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TARANTO WINDOWS 3<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2013

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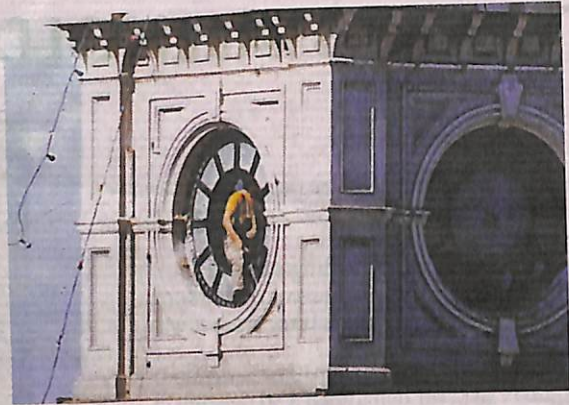
## Vin's 50-year window on the world

When a young Vin Taranto told his grandfather he was going to set up his own glazing business in 1963, he was told to forget it.

Grandfather had emigrated from a dirt-poor Italian island off Sicily in 1908 and had groomed his grandchildren to become successful businessmen. "His only comment was that I should go into the food business because people must always eat, but if they had a broken window they could hang a bag over it," Vin, now 74, recalls.

But Vin stuck to his guns and set up business in a shed on the family farm in Bangholme. The 50th anniversary of one of Greater Dandenong's most well-known family-driven businesses was recently celebrated with a reunion party for 100 guests at Dandenong Town Hall. Taranto Glass now employs 120 people and had more than \$30 million in sales last financial year.

In a 50th-anniversary booklet, Vin tells a story of a half a century's pride and progress. "The seeds to go into business were planted very early in my life when my grandfather would drive me from Warragul to Mornington for boarding school at the tender age of five. I can still feel him grasping my knee and telling me



when I grew up I must 'make the money'. I left school in grade 8, when I must have made some smart alec remark to the teacher, who said she did not know why I came to school as I knew more than she did."

After a stint on the family farm, Vin worked odd jobs before joining Bremner Glass in Frankston. He liked the work and, after two years, gave notice, only to be told by Bob Bremner he would not make it on his own.

After discussion with his young wife, Carmel, he asked for his job back the next day, and worked there for another year before launching his own business doing jobs for friends and family members.

Total sales for 1963-64 were \$8000, and in 1965 Vin and his wife bought a block of land in Dandenong for

**Risky business:**  
Vin Taranto without harness on the Dandenong Town Hall in the 1970s.  
(SUPPLIED)

£1800 and built their first home in Sarona Street. Vin's parents had moved to Frankston Road, Dandenong, and it was there that a small factory was built in their backyard. In 1966, Vin and Carmel bought the factory from Vin's parents for \$10,000.

Over the next few years they bought three adjoining blocks until they had a corner site big enough to build a factory that by 1969 employed 30 people. The first two office staff employed by the family still live locally. They are Brenda Hall of Dandenong and Karen Kenny of Upper Beaconsfield.

Vin remembers the risks he took in the early days, such as fitting the clock-face glass on Dandenong Town Hall in the 1970s. "I had no safety harness, hanging out in midair, but that was the accepted practice back then. Everything seemed so much safer then. We took risks because there was no talk of safety."

"In 1985," Vin says, "I was having trouble running the business, it had got so big. It was then Oliver Davey Glass approached me to sell, so I did."

A condition of the sale was that Vin couldn't start another glazing business for five years. So he and his eldest son, Michael, began fabricating aluminium windows and doors, and Seelite Windows and Doors was born, and continues to thrive, now employing 70 people at its Dandenong site. Another son, Paul, owns Taranto Glass and Screens in Wonthaggi, as well as a business in Inverloch, while a third son, Kevin, has Taranto Windows and Glass in Leongatha.

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