

Gateway: it's gone for good

By Casey Neill

Dandenong's Gateway Industries is no more, 30 years after opening its doors to support adults with disabilities.

The disability enterprise merged with Waverley Industries following financial struggles.

The Journal reported last September that its second-biggest customer, the City of Casey, had ended its eight-year relationship and created a \$180,000 shortfall.

Waverley has found jobs for all 54 Gateway employees with disabilities.

Support staff, including CEO Alan Warwick, finished up on Monday 14 May.

"It is sad but what we set out to achieve is getting all the employees a job and that's what we got through Waverley," Mr Warwick said.

"They're all taken care of.

"We looked at a few different companies.

"Waverley matched up the best.

"It's like anything, there's been good and bad out of it.

"There's only two of the staff that have gone on over with them.

"The rest of us have all retired or gone on to something else."

In a statement, Waverley Industries CEO Frank Cresia said the merger would create opportunities for business growth, innovation and diversification across Greater Dandenong, Casey, Cardinia and Monash.

He said both organisations shared the same vision to provide a long-term commitment to employment and training opportunities.

Mr Cresia said lots of work had gone into ensuring a smooth transition and integration



Gateway Industries worker Kevin Mao late last year.

of both organisations, ensuring all Gateway Industries people needs were completely fulfilled.

Gateway started more than 30 years ago as a Rotary Club of Dandenong initiative.

It employed more than workers with disabilities, most hailing from Hallam, Doveton, Dandenong and Keysborough but some traveling from Frankston, Cranbourne and Cockatoo.

Their roles included gardening, maintenance, woodwork, and processing and packaging.

Gateway Industries provided street furniture cleaning and litter pick-up services to Greater Dandenong Council for more than 25 years.

Workers told the Journal that Gateway had provided them with purpose.

The Journal will report more details on the merger in the coming weeks.

Gateway open wide

By Casey Neill

Award-winning social enterprise Waverley Industries has expanded into Greater Dandenong and is promising to boost job opportunities.

It's employing adults with disabilities at the former Gateway Industries site in Progress Street, Dandenong South, following a merger with the financially-strapped disability enterprise.

The Journal reported last September that Gateway's second-biggest customer, the City of Casey, had ended its eight-year relationship and created a \$180,000 shortfall.

We revealed on Wednesday 16 May that Gateway support staff finished up on Monday 14 May, but its 54 supported workers would continue employment with Waverley.

CEO Frank Cresia said Waverley's mission was to provide support and employment and training in a viable and sustainable business manner.

"A third of our workforce is unfunded," he said, referring to government subsidies.

"We're building a resilience to funding.

"The business is growing.

"Employees with disabilities have greater opportunities to earn more money.

"There's less reliance on the disability support pension, or NDIS.

"If people are able to earn more they're going to improve their own lifestyle.

"By improving their lifestyle it stimulates the economy."

Mr Cresia said Waverley would honour Gateway contracts, including litter pick-up and street furniture cleaning services for Greater Dandenong Council.

He said there could even be opportunities to perform more work for the council and employ more workers.

"We now support 350 people with disabilities, plus our qualified support staff," he said.

"We've got about 46 trainees in our accredited



Kim Kraehenbuehl and supervisor Lan Tran. 181134

Pictures: GARY SISSONS

ited trainee programs.

"Then we've got work experience with students from special schools - that's about 100.

"With volunteers, that brings us well over the 550 people that we support through Waverley Industries across the three sites.

"We've had enormous organic growth. Now we've had the opportunity to take on Gateway.

"We need to put more resources, particularly in sales and marketing."

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Former Gateway CEO Alan Warwick said: "It is sad but what we set out to achieve is getting all the employees a job and that's what we got through Waverley.



Daniel Thomas and Lonny Meunier. 181134

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"Waverley matched up the best."