

Talking Business

June 2023

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Paul's Corner

We hope you are keeping warm as you sit down to read our June edition of this magazine. We officially welcomed the first month of winter for the year – although some may agree the chilly weather has arrived a little earlier.

In this edition of the business magazine, we highlight a few exciting programs that have recently been completed and share some new initiatives on the horizon. This includes the business grant program (page 3), the Ignite Greater Dandenong Program (page 8) and the Future South East Conference (page 15).

We share a beautiful story provided by the Dandenong Market about Kabul Kitchen co-owner, Ali and his journey to starting a business in Dandenong (page 10–11).

Our front cover story introduces a new business to Noble Park, Hyzon Motors Australia (page 5). Our Mayor and representatives from our Business Support Team attended the opening ceremony earlier in the year.

We hope you enjoy the stories we have compiled for you in this edition of *Talking Business*.

Please remember if you need support don't hesitate to contact the Business Support Team via business@cgd.vic.gov.au or 8571 1550.

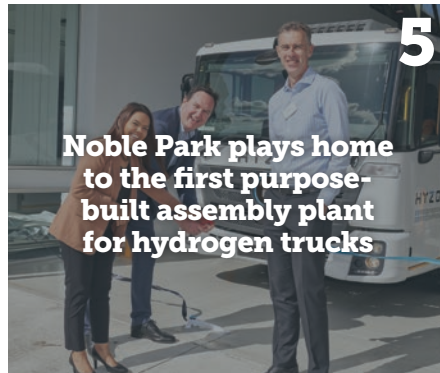
Paul Kearsley

Director Business, Engineering and Major Projects

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Cover image (left to right): Cutting of the ribbon at the Hyzon Motors product launch in March – Mayor Cr Eden Foster, John Edgley, President International Operations of Hyzon Motors and Neil Taylor, CEO and Managing Director of RACV.

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

Buy Local Business Grant program supporting business community



The grant program saw a total of 26 businesses awarded funding support. As per the guidelines, the suppliers must be local which meant another 19 businesses were supported by association, further increasing the value of this program.

The Buy Local Business Grants was a new innovative pilot program trialled this year for Council. The program which ran throughout April and May, aimed to support Greater Dandenong businesses through these difficult economic times and to assist in strengthening local networks.

A limited number of cash grants of up to \$1,000 were being offered to Greater Dandenong businesses to purchase professional services from another Greater Dandenong business. This program was specifically designed to support two businesses at a time and ensure the funding support was kept within the local economy.

The grants were provided to businesses who could demonstrate how the grant will assist them to support business sustainability. The 26 successful applicants has resulted

in a total of \$25,215.30 in grant funding. These grants complemented the other, non-financial, business support measures Council provide on an ongoing basis.

The grant money could be used for new services to help a business including;

- Website development
- Marketing and Design Services
- Business Mentoring
- Human Resources
- Training and Development Services.

All grant opportunities funded by Council are announced via our e-newsletter, Talking Business.

We encourage you to sign up to stay informed of any future updates.

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/talking-business

Parental leave changes coming into effect 1 July

Parental leave policies are designed to support and protect working parents around the time of childbirth or adoption of a child and when children are young. The availability of paid parental leave for each parent fosters a more equal division of unpaid care and paid work, improving the family work-life balance.

Parental leave lets employees take time away from work for the birth or adoption of a child. The term 'parental leave' can include:

- unpaid parental leave
- government-funded Parental Leave Pay
- employer-funded paid parental leave.

As of 1 July, the current entitlement of 18 weeks' paid parental leave pay will be combined with the current Dad and Partner Pay entitlement of 2 weeks' pay. This means partnered couples will be able to claim up to 20 weeks' paid parental leave between them. Parents who are single at the time of their claim can access the full 20 weeks.

These changes affect employees whose baby is born or placed in their care on or after 1 July 2023. Services Australia is the government organisation who manage the paid parental leave scheme. For further details, visit their website.

Best practice employers recognise retaining skilled employees when they have children is imperative to long-term business success. These employers go beyond their minimum legal obligations and create practical, flexible and tailored parental leave policies for their business. Every workplace has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of taking a best practice approach to parental leave.

Learn more:
fairwork.gov.au



Breaking down barriers for working parents

The path of a working mother may be well-trodden but is by no means a walk in the park, it's often riddled with assumptions and discrimination. With impacted levels of female participation in the workforce, reduced career advancement, and limited lifetime economic security, there is an urgent need for change to achieve broad gender equality.

The parental leave problem

It is commonly assumed once parents, women become less ambitious than men. This gendered assumption means 95 per cent of paid primary carer's leave is taken by women and 49 per cent of women (and 25 per cent of men) experience workplace discrimination during their parental leave journey.

The effect of this discrimination is severe. In 2019, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported between 2011 and 2017 an increased number of women believed they were overlooked for a promotion because they were pregnant; 4.5 per cent of women in 2011 to 7 per cent in 2017. More mothers also missed out on training or development; 3.7 per cent in 2011 to 6.4 per cent in 2017. Finally, more women reported their roles and responsibilities at work were changed without consultation while pregnant; 2.2 per cent in 2011 to 3.5 per cent in 2017.

This evidence shows parents, and particularly women, need the support of their employer to have a fulfilling work-life balance and parental journey. Not only is this critical in managing employees' family and work lives, but also helps businesses retain talented staff, creating benefits for their bottom line.

Dismantling the 'Parental Wall'

When it comes to women in the workplace, we hear a lot about barriers to leadership but, for many, there is another barrier they come across much sooner in their careers, known as 'the parental wall'. This is a term coined to describe the drop in career success female employees often experience either when they become pregnant, while on parental leave, or upon return to work after parental leave.

To dismantle the parental wall and empower working parents, businesses should invest in:

- Setting targets for gender equality and holding leaders accountable for achieving them, to challenge biases and create a more inclusive workplace.
- Training for line managers to enhance their understanding and engagement in supporting working parents.
- Provide coaching and educational programs which empower working parents, providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate their parental leave journey and maintain work-life balance.
- Actively sponsoring the success and promotion of working parents, ensuring they have equal opportunities for career advancement and growth.
- Encouraging millennial dads to actively participate in caregiving responsibilities to help break down gender norms and promote shared parenting.

- Establishing a culture where keeping in touch during parental leave is a shared accountability between the parental leaver and their people leader, to promote a smoother transition and support parents' integration back into the workforce.
- Create policies which address the gender gap in retirement savings, ensuring working parents, particularly women, have equal opportunities to build financial security for the future.
- Reviewing company systems and processes to identify and eliminate any gender bias which may exist, ensuring equal opportunities and treatment for all employees.
- Create flexible work options to enable working parents to balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Through concerted efforts and a commitment to gender equality, we can break down barriers and create a more equitable future for working parents. If you're interested in learning more, scan the QR code to read the Australian Human Rights Commission national review on supporting working parents.



This article was written in collaboration with Grace Papers, who are fierce advocates for gender equality and human rights.

gracepapers.com.au/insights

Noble Park plays home to the first purpose-built assembly plant for hydrogen trucks

Hyzon Motors develops zero-emissions, hydrogen-powered commercial vehicles with leading fuel cell technology. Hyzon Motors Inc. is a Nasdaq listed company that builds on almost two decades of experience in hydrogen fuel cell development.

Last year, the business announced the development of Australia's first purpose-built assembly plant in Noble Park (in partnership with the RACV), to manufacture hydrogen-powered commercial vehicles with future capacity to produce over 1,000 vehicles per annum. The facility alone represents over \$50 million of investment into the local economy.

In March, Hyzon delivered Australia's first locally engineered and manufactured hydrogen fuel cell electric truck. Leading the development of this program in Victoria has allowed the business to tap into the rich resources of highly skilled local engineering and technical knowledge to build a team, process, and product for Hyzon's global and domestic market. These fuel cell vehicles are currently being tested in Victoria.

Greater Dandenong City Council Mayor Eden Foster attended the product launch, participating in the ribbon ceremony alongside John Edgley President, International Operations of Hyzon Motors Australia and Neil Taylor, CEO and Managing Director of RACV.

The Mayor said, "it is so exciting to see such a big investment by a global company in our own backyard. I am also really impressed to hear Hyzon recognise the importance of upskilling local engineers and technicians to work in this specialised field, keeping jobs local."

Mr Edgley said the establishment of Hyzon's local manufacturing facility at Noble Park was a 'real game changer' for Australia and New Zealand's decarbonisation journey.

"We are building our zero emission heavy vehicles right here in Melbourne's south east, using local skills, employing local people,

and collaborating effectively with our colleagues across the globe", Mr Edgley said.

The vehicle development process is following a path of design, build and validation to make use of resources available locally and provide an opportunity to train new engineers and technicians.

"Incorporating global market requirements and standards into our design philosophy has allowed the vehicle to be easily adaptable not only to international markets, but also with a multitude of use cases. Hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles will play a vital role in the decarbonisation of the transport sector and be a key component of Australia's fuel security strategy into the future," said Mr Edgley.

Location: 542 Princes Highway, Noble Park
hyzonmotors.com.au



Cutting of the ribbon at the Hyzon Motors product launch in March – Mayor Cr Eden Foster, John Edgley, President International Operations of Hyzon Motors and Neil Taylor, CEO and Managing Director of RACV.

RACV supporting a cleaner energy future

As one of Australia's most trusted brands, RACV is helping Australians transition to a cleaner energy future.

RACV Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Neil Taylor said RACV was founded when the car was identified as an exciting new form of technology.

"For more than 100 years, we have evolved the products and services we offer to suit the changing needs of Australians. Today we are seeing a range of new technologies emerge," Mr Taylor said.

"RACV's partnership with Hyzon Motors helps to deliver on one of RACV's key strategic objectives, that of supporting a cleaner energy future for all."

The partnership also includes a first order of hydrogen powered vehicles for RACV owned subsidiary Nationwide Group, the first order of such vehicles for a towing company in Australia.

RACV, through several partnerships and investments, now offers cleaner energy products and services including solar panels and batteries through RACV Solar and a home

energy trial through Arcline by RACV. RACV has also invested in electric vehicle charging companies JET Charge and Chargefox.

Stage one construction has begun on a new purpose-built facility at the Noble Park location. Hyzon Motors' facility will include corporate offices, a showroom, assembly warehousing and a workshop, and is expected to generate over one hundred localised engineering and manufacturing jobs.

Learn more:
racv.com.au

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

Future looks bright for Dandenong with "next generation" Holiday Inn investment



IHG Hotels & Resorts' newest Holiday Inn opened in the heart of Dandenong on 31 May 2023 after hotel owners, Pelligra Group, invested \$12 million into the build.

Holiday Inn Dandenong is designed as a place for visitors and locals to conduct business and connect, according to General Manager Scott Schaefer.

"Much like Central Dandenong's rejuvenation, the Holiday Inn brand is expanding into new destinations with the introduction of 'next generation' properties like Holiday Inn Dandenong," Mr Schaefer said.

"Through our 'Open Lobby' design concept, we're providing an inspired venue where local workers and

residents can come in for a coffee, work remotely or relax in a light-filled space, then meet up for Mediterranean-inspired all-day dining at our Dandelion Lounge & Eatery."

The McCrae Street property offers 124 brand-new guest rooms in King, Queen and Twin categories and underground parking. Function spaces include a large meeting room that can split into two smaller areas or transform into a ballroom, plus a light-filled boardroom designed for smaller meetings.

Schaefer said engaging with the local community was a priority for the team with plans to grow the hotel's staff of 28, 90 per cent who are from the local region, to 40 staff soon.

Holiday Inn Dandenong has also partnered with social enterprise SisterWorks' Dandenong Empowerment Hub to employ three migrant women.

"Our team has been working with local business groups who have been incredibly positive about the hotel's launch, and we've recently formed a partnership with Drum Theatre. We're also offering local craft beers from BoJak Brewery and pastries from Noisette bakery at Dandelion," Mr Schaefer said.

► **Location:** 50-52 McCrae St, Dandenong
holidayinn.com/dandenong





50 years of trading at Parkmore Shopping Centre



Taking a step back 50 years and one may recall Parkmore Shopping centre was described as looking like a 'Science fiction spaceship headquarters from the air' in the local newspapers after its opening launch.

It was 27 November 1973 and the community was excited about the opening of their new local Shopping centre. So much so at 9am the 1,200 space car park was already full before the doors had even opened. The party was getting underway with John Farnham performing whilst Santa arrived at the centre in the world's largest hot-air balloon (at the time).

In 1995 the centre underwent an upgrade which included food court seating for over 380 people, a spectacular new centre court area, over 40 new specialty stores and Big W. This feat made Parkmore the only shopping centre in Victoria (at the time) with Big W, Kmart, Coles and Franklins all under the one roof.

The year 2011 saw the centre undergo another renovation which featured a new 3500m² Safeway, new specialty mall, a more efficient and use-friendly car park and an improved shopping environment with upgrades to the existing centre.

This year the complex is celebrating its 50th Birthday. Time may have moved on but the centre has changed with it, undertaking major improvements ensuring it has remained relevant to the Greater Dandenong and wider community.

In 2022 retail store, JB Hi-Fi, opened one of its flagship small format stores making the goods on offer so much greater. The centre is focused on offering customers convenience, with major stores such as Big W, Best & Less, Coles, Kmart, and Woolworths on offer. Alongside these businesses there are approximately 120 specialty stores ensuring you will have no issues finding exactly what you are looking for.

The shops are varied and culturally diverse reflecting the amazing community that live, work and shop in Greater Dandenong. The centre acknowledges one of their oldest retailers, Red Balloon Café. The long-standing retailer has been at the centre for the entire 50 years.

Parkmore Shopping centre Marketing Manager, Chris Gavralas said, "...it's incredible to have Red Balloon Café celebrate this special occasion with us. We hope we can continue to build on this and reach future milestones like this with our retailers for years to come," said Mr Gavralas.

Keep an eye out for celebrations in October as the centre approaches this remarkable milestone.

► **Location:** 317 Cheltenham Road, Keysborough
parkmoreshopping.com.au



There are so many adventures to be explored in **Greater Dandenong**



Ignite Greater Dandenong Program launching soon

The Greater Dandenong Ignite Program is a program designed for those looking to start or grow their new business. The program has been running since 2019 and applications for this years' intake will be opening soon.

If you're considering starting a business the Ignite Program might be the perfect pathway to help you take the step in the right direction.

The program includes:

Workshop series consisting of six weekly sessions to help you understand what you need to do to start a business.

Masterclass series run by business experts who share their own experiences and offer tips and tricks.

Private mentoring with a business professional which allows tailored business advice specific to your needs.

The program is free to participate and open to anyone looking at starting a business in the Greater Dandenong municipality.

Applications for 2023 will be opening soon and information will be made available on Council's website.

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

Dandenong to spark next cohort of electricians

Victoria's manufacturing hub is set to produce the next generation of skilled electricians through the new National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) Education and Careers trade training centre.

The organisation has invested \$4 million in the Dandenong campus to meet the "remarkable" demand in electrical apprenticeships.

General Manager of Training and Development, Natalie Green, said in Victoria alone, electrical apprenticeships increased by more

than 760 in 2021/2022 with an additional waiting list of apprentices eager to commence.

"A recent survey by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research found 88.2 per cent of our graduates were employed a year after finishing their training," Green said.

"Dandenong is the perfect fit for us because of its thriving manufacturing and construction industries and where apprentices are most likely to find employment. We will be located at the heart of this activity."

The trade training centre will have seven classrooms and two purpose-built workshops for future electricians to hone their skills, and offers government-funded programs for both Certificate II and III courses.

NECA's members collectively employ more than 50,000 people across Australia, including many based in Greater Dandenong. The campus will open later this year and the new training facility will also be open to non-NECA members.

Learn more:
necaeducation.com.au

**The DNA
make-up
of Greater
Dandenong
Business**



Home to over
20,400
businesses

96.1% small businesses

3.5% medium businesses

0.4% large businesses

Shaping the future of Springvale with community at the heart

Council is currently developing the Springvale Revitalisation Action Plan, with the first stage identified as, Shape Springvale.

Springvale has been the place to be with Council recently delivering the Springvale Hub and newly revitalised Springvale Boulevard. Both projects celebrated the area's rich cultural tapestry and provide a renewed sense of pride, which the Springvale Revitalisation Action Plan will also build upon.

Shape Springvale has provided the avenue for Council to hear from the people who live, work, shop and visit Springvale. It also allowed the community the opportunity to tell Council what they liked about the existing Springvale shopping precinct and how it can be improved on. The first stage of the Shape Springvale community engagement project officially ended on 21 April.

Stage one aimed to promote community contact and support, elevate community exposure, participation and contribution, and gather insights into the appearance of the Springvale shopping precinct and the needs of the community. This project stage utilised various forms of community engagement, including a new digital program called 'The Hive', face-to-face engagement, drop-in sessions, and

pop-up kiosks. Council received over 200 community submissions through The Hive and over 150 contributions through face-to-face engagement with the community. Feedback and submissions came from a diverse range of community members, including parents, children, grandparents, shop owners and traders, shoppers, diners, visitors, and the wider Springvale community.

The consultations happened in a variety of settings which included private shopping centres, multicultural places, the Springvale Hub, and the general activity centre. Additionally, there were coordinated community engagement sessions held at schools, early learning centres as well as places targeting youth and young adults, and specific organisations and associations to ensure an accurate picture of the Springvale identity was being represented.

So, what is next? The next stage of Shape Springvale will involve the awarded consultants, Realm Studios, processing and collating the community feedback and data collected. Once this is complete, another round of community engagement will commence. Phase two of the community engagement process will allow participants to have their say on the themes and priorities identified from phase one to ensure it is an accurate interpretation.

Business Permit Support Service

The Business Permit Support Service helps people who want to start, renovate, relocate or buy a business in Greater Dandenong.

The team can help you understand what permits and registrations you may need.

This is the first and best team to talk to at Council for Business Permit information. This conversation should happen before you:

- purchase agreement
- sign a contract or lease
- buy an existing business
- begin or start any fit-out or work on your premise
- start operating your business.

Scan the QR code below to learn more and complete the checklist today.



Kabul Kitchen: a business with a heart of gold

Meet Ali Haidari – a successful business co-owner of Kabul Kitchen at Dandenong Market which opened in 2017. His co-owner, Mohammad Sarwari, is also a fellow refugee. The men were on the same boat and at the same detention centres but only met after being released in 2011. The men believe this was fate.

At 17, Ali Haidari escaped the threat of the Taliban in Kabul via Pakistan but, in order to do this, Ali had to make the difficult decision to leave his young family behind.

It was in Pakistan where Ali began practicing as a chef, learning the culinary skills he would later use at Dandenong Market. Not long after in 2010, Ali immigrated to Australia by boat and was eventually placed in detention centres in Darwin and Christmas Island with no release date in sight.

Fast forward to now, every week the men produce more than 10,000 loaves of the yummiest bread you'll

ever eat. They bake from 5am to well after 9pm, seven days a week.

Kabul Kitchen offers up freshly baked Afghan bread served piping hot and fluffy from their cylindrical tandoori ovens. You'll also find a diverse range of Afghan cuisine on offer, this includes chicken biryani, the traditional Kabuli palow rice, dhal and a mouth-watering selection of chicken, lamb, kofte or tikka kebabs. The once hole-in-the-wall stall has also now expanded to an adjoining restaurant.

Ali's story whilst not unique, is one told by many-a-refugee but it is equally important. It provides hope for others of what is possible.

An abridged story: Ali's journey to Australia

Ali arrived by boat to Australia in 2010. Ali was released from detention centre in 2011 and he began working on applications for his family to join him in Australia but it's been a long frustrating road. Ali's son, who he had only seen twice since his birth, turned 5 in October.

During one attempt to leave, his family arrived at the airport shortly after a suicide bomber killed scores of civilians and 13 US soldiers outside the airport gates. In August 2021,



Ali's wife and son went missing after the Taliban captured the capitals in Afghanistan.

In March 2022, the Federal Government announced 10,000 more Afghan applications would be fast tracked for approval. Ali's wife and son's applications were among them.

In 2022, Ali became an Australian citizen. This was the last step to his visa applications being processed. He was only allowed to bring one guest to the ceremony and he invited Judy Robertson, Marketing Manager at Dandenong Market and now dear friend of Ali's. He proudly wore the Australian tie and socks she had gifted him.

This year, on 17 February, Ali received the news he'd waited 10 long years to hear. His wife and son's visas were at last granted. The very next day he was on a plane to bring them to Australia.

They weren't able to leave from Iran so they made the difficult decision to attempt crossing the border to Afghanistan. This was the most dangerous part of their journey so far but in March, they made it and registered at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees camp. They were together and safe at last. Their last step was a 37 hour journey to Australia but this seemed like a drop in the ocean compared to their whole story.

Ali's story is one of courage, resilience and determination. His achievements, are a perfect example of how refugees can inspire our society and realise their dreams, given the opportunity. After years of heartache, he and his family have hope. Together, they have a safe place to call home and a legacy in Kabul Kitchen and the possibilities the business holds for them.

This story was written in collaboration with Judy Robertson, Marketing and Communications Manager at Dandenong Market.

dandenongmarket.com.au/traders

D A N D E N O N G
· MARKET ·
Fresh & Vibrant Since 1866

A brief timeline

2010	Ali escaped the threat of the Taliban in Kabul via Pakistan. Ali boarded a boat and arrived at Christmas Island, seeking a better life for him and his family.
2011	Ali was released from detention centre on Christmas Island. He begun applications to bring his family to Australia.
2013	Ali married his wife, Yalda in Kabul, Afghanistan. Ali has visited every year while attempting to get his wife a partner visa.
2017	Ali opened Kabul Kitchen at Dandenong Market alongside his business partner, Mohammad Sarwari.
August 2021	The Taliban captured the capitals in Afghanistan. Registered with Australian authorities, mother and her now four-year-old son made the dangerous road journey from Iran to Kabul in the hope they could get help.
25 August 2021	Ali's family including his mother and father, tried to escape but were held up by suicide bombers outside the airport gates. Ali lost contact with his family.
27 August 2021	Reporter, Wendy Tuohy, told Ali's story in <i>The Age</i> and had it syndicated into the Sydney Morning Herald.
March 2022	the Federal Government announced 10,000 more Afghan applications would be fast tracked for approval. Ali's wife and son's applications were among them.
August 2022	Ali became an Australian citizen.
17 February 2023	Ali received the news his wife and son's visas had been granted.
18 February 2023	Ali boarded a plane to bring his family to Australia but they were unable to leave from Iran and had to attempt crossing the Afghanistan border.
6 March 2023	They arrived safely at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees camp.
10 March 2023	Ali and his family boarded a plane and begun the 37 hour journey to Australia.
May 2023	Ali and his wife Yalda, welcomed their second-born, a baby girl into the world.

GameChange a community-led project:

Supported by the City of Greater Dandenong through SEBN and funded through the State's Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, GameChange is a community-led program to engage employers, job seekers, service providers and training organisations to work better together and shape a healthier, more effective jobs and skills system.



Flexibility is becoming a key to success for business

As attraction and retention of staff is more difficult now than ever, good ideas that are delivering results need to be shared. GameChange will continue to showcase local companies who have introduced different ways of thinking to improve not only attraction and retention but also productivity. Through reports and articles, we are sharing why and how these companies have embraced change, expanding their value proposition and building more inclusive and sustainable businesses.

Introducing flexible hours, split shifts and other operational changes can help you attract and retain more women and those with caring responsibilities. It doesn't matter what industry you are in, 'normalising' change can benefit business and community alike.

If you have tried something different in your business, or would like further information on GameChange, please email: gamechange@cgd.vic.gov.au



Are you in the know?

To help you to get to know the key players in the jobs system, GameChange is running a series of workshops for business to meet our region's Learn Locals and other training organisations. This 'meeting of minds' will provide an ideal forum to collaborate on training ideas to meet the needs of both business and jobseekers. More importantly, you may open new pathways to filling those staffing gaps by:

- Information sharing
- Having training tailored to your needs
- Understanding what job-readiness means to you
- Or creating something completely new.

This is a great opportunity to connect with education and training providers and see what's possible – and will give the providers an opportunity to learn the challenges you face when recruiting. These workshops are scheduled for July and August.

**Contact the Gamechange team by email for early-bird registration.
Email: gamechange@cgd.vic.gov.au**





Celebrating the SEBN community

Known for delivering practical outcomes and opportunities for manufacturers and women in business, South East Business Networks (SEBN) is the premier networking facility for Greater Dandenong and the South East region.

Through its diverse range of common interest groups, programs and events, SEBN brings together people at all organisational levels to:

- strengthen manufacturing knowledge and capability
- support women in business across all sectors
- enhance leadership and organisational development
- connect, share and learn from each other and specialist expertise
- work together to find solutions to common issues and problems.

Sandra George OAM

Manager SEBN

Email: sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au

Why not be a part of the SEBN community? Read more about our groups and roundtables, or complete an online registration form.
greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/sebn

The voices of SEBN

“I’ve been fortunate to participate in SEBN activities over the last decade, introducing the wealth of knowledge and experience of the network members into now three workplaces in the south east region.

SEBN activities provide opportunities for growing your network of like-minded counterparts in local industries; access to knowledgeable and insightful speakers; and a great platform for personal development. Highly recommended.”

Rachelle

“I have found the topics highly relevant and the presentations peppered with practical, take home advice. I have also thoroughly enjoyed networking with like-minded colleagues who have faced or are dealing with similar issues to my own.”

Don

“...we participate in the monthly site tours at different facilities. It’s not every day you can walk into another business, hear about their challenges and see how they ‘get things done’. I then am able to take new ideas back into my own business.

... I have developed some strong professional relationships with participants involved. Some have since become an invaluable part of my professional network.”

James

Snaps of 2023 so far...



Why not join one of the SEBN Network Groups or round tables including:

- Manufacturing Leadership
- Workplace Health & Safety
- South East Quality Network
- Manufacturing Xcellence
- Developing Leaders
- Waste | Sustainability
- CEO Mentoring Program
- Women In Business Network

Groups meet monthly and are open to all manufacturers across the region. For further information, contact sebn@cgd.vic.gov.au



A Local Manufacturer with Global Impact

A metal forming and fabrication company in Dandenong South has secured a contract to supply parts for the F35 joint strike fighter jet.

U-Neek Bending is a technology driven Australian designer and manufacturer providing defence and other industries with custom solutions for complex bending and welding projects. Director of U-Neek, Dale Theobald, credits their success in supplying to the prestigious defence industry to their long-term investment in quality standards.

“While the company has always been at the forefront in quality, having achieved ISO9001 way back in 1993; our recent investment in further certifications is now paying dividends. We are getting a lot of interest from aerospace and rail

primes for the manufacture of parts in Australia,” said Mr Theobald.

To remain competitive, U-Neek have since pursued a number of upgrades to their manufacturing capabilities and quality credentials over the last three years, including aerospace accreditation in 2021, welding systems, military and rail stock welding.

This has allowed U-Neek to expand to service other industries providing power generation components for a thermal power plant, transport industry parts for trains, trams, buses and road tankers, telecommunications headframes for mobile phone towers, mining and process plant equipment and general engineering.

U-Neek is a member of local association South East Melbourne

Manufacturers Alliance (SEMMA), a peak industry group representing more than 200 members in the region. SEMMA CEO, Honi Walker, said that U-Neek was an example of how local manufacturers can succeed in the global market by investing in technology, innovation and quality.

“U-Neek is a role model for other manufacturers who want to grow their business and create jobs,” said Ms Walker. We are delighted to see them achieve this remarkable feat and we congratulate them on their success.”

Learn more:
semma.com.au

This article was written by SEMMA in collaboration with their member, U-Neek Bending.



Entries are open for this years South East Business Awards



Pictured: Last years 2022 winners for the Building and Construction category and also the Overall Business Award winner, Jeremy Cayford and Paul Culverwell from ASM Chilltech.

Nominations are now open for the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce's South East Business Awards. This event is held annually to celebrate outstanding businesses in the south east region of Melbourne.

Participating in the awards is a wonderful opportunity to gain valuable insights and feedback on your business through the nomination and judging process. It can also serve as a vehicle to reflect on what is working well, acknowledge your successes, and receive helpful feedback on your business.

A spokesperson for Medical Edge who were last years co-winner of the Professional Services award said, "... receiving this award recognises the hard work our team of 450-strong operational and support staff do on a daily basis."

Winners will be announced and celebrated by the wider business community at the Gala Awards Night on Thursday 26 October. This is a great night where the business community in the south east come together to honour winners, network, and let their hair down.

Last year's winner of Community Impact award, Ibrahim Hassan of Personalised Support Services, said "...the awards put you on

the map with stakeholders. My clients recognised me, and I was approached by a student after the Star News published an article on the awards. I have since recruited that student as an employee."

Businesses can be nominated in 12 different categories this year, with the winner of the overall business award chosen from the individual category winners.

This year the categories are:

- Business Innovation
- Environment and Sustainability
- Community Impact
- Business Citizen
- Emerging Business
- Employer Engagement
- Micro Business
- Leisure, Tourism and Wellbeing
- Retail/Wholesale
- Professional Services
- Building and Construction
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Overall Business Award.

▶ How to apply

You can nominate your own business or another deserving business, it's up to you. You have until Tuesday 1 August to submit your nomination.

greaterdandenongchamber.com.au/awards

Save the date: The Future South East Conference

The Future South East Conference is an inaugural event created by the Chambers of Commerce and business groups across the eight City Councils within Greater South Eastern Melbourne (GSEM). All eight councils have been warmly welcomed to take part in this event.

The intention of the conference aims to open up collaboration and connectivity of the various business groups and chambers across the south east to support development of a strong value proposition for attracting and retaining members. Important to this model is the retention of grassroots connections between business networks and their member base, while creating a stronger connection and presence across the south east for businesses.

GSEM includes the shires of Cardinia, Mornington Peninsula and the cities of Casey, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Knox and Monash. South East Melbourne is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia and is one of the country's most important economic centres.

Event details:

When: 30 August 2023

Time: 7am – 12.30pm

Where: Bunjil Place, Narre Warren

Keynote speaker: Simon McKeon, Chair Greater South East Melbourne

Bookings: Visit the Greater Dandenong Chamber of Commerce website for further details and bookings.

greaterdandenongchamber.com.au



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