business Victoria, have implemented the Better Approvals Project. The project, aims to lend a hand and take the angst out of the permit approval process. Better Approvals is now in place at over 50 councils across Victoria. So, good news if you have more than one business in different municipalities.

As part the project Council Officers spoke with local businesses to understand their experience with obtaining permits and approvals from council. The major issue we heard was that business operators had to work separately with multiple departments of Council such as planning, building, environmental

health and local laws. This often meant businesses passed one step only to find out they then needed to start another permit process in a different department.

Council listened and made changes to improve things. The Better Approvals Project now means there is only one point of contact at the very first step in the process. The Better Approvals Team (BAT) at Greater Dandenong is now here to help with new business application processes from the beginning, right to the very end. The team is here to guide businesses on what permits are needed and then help businesses apply for more than one permit at the same time - saving everyone time, money and frustration.

New and expanding businesses are encouraged to come and see how we can help.

To learn more about the services or to speak to the team, contact us via email business@cgd.vic.gov.au or 8571 1550.

Start, run and grow your business



Council is launching a new program to support your next business venture.

If you are a business that has just started or getting a business off the ground, you are invited to participate in the Ignite program.

Ignite Greater Dandenong is a program that offers a range of activities and resources for people looking to get a business idea off the ground or who have recently started their business.

Running over three months, the program will include a mixture of workshops, masterclasses, group mentoring sessions and individual mentoring opportunities.

The program will kick off with a launch night on Tuesday 22 June.

At the launch night, further details about the topics and dates of the workshops and masterclasses will be provided. You will also learn more about the program and the requirements.

Past participants, who completed the program in 2019 will also be at the event. Network and hear about their experience of the program and how they kicked off their businesses through this program. You will also get the opportunity to network with other start-up businesses and representatives from council.

The program will start off with a think tank and hackathon, which is a fun intensive brainstorming day, where you will learn skills on how to problem solve and come up with solutions for a current problem.

You will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek further support from experienced industry experts throughout the program.

Numbers are limited. Visit our website to register for this event.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/ignite-program

Calling all land developers, surveyors, contractors and planning consultants

The City of Greater Dandenong has joined the Australian-wide consortium of users of A-SPEC. This is a common specification that provides a consistent and efficient approach to the supply of digital 'As Constructed' data.

It is now a Council requirement that upon completion of an infrastructure project/subdivision that planning consultants/developers submit "As Constructed" infrastructure asset information in 'A-SPEC' format. You can do this via the Open Spatial ACDC online portal prior to being issued a certificate of Practical Completion.

Learn more: greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/planning-forms-fees-and-information-guides/spec-specification

From paper to pixels...

Did you know the Talking Business magazine is available electronically?

To swap to a digital version email
business@cgd.vic.gov.au



CONTACT

Greater Dandenong Business
Dandenong Civic Centre
225 Lonsdale Street
Dandenong, Victoria 3175
Ph: 8571 1550
business@cgd.vic.gov.au

Talking Business Editorial
Ph: 8571 1550
business@cgd.vic.gov.au

Views expressed by individual contributors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Greater Dandenong.

Material from Talking Business, Greater Dandenong's business news, may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes provided the source is acknowledged, for example, 'This material first appeared in the City of Greater Dandenong's Talking Business publication, June 2021'.

Email business@cgd.vic.gov.au to receive your copy of Talking Business electronically.

CONNECT

 /greaterdandenong
 /cityofgreaterdandenong
 /greaterdandy

