

KIRKHAM ROAD MILK BAR Dandenong South

Assoud "SAM" Daoud - OWNER

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S TOP 200 INDEPENDANT RETAILERS

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News

More than just a local store

Jeff Jones

IN BYGONE days, the corner store or milk bar was a popular community meeting place.

It was where people went for a newspaper, a loaf of bread or a bottle of milk – and of course, they always had a chin wag while they were there.

Supermarkets and petrol stations gradually took over offering one-stop convenience, a wider range of goods and cheaper prices.

Many corner stores closed down but the good news this week is they are far from dead.

Just ask Assoud "Sam" Daoud, who owns the Kirkham Rd Milkbar in Dandenong.

Sam is thrilled his little shop has been named as one of Australia's top 200 independent retailers. It's all part of a competition called the Parmalat Community Store of the Year program, recognising shops that excel in community involvement and business performance.

The recently refurbished Kirkham Rd Milkbar certainly has all that and more – there's a great feeling of belonging.

"We took it over about a year ago and put in new signs and gave it a coat of paint – it looks like new," says Sam with a proud grin. "We have a great community here, that's why we have survived."

Sam works long hours – 7am-8pm, seven days a week.

"It's a hard job sometimes," he says, "especially when you come



Sam Daoud and his Kirkham Rd milk bar in Dandenong South.

to the end of the week and find you've made very little or nothing... but other weeks are good.

"Sometimes I feel like a psychiatrist – people like to talk about their problems and I like to listen."

Parmalat Australia manager Rob Healy said Sam should be

proud of his achievement. "To be named in the top 200 is testament to their business acumen and ongoing commitment to provide quality customer service to the local community," he said.

Supa IGA Springvale also finished in the top 200.

Both stores will proceed to the

third round of judging when a mystery shopper will visit the store. The 50 finalists will be announced later this month.

■ What are your memories of the old corner store? Write a letter to the editor at www.dandeenongleader.com.au or P.O. Box 2614, Cheltenham 3192.