

# roll with the changes

By CASEY NEILL

BRUCE and Dawn Van Krieken have watched generations of Dandenong families grow up.

They've also seen the town and its businesses grow and evolve during their 27 years at Dandenong Image Centre.

This Thursday (23 July) they'll work their final day at the Dimmays Arcade store before handing over the reins to seek a sea change.

"I'll miss all my regular customers," Dawn said.

"We've got some oldies who come in and bring you flowers for your birthday and things like that.

"They just come in to see you and for the company.

"But it's a new chapter in your life. You've got to change.

"We met each other working together and still work together so I deserve some time away from my husband!"

Dawn was a courier and Bruce was a manager at a pharmacy back when one-hour photo developing was just emerging.

"That's how we got into the photo business," she said.

They set up in Dandenong in 1988 across the road from their current Langhorne Street location.

"We moved across here in 1999. We've been here ever since," Bruce said.

"It is continuing as a family business.

"The new owners are Delio and Lucia Fagundes."

Delio conceded he had big shoes to fill.

"Customers, they know Bruce and Dawn very well," he said.

"It will be a bit of a challenge at the beginning.

"I will just carry on what they've been doing here."

He also plans to introduce studio photography and run his existing wedding invitations business.



Dawn and Bruce Van Krieken behind the Dandenong Image Centre counter. 141224

Picture: ROB CAREW

"We are trying to find Bruce's clone," he laughed.

And with good reason. Bruce said the tipping point from film to digital came in 2005.

"Digital's been a big change but the store has kept up with it," he said.

"You don't do as many prints as you did, but you can do so much more.

"Years ago we never had things like canvas prints or photo gifts - photos on cups and T-shirts and jewellery."

Dawn said developing film was more interesting than dealing with digital prints.

"People go 'oh you're blinking, let's take it again' and you don't have any of those candid shots," she said.

"I call it staged photography because everyone poses for a photo now instead of being natural.

"We can't stress that enough that people shouldn't keep the amount of photos on their phone that they do.

"Make sure you print the important ones.

"There will be an era that will grow up and they will have hardly any history prints.

"Our grandparents took photos of every occasion, printed them, put them in an album, printed them, wrote dates on them ..."

Bruce and Dawn count John Farnham, Denise Drysdale, Lindsay Fox and the Dulux dog among their past customers.

"We would have dealt with every company that's been in Dandenong," Bruce said.

They also served the Journal, Dandenong and District Historical Society and CFA crime scene investigators.

"You had to check them but you were trying to glance over them because you didn't want to see too much," Dawn said.

They've developed photos for "all the ones that the streets are named after" including former mayor Maurie Jarvis and his wife Gwen.

"I used to love talking to her. She'd

tell you so much history," Dawn said.

"She was an amazing lady with an amazing memory."

They even cast their eyes over a Ribena berry or two.

"We used to do a lot of work for Smith-Kline Beecham when they did the blackcurrants for the Ribena," Dawn laughed.

"They used to bring them in by the roll full, of different vats of Ribena berries.

"There'd be hundreds of prints of Ribena berries. We couldn't see any difference."

But she's watched with interest as families have grown.

"The jeweller across the road, we saw his kids' photos, we saw his son get married and now we're seeing his grandkids. They're growing up," she said.

"You see generations of families growing up.

"Thanks to everyone who's been through our doors in the past 27 years."

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BUSINESS — DANDENONG IMAGE CENTRE  
DIMMAYS ARCADE — LANGHORNE ST. D'NONG  
27 YEARS IN DANDENONG FROM 1988  
DAWN AND BRUCE VAN KRIEKEN