

Talking Business

June 2022



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Paul's Corner

We are already half-way through the year and restrictions are safely being eased due to our high rate of vaccination. We can now look forward to spending more time with our loved ones, visit our favourite places, enjoy events and travel further with more ease.

After navigating a challenging two and a half years, our businesses and community have persevered and should be proud of the resilience they have demonstrated during this time. A credit to you all.

In this edition of Talking Business, we hear from a local family run business, Regen Energy who are taking action to empower and educate companies to become more environmentally conscious. Their passion for the need for renewable energy and desire to educate and support climate change is inspiring. You can read about their journey on page 7.

We share details of the Revitalising central Dandenong development which is due to commence in 2023. This project will transform central Dandenong into a vibrant and thriving economic hub for our community. Read the story on page 3.

On page 8 learn more about the investment to construct Melbourne's largest intermodal terminal, supporting future growth of the municipality. This project will take trucks off suburban roads and connect port and rail networks, ensuring a safer working environment for users.

I'm sure we are all looking forward to a more prosperous second half of the year and with our economy opening up even further we can continue to remain positive.

We hope you enjoy the stories we have for you in this edition of Talking Business. Please remember if you need support don't hesitate to contact the Greater Dandenong Business team via business@cgd.vic.gov.au or 8571 1550.

Paul Kearsley
Director Business, Engineering and Major Projects

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Cover: Hiko Deddefo and Nefissa Ahmed owners of Odaa cafe and restaurant.

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

Revitalising central Dandenong



Artist impression of the new Little India precinct

The redevelopment of central Dandenong is slated to add over \$1.5 billion in value to the region and create more than 5000 jobs upon completion, according to its developer Capital Alliance.

Development Victoria is working in partnership with the City of Greater Dandenong, state government agencies and the private sector to achieve the goals of the Revitalising Central Dandenong initiative.

Melbourne developer Capital Alliance has released a draft masterplan showing the next phase of the development along with design renders to give locals a glimpse of what it will look like.

The proposal showcases 470 new dwellings, a hotel and conference centre, offices and community spaces for retail and dining, entertainment, education and healthcare.

Capital Alliance Founder and Managing Director Mohan Du said growing up in Melbourne's outer suburbs and experiencing

how local redevelopment projects transformed the community led him to take on the Revitalising Central Dandenong project.

“As a first-generation migrant who grew up in Blackburn and Box Hill, seeing those areas gentrify over the last couple of decades sat with me. So being able to participate in a tender that could shape a place like central Dandenong was really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” Mr Du said.

“Seeing the diverse culture of Dandenong and how we could be a part of shaping its future for next generations is really priceless.”

Construction on the development's first stage is expected to start next year, and will include delivering a supermarket, food market hall and residential building. Capital Alliance will invest \$600 million to develop the area next to the Dandenong transport hub.

To maintain the site's strong cultural identity, the project will also deliver a

Little India precinct. The new precinct will provide more modern facilities and services, as well as better spaces for tenants, and will be built as part of the development's first stage to minimise disruptions to traders.

The City of Greater Dandenong is Victoria's most culturally diverse community and is home to residents who come from more than 157 countries. There are about 17,500 businesses in the region, employing at least 95,000 people locally.

Mr Du said the genesis of the project was to bring people to Dandenong and to strengthen its position as an economic hub.

“What we're not doing is creating a concrete jungle. We're improving the community, the amenities, and if we look at what it will bring to the community and for local business in the future, it's going to be tremendous.”

development.vic.gov.au/projects/revitalising-central-dandenong

A snapshot of our Greater Dandenong tourism sector

Tourism offerings continue to strengthen across the City of Greater Dandenong, and we are pleased to share these great stories through this magazine.

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

Odaa Café and Restaurant



Many things have happened throughout the pandemic, but for local sisters Hiko Deddefo and Nefissa Ahmed the most

significant thing was like a dream. Born in Ethiopia, they have used this time to achieve their dream of opening their own restaurant, and they have done it here in Dandenong.

It all started with a conversation over coffee where they shared their mutual desire of opening a restaurant and sharing the love of their culture and cuisine with others.

Hiko and Nefissa chose Dandenong as the location for their new venture as they knew it was the most culturally diverse community in Australia and wanted to share the authentic Ethiopian flavours of their food with the local community.

Specialising in traditional Ethiopian and Oromo cuisines, they also serve a mean cup of coffee. They are bringing the original flavours of home-made Ethiopian coffee to their customers.

When asked what their hopes were for the future, Hiko said, "God willing, we will open another restaurant... we surely want to expand".

Another local business demonstrating that passion and persistence does pay off.

► **Where:** 115 Foster Street, Dandenong.

Did you know?

30 years

Little India has traded as a cultural precinct

2006

Paddy O'Donoghue Community Centre opens

629

business tenancies are located in the Springvale Activity Centre

World class lawn bowls in Dandenong



Barrie Lester delivers as Gary Kelly watches on.



Dandenong Club played host to a unique triple-header bowls competition

in April with a prize pool of a record \$500,000. It was a welcome return of the Ultimate Bowls Championship (UBC), last played in December 2019.

In 2021 Dandenong Club was chosen by Bowls Australia to host its national championships. Winning the rights to an ongoing bi-annual agreement to host the UBC event was another feather in the Club's cap. Dandenong Club is recognised as a World Class bowls venue, capable of running major events on a green considered equal to anything else in Australia.

The Club's roof and surrounds provide a guarantee against weather interruptions. The catering, transportation capabilities and overall event management skills prove a

winner for promoters, players and spectators alike.

This time international teams from the USA, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, England and Scotland joined the best from all around Australia at Dandenong Club. The winner of event one was Geelong Clippers.


Dandenong Club team is represented by Irish International Gary Kelly, who now lives in Australia, Barrie Lester and Commonwealth Games Gold Medalist Wayne Turley OAM.

Dandenong Club runs extensive bowls programs all year round. For more information on when to play, visit dandenongclub.com.au

Owners, Brendan D'Amelio and Bert Glinka.



Uncle's new Deli Food store

 Uncle's Smallgoods, local makers of high-quality Deli cuts have made the move to a whole new flagship foodstore and café.

From the growing number of local and loyal customers, including customers from far and wide, Uncle's Smallgoods have outgrown their old shop, relocating to a spacious venue at 32 Gladstone Road, Dandenong.

Having more space means a greater variety of choices for you to purchase, from the 10-metre-long deli fridge filled with deliciously made food, to the freshly baked bread from the local bakery, Noisette. You can wander through the aisles of speciality foods and what could arguably be Melbourne's biggest

selection of pickles to compliment your deli purchases.

There are over 100 products in their range including smoked salmon, bacon, American style beef brisket, continental sausages and their recently made famous New York Pastrami, which you'll see on the menu at the best sandwich bars and restaurants around Melbourne.

The foodstore is seriously unique, on the shelves you'll also discover an extensive range of imported European products that typically come from Poland as well as Italy (paying homage to the two owners). From an extensive range of pickles, rare mustards and sauces to ready-made meals such as Pierogi (Polish dumplings) which are made in house.

With the new venue comes a great outdoor dining space, where you can purchase a delicious fresh lunch and enjoy it on the doorstep, with an excellent cup of coffee.

The boys proudly use only 100% Free Range Australian meat in all their products and sell their goods around Australia to the best speciality foodstores and cafés.

Owners, Brendan D'Amelio and Bert Glinka have realised their vision, expanding from a single shopfront deli on Thomas Street to a purpose-built smokehouse manufacturing plant and now this new flagship foodstore in Gladstone Road.

► **Where:** 32 Gladstone Road, Dandenong or online at unclessmallgoods.com



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

Small Business Bus

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 visits Greater Dandenong on a regular basis and helps local business owners by giving them expert advice and knowledgeable guidance.

The Victorian Government's Small Business Bus can help you to develop your business ideas and capabilities.

The Small Business Bus currently offers information through various Government organisations as well as business assistance from expert advisers, financial business counselling through the Rural Financial Counselling Service and coaching sessions under the Partners in Wellbeing program.

Bookings with a business adviser, financial counsellor or a wellbeing coach are required as sessions are strictly limited.

Council will be scheduling more bus visits to the Greater Dandenong municipality in the second half of 2022. Details to be published on our website.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/events



Business Recovery Coaching Program

Are you a small business owner who has been impacted by the pandemic and is looking for support to get your business back on track?

The free Business Recovery Coaching Program by LaunchMe can help you renew your business.

The program is designed for small business owners in south east Melbourne who have been impacted by the pandemic and need help with recovery.

Good Shepherd's LaunchMe Business Recovery program can help you restart by providing:

- Three personalised business coaching sessions over a period of up to three months

- A tailored roadmap to recovery
- Referrals to Good Shepherd's network of financial and wellbeing services
- Financial assistance to support business goals. Examples include tools, social media training and mentoring sessions.

To be eligible for this program you need to be the owner of an established business, live in south east Melbourne and have a business profit of less than \$75,000 in the last 12 months.

goodshep.org.au/launchmerecovery

Funding and support available for a greener Greater Dandenong



Support is available for businesses in Greater Dandenong to upgrade equipment and save money while protecting the environment.

Solar panel installation rebates

This initiative is brought to you by Solar Victoria and will bring down energy bills for small businesses by reducing the upfront cost of the installation of an approved small-scale solar PV system up to 30kW. Businesses with under 19 employees and operating from a non-residential premise are eligible for a maximum rebate of \$3,500. Visit solar.vic.gov.au/business to learn more.

Energy Compare

Energy Compare is a free, Victorian Government website which allows businesses and households to compare their current pricing on electricity, gas and solar in as little as five minutes. As many small businesses operate during daylight hours, it's especially important that business owners compare their energy bills/pricing every 6-12 months, to ensure they're accessing the most competitive price. Visit compare.energy.vic.gov.au to learn more.


Regen Energy sparking clean energy for the future



Andrew Scott, Sales Director, Regen Energy with one of their solar power systems.



Owners, Andrew and Mish (centre), plant trees in the Daintree with their family and Half Cut's founder James Stanton-Cooke (right).

 Keysborough solar power business Regen Energy may only be two years old, but it has big ambitions to trigger a ripple effect in the energy sector and fight climate change.

Co-founders Marisha and Andrew Malcolm started the business after being inspired by the Australian-made documentary *2040*, which explores how existing technologies could reverse the effects of global warming.

Having already run a successful solar installation contracting business for over a decade, the husband-and-wife team felt they were in a unique position to bridge a knowledge gap in the industry.

“That night, after watching the film, we looked up more than 50 solar websites and what we realised was not one was talking about the bigger picture and climate action,” Ms Malcolm said.

“Most companies know they should have solar, whether it’s to cut energy costs or respond to customer expectations. But these companies were not having the conversation with their clients about what we

considered the most important benefit of installing solar – reducing carbon emissions.”

Regen Energy designs, supplies, installs and commissions solar power systems in the commercial and industrial sector.

Ms Malcolm said interest was growing in solar power energy and the sector was teeming with activity.

“...set in the heart of the City of Greater Dandenong, we are pleased to actively participate in its business community.”

“Our challenge is competing in an oversaturated market and communicating how we are different. There is a lot of greenwashing at the moment and people are starting to see through this.”

Regen Energy’s commitment to climate change goes beyond its service offering. The business has committed to raising \$100,000 for HalfCut, a charity focused on saving the Daintree Rainforest, over seven years.

Regen Energy has a number of installation teams led by long standing A-Grade electricians from their contracting business, and its office crew has expanded to five to support the growth of the retail division.

“As a company set in the heart of the City of Greater Dandenong, we are pleased to actively participate in its business community.”

In the last six months, Regen Energy has installed solar panels on 11 commercial sites in the area.

The family-owned business is also passionate about sharing knowledge and bringing the next generation on its journey, educating school teachers and students about renewable energy and its positive impacts on the environment.

Regen Energy pledges to plant 2,000 trees on behalf of each school that introduces renewable energy.

regenenergy.com.au

- withhold your employees’ tax
- pay super guarantee to their funds
- manage their fringe benefits.

Visit ato.gov.au/employing for information on support available.

Tax and super support for Australian employers

Being an employer comes with many responsibilities, including managing tax and super on behalf of your workers.

No matter where you are in the hiring journey, the ATO has a range of resources and tools available to support you to:

Largest intermodal terminal for Dandenong South



Melbourne's largest intermodal terminal should be up and running in Dandenong South in 2024 as Salta Properties works with government to connect port and rail networks for containerised freight.

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments' joint investment of \$28 million will connect Salta's Nexus Industrial Estate to the Port of Melbourne's new \$125 million Port Rail Transformation Project, allowing port shuttles to run to and from Dandenong South up to five times per day.

The efficient transportation of containers between the Port of Melbourne and Dandenong South

aims to reduce transport costs for businesses and take trucks off suburbs roads. The terminal will offer users 24 hour access to drop off and pick up containers via its fully automated gantry crane system.

In order to support the growth in containerised freight volumes in Melbourne's south east, Salta's terminal has been designed to handle up to 560,000 twenty-foot equivalent units every year.

Salta Properties founding director Sam Tarascio Snr said the company was in discussion with several major logistics operators regarding the terminal's operations and had already made a considerable investment into

Nexus Dandenong South Industrial Estate, which is located adjacent to the Dandenong South Intermodal Terminal.

"The Nexus industrial estate is home to several major users, including Woolworths and Bunnings and significant capacity exists for additional tenants that could benefit from being next to the intermodal terminal," Mr Tarascio said.

The Dandenong South Intermodal Terminal is expected to take approximately 24 months to complete and is just one part of the broader Victorian Port Rail Shuttle Network.

salta.com.au/projects/dandenong-south-intermodal-terminal/

Jayco's busier than ever



The pandemic has seen a rise in caravanning and domestic travel, with people of all levels of experience looking for new, safe, and affordable ways to explore our amazing country.

This has resulted in Dandenong-based manufacturing business,

Jayco, seeing a significant increase in sales across all new and used RVs.

Jayco Head of Sales and R&D, Scott Jones, said consequently, Jayco's Dandenong South facility and production lines "have never been busier".

"We have hundreds of new RVs to deliver to our customers and we've had to expand our team and production lines to ensure our customers can get on the road as soon as possible."

Established in 1975, Jayco has come a long way from its humble beginning. Starting in the garage of a suburban home with an ambition to build a camper trailer.

Today, Jayco has built and sold more than 225,000 RV's, each equipped

with standard features that other brands only offer as options.

Jayco and its subsidiaries added 200 jobs to handle the demand last year.

"It has been a challenging time to manage such a large workforce during the pandemic, however what we've also seen has been people pulling together and supporting each other to fulfill our mission to create the best possible product for our customers."

Amid global supply chain issues, Mr Jones said the company is proud to be able to support local manufacturing jobs.

"In a time where industries have had to reduce their headcount, we've managed to grow ours," Mr Jones said.

Local businesses addressing welding skills shortage



Many businesses are feeling the pinch of the current labor shortage, but for those in the manufacturing sector, a lack of skilled welders has been an increasing issue for decades. In response to direct feedback from industry, the South East Melbourne Manufacturer's Alliance (SEMMA) branched out from its advocacy role to directly respond to local members' needs by launching a Welding Skills Short Course.

After securing a \$200,000 Federal Government grant during the peak of the pandemic in 2021, local job seekers have had the opportunity to undertake this free four-week course in Dandenong South with guaranteed employment upon successful completion. The course is designed to equip participants to be employment-ready and perform basic welding work, which can in turn free up organisations' more experienced welding employees for other projects.

A valuable component of the training has been incorporating a welding simulator, allowing participants to not only adjust to the welding helmet but practice in a safe, fun, sustainable manner while receiving a detailed analysis of their attempt. SEMMA has observed a

strong, positive correlation between performance with the simulator and the physical MIG welding achieved in the welding bays.

The course would not have been possible without the support of Hilton Manufacturing, based in Dandenong South, who generously provide both formal classroom training space and valuable production floor space for the student welding bays, giving participants the experience of operating in a real factory environment. Chisholm Institute's experienced instructors deliver the training for SEMMA.

Peter Angelico, Managing Director of ABECK Group, is thrilled with his new employee and course graduate who is producing jig welded parts, freeing up a higher skilled welder to complete more critical work. Peter said, "the skills course is designed to fill an immediate need which enables us to maintain our customer's confidence that we can deliver in full and on-time".

"There are plenty of full-time positions in manufacturing, we need to bring people in with micro credential courses such as this that are specifically designed to suit what our customers need".




Darrell Hewton, Employment Facilitator, South Eastern Melbourne and Peninsula Local Jobs Program (LJP)
Vonda Fenwick, SEMMA CEO.

This story was supplied by SEMMA. SEMMA is the peak industry association representing over 200 leading manufacturing companies located in south east Melbourne, Australia's most dynamic manufacturing region.

semma.com.au

Work Local Greater Dandenong

 Looking for staff? In the current tight jobs market, we are hearing of many businesses struggling to find the staff they need. If you are recruiting for your current operations, or are looking to expand, the local jobs portal 'Work Local Greater Dandenong' is one online tool that may be of assistance.

Hosted by SEBN, the portal aggregates all the Greater Dandenong vacancies from online jobs boards (except SEEK) into one

simple, accessible site. Lodging your vacancy on a dedicated local site ensures that you reach a local audience, maximising your exposure to jobseekers able to easily access your workplace.

The portal also has the facility to email vacancies directly to the inbox of more than 950 jobseekers registered with the site and the SEBN team can assist if you would like to share your vacancy via this direct method.

Contact SEBN sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au for further information.





Artist impression of the warm water pool hall at the DWC

Dandenong Wellbeing Centre

Customised to meet the needs of Greater Dandenong's diverse community, the Dandenong Wellbeing Centre (DWC) will replace Dandenong Oasis and will be a world-class aquatic centre with an unprecedented focus on health and wellbeing outcomes.

The DWC will reposition the traditional Australian aquatic and leisure centre to a 'next generation preventative health centre' in response to the challenging health status of the community. The centre will combine contemporary aquatic and leisure facilities with allied health services, education programs and

community spaces to provide an integrated facility that is focused on maximising community benefit.

The development of the DWC is a key recommendation from the Greater Dandenong Aquatic Strategy (2019) and is based on the vision to get "more people, more active, more often".

The detailed design process for the new centre is currently underway and builds on extensive planning and consultation that has been undertaken over a number of years. This includes over 2,400 community/stakeholder engagements to ensure the new centre responds to the

needs of Greater Dandenong's unique community.

The new two-storey centre will be built at Mills Reserve (Cleeland Street, Dandenong) and will include a range of innovative sustainable measures.

The construction of the new centre is proposed to commence in 2023 and be completed by 2025, subject to funding. Dandenong Oasis will continue to operate during the construction of the new centre.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/works-and-projects/dandenong-wellbeing-centre-new-dandenong-oasis

Springvale Boulevard update

Construction is nearing completion on the \$6 million Springvale Boulevard Renewal Project.

Council would like to thank businesses and visitors to central Springvale for their patience with the works which have affected traffic movements and parking in the activity centre.

Improvements to the iconic commercial strip include new paving, street furniture, lighting and wider footpaths for improved trading and dining conditions.

In addition to these features, new garden beds and established trees

have been planted to give the Boulevard a more natural feel and improve shade across the precinct.

The improvements are supported by the State Government and Greater Dandenong City Council and the design is a nod to Springvale's status as one of Melbourne's most beloved and leading cultural destinations.

The completed project will improve access to, and within the wider shopping precinct, ensuring it remains an attractive and sustainable destination for retail, cultural and tourism activities into the future.

Council hopes the boulevard will become a social hub that encourages people to connect and relax with friends and family, and where community celebrations can light up the local streets.

Greater Dandenong City Council would like to acknowledge the ongoing support and resilience demonstrated by Springvale Boulevard businesses during this construction period.

Springvale Boulevard, together with the recently completed Springvale Community Hub, will celebrate Springvale's rich cultural tapestry and create a renewed sense of pride within the community.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/Springvale-boulevard



Collective Impact



Paul D'Arcy has employed about 100 people over the past 25 years, and that's not just a number to a man who loves seeing people grow, learn and achieve.

The Managing Director of Dandenong South's Direct Mail Solutions is hoping to make an impact on many more in the coming years, and recently launched a not-for-profit social enterprise to support at-risk youth.

When Mr D'Arcy moved his business last year, several other businesses joined him at his South Gippsland Highway warehouse. When he expressed his desire to help employ and mentor at-risk youth those other businesses jumped on board, forming Collective Impact.

Working in conjunction with Social Engine and Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia, Collective Impact is making a better future for vulnerable young people.

When Mr D'Arcy entered the workforce he said the mentorship



Sabrina Curtain (ZooZoo Printing), Maria McEwan (Cardline), Mark Watt AM (CEO Brothers and Sisters), Allister Freeman (Freeman Media), Ran Zheng (Ranz Print), Nick La Porta (Card Line), Paul D'Arcy (Direct Mail Solutions).

"I also personally believe that a workplace should be relaxed and fun – we can get the job done while enjoying ourselves."

he found among older employees set him on the right path and he hopes he can be as inspiring to a new generation.

"Collective Impact is still in its infancy, but we are helping to build awareness around employing kids and giving them a chance. I also personally believe that a workplace should be relaxed and fun – we can get the job done while enjoying ourselves.

"I have a teenage boy and I hope that when he enters the workforce he finds a supportive environment in which he can learn and grow, and also have fun," Mr D'Arcy said.

Collective Impact brings together a range of businesses covering marketing, design, print, production, warehouse distribution and charitable sectors. **Visit collectiveimpact.org.au to find out more or contact Allister Freeman 0421 175 223.**

Noble Park revitalisation

Noble Park Activity Centre is reaping significant investment rewards thanks to the Noble Park Revitalisation Board, Office of Suburban Development and Greater Dandenong City Council.

Over the course of 18 months this partnership has leveraged recent growth and capitalised on new infrastructure to unlock Noble Park's full potential to attract additional investment and speed up the social and economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

One of the newest project installations is a pavement mural by Australian Street Artist/ Muralist Happy Decay, which was commissioned for the laneway off Douglas St in Noble Park.

Inspired by the scale and colours of Noble Park streets, Happy Decay's pavement mural is bright and engaging. The artwork runs the length of the laneway, transforming the 46m-long paved path into a playful pedestrian short-cut that people will be naturally drawn to.

Located opposite the pedestrian crossing on Douglas St, the work is highly visible to Noble Park's pedestrians and shoppers, with the intention of creating a more enjoyable and positive community space.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/revitalisation-and-placemaking/revitalising-noble-park





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 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:

SEBN's Women in Business network program for 2022 continues across four key themes of Connection | Communication | Personal Brand | 'Out of the Box'. **Join now – sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au**

Showcasing Women in Business Event Series featuring special guest speakers who have achieved success in their field of business.

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

The Strength and value of Dandenong manufacturing



Martin Pakula MP, Gabrielle Williams MP, Peter Jones, Managing Director, Nissan Casting Australia, Markus Spindler, General Manager, Nissan Casting Australia.

Dandenong manufacturing is alive and well and at the forefront of Australian manufacturing as recent announcements by the Victorian Government highlight the strength and breadth of this region's manufacturing capability with local companies benefiting from state government investment. Nissan Casting Australia will design and manufacture electric vehicle components for carmaker Nissan through a \$15.5 million expansion at its Dandenong South facility which can produce around 2.6 million castings each year. This investment will create 41 local jobs in engineering, management and production, allowing the company to boost its automation and robotic operations – building Victoria's skills base.

Volgren will develop their first Australian designed and built commercial-grade hydrogen fuel cell electric bus, with two vehicles

being built in Dandenong, providing valuable insights on the performance and commercialisation of hydrogen buses in Victoria. Thiago Deiro, CEO of Volgren, said the project was an exciting opportunity to introduce hydrogen fuel cell electric buses in Victoria and develop local expertise in clean energy utilisation. By creating local manufacturing capabilities, you reduce the dependency of importing full hydrogen buses.

Alstom was awarded a \$1.85 billion contract for the government's Next Generation Trams project to build 100 Flexity low-floor trams for the largest urban tram network in the world. The contract includes supply of rolling stock and 15 year maintenance, making this the biggest tram contract in Australian and the Southern Hemisphere. Pre-construction activities at Dandenong to establish the production line will begin imminently, with construction on the first tram due to start from late 2023. The first vehicles are anticipated to be in service from 2025.

These announcements also demonstrate that manufacturing is here for the long term, providing unique opportunities for our schools and training organisations to build a pipeline of workers that will meet the highly diverse and increasingly sophisticated skills and training needs of the manufacturing sector.

Community Revitalisation project

The strategic phase of the Community Revitalisation project is well underway with a co-designed *framework for change* guiding the process. Focus groups are being facilitated during May and June for all stakeholder groups who play a role in the employment landscape. Thank you to the employers who have participated in these events and provided valuable input to the visioning of a skills and jobs system that functions seamlessly for all.



Funded by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions this long-term endeavour is intended to shift the employment ecosystem in Dandenong and surrounds, to provide better outcomes for both businesses and jobseekers. If you would like to become involved, please email onepercentproject@cgd.vic.gov.au

Wallara shines at national awards

"We've been associated with SEBN for a long time. We've been the beneficiary of the Take a Swing for Charity Golf Day twice, and used those funds to expand our programs at Wallara."

Wallara Australia, an organisation providing support services for adults with different abilities, won two awards at the inaugural 2022 Australian Disability Service Awards in April.

Awards organiser One Community recognised Wallara's CEO, Phil Hayes-Brown, for Most Outstanding CEO/Director and awarded the company the Best Remote Service/Program honour for its innovative approach.

Mr Hayes-Brown said the awards were an excellent way to demonstrate the amount of good work happening across the disability services sector.

"I'm lucky to lead a team of creative people," Mr Hayes-Brown said.

"When COVID hit, we launched Wallara Online almost immediately. We had classes across music, sport, technology and art, as well as coaches offering live support. The service is still utilised by clients and carers in rural areas and we're now promoting it nationally."

Don Elgin, Head of Events for One Community – which aims to connect and empower people with disability to service providers – praised Wallara's approach to disability service.

"One of the overwhelming things that came through from the submission is that Phil listens to clients and the people he's there to serve," Mr Elgin said.

"That relationship is part of Wallara's success. They have vision, fantastic ideas, and are willing to break the



Phil Hayes-Brown, Jeanette Boutros from Tender Loving Care, Hon Bill Shorten MP.

mould in disability services and how they're delivered."

Wallara's head office and extensive facility in Keysborough employs 150 workers with disabilities and is key to the supply chains of many major brands, including Myer.

Mr Hayes-Brown encourages companies to get in touch if they need logistical support, which also builds a more inclusive community.

"St Kilda Football Club is a partner of Wallara. Anyone who buys Saints merchandise online goes through our warehouse and one of our clients picks, packs and ships the product to them. The club films that work, tells their members about it, and that all increases the visibility about what adults with disabilities can do," he said.

www.wallara.com.au





The Market will rebuild its popular festivals and events program celebrating the diversity of the local community and giving shoppers an added reason to visit.

Give me a reason to grow

 Dandenong Market is calling for local businesses considering a second location at the Market as well as new businesses looking to open their first retail store.

“We have a number of traders with stores elsewhere who find a second, and sometimes third location, a viable business proposition,” Jennifer Hibbs, General Manager, Dandenong Market said.

The Market Leasing team is looking for locally grown, foraged or manufactured foods as well as small and micro businesses that offer a product or service not available at Dandenong Market, locally designed or hand-made products, vintage or repurposed and up-cycled goods, hobbies and collectibles, cosmetics, skin care and perfumes, and hair and beauty services.

“We’re always looking for something new and what’s not currently available at Dandenong Market, including locally grown, foraged or manufactured products,” Ms Hibbs said.

Specialty foods and other products that support Dandenong Market’s

positioning as “The World Market” are always popular, as are culturally based uses that resonate with our local community.

“We’re excited to welcome new Pakistan street food traders Spirit of Pakistan next month and we are offering great incentives to current traders who introduce new traders to the Market,” Ms Hibbs explained.

If they qualify, new traders could be eligible for a generous marketing package to help spread the word of their new location.

“The total marketing and PR value is \$10,800,” Ms Hibbs said. “Once added to generous lease or licence terms, that’s a really attractive incentive to someone wanting to grow their business.”

The Market has just completed its annual customer research survey with pleasing results. Shoppers are spending more and staying longer. The Market’s customer satisfaction rating is 8.4 out of 10, and, although there is always room for improvement, this is wonderful feedback.

“The Market is going from strength to strength and, despite the challenges of the past two years, when we welcomed 5.6 million visitors a year, our competitive pricing compared to supermarkets as well as our customers’ renewed desire for authentic and engaging shopping experiences where they can reconnect with their community will see the Market thrive again,” Ms Hibbs said.

dandenongmarket.com.au





In this issue of *Talking Business* we hear from the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce on how they continue to support local businesses and help them stay connected.

The Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce has started the year off strong, working on many new and exciting projects that will benefit not only members, but also the local business community.

With so many impressive new and well-established businesses in the south-east of Melbourne, the Chamber is keen to support them with improved platforms to promote, share and influence the community, other businesses, future partners and investors.

The Chamber has been working hard on the Business Awards program to make it bigger and better than ever before. Therefore, this year the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce presents the *South East Business Awards*.

This year, the border has been extended beyond Greater Dandenong and the Awards program is open to all businesses in the south-east of Melbourne. There are more award categories and more opportunities for sponsors to generate immense exposure from the program.

The Awards Program is free to enter and aims to provide recognition for

outstanding business achievements and contributions to the south-east area.

There are many ways to get involved, as a nominee, a sponsor, a supporter, an attendee, a nominator, to hear business stories or gain advice from past winners. The final awards presentation event is in October.

“The *South East Business Awards* offer businesses a unique opportunity to be recognised beyond the borders of their local council, business network or chamber.

With more categories this year, we look forward to introducing a wide range of professionals to each other and generating their promotion to new audiences,” said Lisa Moore, President of the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce.

To nominate your business for an award simply head to the Greater Dandenong Chamber website and fill out the nomination form online.

greaterdandenongchamber.com.au/awards



Paul Wood from NAB with 2021 winners KLM Spatial.

The Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce is very excited to introduce it's new online community platform - Chamber Connect.

Chamber Connect is one of the most powerful member benefits in the 75-year history of the Dandenong Chamber. This new connection is an incredible resource – more than 500 of your business colleagues that share your challenges, uncertainties and successes. Businesses finding solutions together. Chamber Connect is a platform that anyone can join to find support, best practices, peer-to-peer connections, resources, events, and networking, all in one destination.

The Chamber knows the value of networking, programs and the right business introduction for members. To build on that value, the Chamber is now entering a new phase of collaboration by providing busy business owners with an environment to connect, engage and share experiences and advice, to exchange resources and build relationships, at a time convenient to them.

“Existing channels that support the Chamber to shape Greater Dandenong as Australia's future business hub, like our in-person networking, Business Awards Program and specialist business

events, mean that new channels like Chamber Connect are well placed to provide valuable services businesses need right now,” said Lisa Moore, President of the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce.

Head to the Greater Dandenong Chamber website to find out more about Chamber Connect and join online today.

chamberconnect.greaterdandenongchamber.com.au



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