

MICHAEL RANDALL talks with Roy Aspinall, a man who really believes in central Dandenong.



All smiles: Roy Aspinall says things are looking up for Greater Dandenong and the DRTA is a big part of it.

Picture: Marco De Luca

Roy wouldn't trade Dandy for the world

ROY Aspinall's name is synonymous with the Dandenong Retail Traders' Association.

The evergreen 61-year-old was a founding member and has been chairman since its establishment in late 1995.

The DRTA has sustained upward of 70 members over its 13-year history.

The one constant has been Mr Aspinall, the affable chap with the boisterous greeting every time you ring his Walker Street business, Highway Bowls.

"Highway Bowls, good afternoon," he says with his trademark flair.

"G'day Roy, I never get tired of hearing that greeting," I respond.

"Just want to have a chat about the DRTA, mate."

And off he goes.

"Let me tell you the story," he begins.

"There used to be a Greater Dandenong committee that met a few times in the mid-1990s.

"A retail traders' association was always on the agenda, but kept getting pushed back, so I decided to put up a motion that we either give this thing a crack or we forget about it.

"Fortunately, it got up and the rest is history."

Mr Aspinall says there are about 700 traders in Dandenong and about 10 per cent are members of the association.

"That's pretty good going," he assures me.

"We'd like to have someone employed to go out and sell it, but we do our best.

"We'd love to have 100-200 members minimum, but it's very hard to convince some people.

"It's cheap, we've made it so it's not an encumbrance — it's

TRADERS JOIN FORCES WITH THE JOURNAL

THE Dandenong Retail Traders' Association and *The Journal* have joined forces in a special sponsorship deal.

***The Journal* will help the DRTA with the production and distribution of its monthly newsletter, distributed to all central Dandenong retailers.**

DRTA chairman Roy Aspinall said: "*The Journal* is a valued member of the Dandenong community and I welcome them as a generous sponsor of the DRTA."

"The DRTA has been working to assist retailers and promote Central Dandenong as the second most important shopping precinct, outside Melbourne Central, since 1996.

"While we have established a position in the community during that time, *The Journal* has been an integral part of the Dandenong scene for close to a century-and-a-half."

***Journal* advertising manager Kristina Leckenby said the support recognised the importance of central Dandenong traders and of the DRTA.**

only \$80 per year, and you get a free ticket to our end-of-year dinner."

Mr Aspinall has three passions, bowls, horseracing and the DRTA. Make that four — Dandenong as a city as well.

"It's an exciting time for Dandenong.

"The next five years is going to be very big.

"You can see at the moment.

The cranes are up already and it won't be too long before we have cranes on the corner of Walker Street doing the government building, the new council offices, the education precinct and, as soon as they stop arguing, the cranes will be up for the Old Dandy Inn."

Mr Aspinall was chuffed the DRTA could count *The Journal* as its newest sponsor.

"It's good we're working together with *The Journal*.

"It's certainly the pre-eminent newspaper in the area and we're very pleased to be associated and we hope to have a long-term relationship."

Mr Aspinall said the DRTA met on the first Tuesday of each month from February to October. The end-of-year dinner and awards night is at the end of November.

"All retailers are welcome at the general meetings, be they members or not, but we do hope that all retailers will eventually join.

"As well as our speakers there are normally Victorian Police members plus Greater Dandenong Council representatives in attendance to provide information and for those present to discuss issues with.

"VicUrban has also assured us that they will have a representative at most general meetings."

DRTA general meetings start at 6pm and normally end by 7.30pm, allowing retailers to attend after they close their business and without having to commit to a late evening. Details: Mr Aspinall on 9793 3487.



Multicultural Men's Shed



Getting their skates on



Stingray-sing the bar

Property liftout

PAGE 4

PAGE 28

SPORT

Leader names winner and stands down

Business best

By CASEY NEILL

A DANDENONG retail leader stepped down from his post and an iconic business was applauded at an eventful Dandenong Retail Traders' Association (DRTA) Christmas dinner.

DRTA chairman Roy Aspinall retired from the position after 16 years at the Dandenong Club event on Tuesday 27 November.

Among his last acts was announcing Heidi Rose Clothing as the Central Dandenong Retailer of the Year.

For the first time, the public was invited to vote for its favourite retailer to determine the winner, and the Foster Street business was among five finalists.

The store's Kathrynne Turtan-Lane said Heidi Rose Clothing had grown and developed its customer base over 35-plus years.

"Our clothing represents individuality and it's about women celebrating their shapes," she said.

She said the store was about an experience in shopping, forming friendships, and a holistic experience.

"It's about nourishing the soul," she said.

"I know most of my customers by name. I love what I do, I do it with passion."

"I'd like to see Heidi Rose Clothing grow and shine its light."

The store beat finalists Menzline Mason Reed, Polish Rye Crust Baker, The Good Guys and Universal Pool-care.

Mr Aspinall said the award brought extra prestige to retailers in Victoria's largest shopping precinct outside central Melbourne.

He said representing those retailers had been an honour and a pleasure.

"I have decided that it is time I made a change personally," he said.

"I'll still be around to assist wherever I can."

City of Greater Dandenong Mayor Angela Long said the Highway Bowls



Roy Aspinall stepped down as Dandenong Retail Traders' Association chairman, handing the reins to Glenys Cooper. 90935
Picture: CASEY NEILL

Centre owner was "a powerhouse of the local business community".

She said he had lobbied for a group separate to the chamber of commerce that focused solely on retail traders, and the DRTA was born.

"The association has provided an important network for retail traders," she said.

"His skill as a trader and organiser is unending."

"Roy has worked tirelessly for the improvement of the association and Dandenong."

Cr Long presented Mr Aspinall with a letter under seal from the coun-

cil "in recognition of his contribution to the Dandenong business community" and thanked him for his dedication.

Mr Aspinall said his successor Glenys Cooper from Compleat Angler, Camping World and Mason Reed Clothing was a dedicated retailer and congratulated her on her election.

"Glenys has some excellent ideas to take the association forward and I am sure that all members, and future members, will benefit," he said.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my 16 years as chairperson and thank everyone who has assisted and supported me over that time."

Ms Cooper said she was looking forward to the role – but certainly wouldn't be standing in Mr Aspinall's shoes 16 years down the track.

"I'm not sure why I'm doing this – I've got big shoes to fill," she said.

"I intend to give it my best for probably two years."

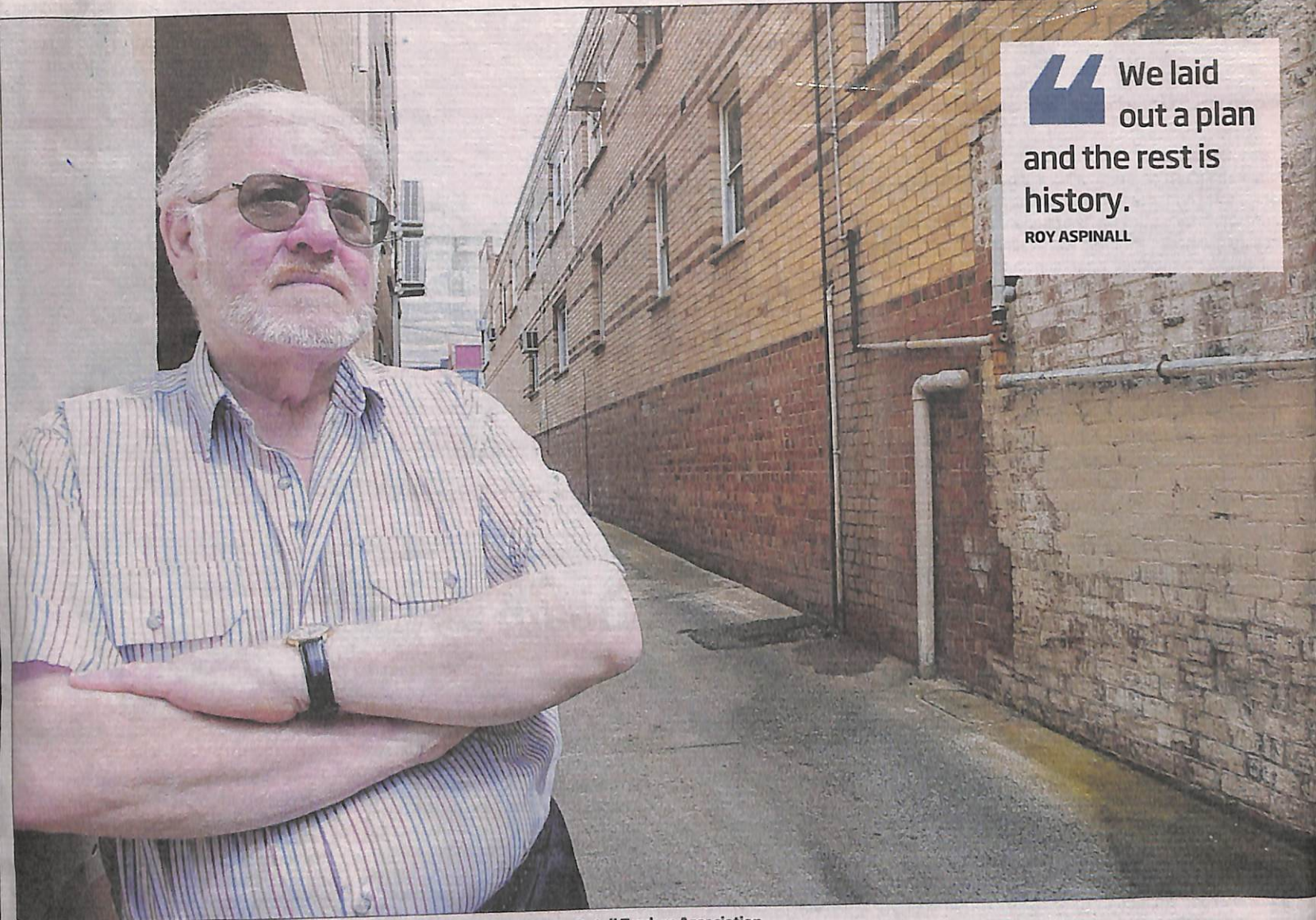
She presented Mr Aspinall with a plaque for all the work he'd done for the organisation.

"I don't think we would be in such a good place without it," she said.

See page 6 for more DRTA Christmas dinner coverage.

DANDENONG LEADER DECEMBER 10, 2012 P.8

DANDENONG



We laid out a plan and the rest is history.

ROY ASPINALL

Roy Aspinall, pictured, in 2006, encourages all retailers to join the Dandenong Retail Traders Association.

Compleat way ahead

Michael Randall

CHAIRMAN LEAVES ASSOCIATION IN GOOD HANDS

AT A GLANCE

- **Age:** 65
- **Business:** Highway Bowls
- **Interests:** bowls, horse racing, Dandenong
- **Achievements:** Centenary of Federation Medal 2003, founder of Dandenong Retail Traders Association, founding member of Dandenong Drug Action Committee, member of Police Community Consultative Committee

IF BRUCE Patchell was Mr Dandenong, Roy Aspinall is certainly Mr Central Dandenong.

The bubbly founder of the Dandenong Retail Traders Association has resigned from his post as the body's chairman after 16 years in the job. He has become the first and only immediate past chairman the association has ever had.

The decision sits well with the 65-year-old, who runs the Highway Bowls

shop in Walker St. "I just thought it was time. The association is looking at making a few changes and, after 16 years, I thought it was a good idea to bring some fresh ideas to the table," Mr Aspinall said.

He said Dandenong's traders were in good hands, with Glenys Cooper from Compleat Angler taking over the reins.

"I'm sure Glenys will do a very good job as chair-

woman, she's a very good businesswoman and I'll be there to back her up if she needs anything," he said.

He said co-operation with police and Greater Dandenong Council had helped him in his time.

Mr Aspinall stood down at the association's recent business awards, where Kathryn Turtan-Lane, of Heidi Rose Clothing, was named the Central Dandenong Retailer of the Year.

Mr Aspinall encouraged all retailers to join the association.

"We've always had around 60-80 members, which is apparently pretty good, but it should be more in my opinion," he said.

"We should have 200 members at least — I tell people if they want things done, you've got to be prepared to get on board and have a say."

Details: 0418 303 284.



Heidi Rose Clothing's Kathryn Turtan-Lane receives the Business of the Year award from City of Greater Dandenong Mayor Angela Long.

FRIENDLY FACES

By CASEY NEILL

DANDENONG restaurateur Rahimi Baryalai received the Chairman's Award at Tuesday night's Dandenong Retail Traders' Association Christmas dinner.

The award was instituted in 2005 for a "significant contribution to Central Dandenong retailing" and is not awarded annually - only when there is a worthy recipient.

At the annual general meeting Outgoing chairman Roy Aspinall said Mr Baryalai from Afghan Pamir Restaurant had been a great ambassador for Central Dandenong for many years through the promotion of his business on television programs and other media.

"Rahimi has also had positive reviews from foodies including Matt Preston from MasterChef," Mr Aspinall said.

Mr Baryalai was thrilled with the award, beaming as fellow traders and his son congratulated him.

Also thrilled and "stoked" were the Central Dandenong Retailer of the Year finalists, which will each receive a framed certificate, sign-writing on their window and publicity.

Menzline Mason Reed has been in Dandenong Plaza, two doors down from Myer, for about 18 years.

"It was absolutely awesome," operations manager John Lemmo said.

"We're probably one of the lon-



Crime prevention officer Senior Constable Annmarie Logan, outgoing DRTA chairman Roy Aspinall, new chairwoman Glenys Cooper, and Safer Suburbs officer Senior Sergeant Steve Wood.

gest-standing businesses in Dandenong Plaza."

Polish Rye Crust Bakery has been in Foster Street for three years.

"We're only babies to this industry," owner Andrew Lipiszko said.

He said his wife Hanna was the driving force behind the successful business, which sells traditional Polish baked goods and home recipes.

The Good Guys has been in Dandenong for 32 years and is relocating to the new Homemaker Centre on the Dandenong Bypass for more space.

"I think we can call ourselves an iconic Dandenong business," spokesman Allen Garb said.

He said he was very proud of the nomination.

"That's really why you go to work every day. It's because of your customers," he said.

Universal Pool Care husband and wife team Michael and Mary Wanless have lived in Dandenong all their lives and run the store for 15 years.

Their son works for them, their other two children come in from time to time, their nephew calls in, and two golden retrievers also help with customers.

"Our customers are family as well," Michael said.

"They're important to us."

Guest speaker, business coach

Jan Bidstrup, said: "There is no higher form of recognition than to be nominated by your customers."

He shared tips on how to run a more profitable business and said blame, excuses and denial were holding people back.

Instead they need to take ownership, be accountable, and be responsible, Mr Bidstrup said.

"In order to grow your business, you need to grow yourself," he said.

"You are in control."

He said referral strategies, encouraging customers to return, using the internet to advantage, up-selling, picking a niche and targeting your customers were among the most important strategies.