



Entsar and Nadia Hassan in the newly opened African Superstore. 242691

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

Superstore feeds the soul

Behind a welcome bowl of baklava, there's aisles of foods from all over the world at Dandenong's latest and most eclectic supermarket.

The African Superstore is the brainchild of Nadia Hassan – a refugee and business graduate from Eritrea who after looking at the unappealing 'job boards' at Centrelink decided to be her own boss.

Ms Hassan started her first "milk bar" in Melbourne's west in 1996.

Using her wide network of suppliers, she's able to find almost any foods from anywhere at a low price.

Not just favourite foods and spices from African nations, such as the Mazoe orange-crush drink, fufu flakes and dried meat from South Africa.

But whole foods from Asia, Middle East, Europe and Australia as well.

Since opening in Lonsdale Street, Dandenong on 3 July, Ms Hassan has been sourcing soy milk and Greek yoghurt as a result of customer requests.

One curiosity are the green coffee beans from Ethiopia. Customers wash them, dry

them and roast them to aromatic effect at home.

There's fridges full of essentials for world cooking at home - feta, filo and spring-roll pastry, hummus, pomegranate juice.

In the freezers are imported sweet corn, whole sardines, smoked swai fish, cassava leaves and stalks, ginger, peanuts, habanero chillis, okra and roti breads.

There's piles of bulk bags of sugar and rice, as well as shelves of pasta, polenta, olive and sesame oils, rose water, honeycombs.

Dried lentils, beans and peas such as adzuki beans, broad beans, chick peas, black-eye peas and mung beans are also in abundance.

The aim is to please the diverse needs of Dandenong's diverse community, Ms Hassan says.

"We don't do big margins like the big supermarkets. We just make enough to support our family.

"If we priced ourselves higher than the supermarkets, we wouldn't survive."

P6. 13th July 2021

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