

Springvale Dandenong Leader

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Local apprenticeships go begging as job hunters look for security

Melanie Martin is one of the lucky IKEA employees to secure a job at the new Springvale store. There were almost 4000 applicants for 350 jobs.

Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN N420S215

Retail's stampede

Employment | Nicole Precel

SPRINGVALE IKEA store applicants have less than a one in 100 chance of getting a job there, while other lower profile jobs in the area remain vacant.

More than 3700 people have applied for the 350 jobs up for grabs at the Swedish furnishing giant's Springvale site.

The new store on the corner of Westall Rd and the Princes High-

way is set to open in September, with successful applicants told in May and June.

IKEA store manager David Brady said he hadn't expected such an overwhelming response.

"I think people are looking for job security and looking for a company that can align with them in terms of their cultural value and beliefs," Mr Brady said.

He said the 80,000 sq m home-maker centre, to include Harvey

Norman and another 20 stores, would bring a wave of employment.

But Wise Employment employer liaison officer Sonia Mackie said there were many jobs that remained vacant in Greater Dandenong, including apprenticeships in horticulture, the automotive industry and plumbing.

Bernie Mack Motor Body Repairs co-director Alan Black said it was offering one apprenticeship in

panel beating and one in spray painting automotive refinishing, but had failed to get any application.

He said many apprenticeships started off on a low wage, which scared many people off.

"The young people we deal with, they don't live at home. Living on \$9 or \$10 an hour is really hard. I think that's part of it, too," Mr Black said.

He said many people believed re-

tail was easy, and did not believe they had the skills required to undertake an apprenticeship. "The best apprentice you can ever have is a kid who doesn't know anything," he said.

"People have to get over the stigma that it's hard work... if you stick at it the rewards come later."

Are you having a hard time finding job applicants? Tell us at dandenongleader.com.au