

New lease on life

By Casey Neill

One of Dandenong's oldest funeral homes is getting a makeover.

The Le Pine team moved into a portable office on its Princes Highway site and return to the refurbished chapel and offices in February.

Branch manager Ian Maxwell said the old facilities had been gutted and it will be "basically brand new", including a 200 seat chapel and catering spaces.

"I think it will be the best funeral home in Melbourne when it's finished," he said.

"It was a long time overdue.

"It's exciting to offer families the best possible place that's available."

Mr Maxwell has worked at Le Pine since 2002 but his personal association with the service goes even further back.

"When my father died, it was Garnar and Sons," he said.

The business that is Le Pine Dandenong today started as JW Garnar in the late 1800s, became WJ Garnar and Son and was sold to Le Pine in 1950.

"A lot of other family members have gone through," Mr Maxwell said.

JW referred to James William, a father of seven who was killed in a bull attack in 1913.

During the late 1800s he'd worked as an undertaker at 10 Walker Street, Dandenong, ran a mortuary in nearby Crump Lane and was also involved in a blacksmith business based in Lonsdale Street.

The family name was originally spelled Garner but James altered it to Garnar to distinguish himself.

His widow Margaret continued the family business after his death and in 1927 James's eldest son, William James, and grandson Len, 15, took over the business.

They changed the business name from JW Garnar to WJ Garnar and Son.

The business relocated and operated from 44 Walker Street and it was behind this premises that Garner Lane was located until 2009.

Len eventually replaced his father and continued to run the business until he sold it to Le Pine Funerals.



An artist's impression of the refurbished chapel.



How the chapel is expected to look post-



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We are building a new funeral home
to help us better serve our families.



In the meantime, we are still open at the same place and looking after families the same way we always have. Speak to us on 9794 0511.



Le Pine
FUNERALS

137 Princes Hwy (Cnr Fifth Ave) Dandenong | lepinefunerals.com.au

GREATER DANDENONG LEADER, Monday, November 27, 2017

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Funerals of the future

Dandenong is now home to a 'funeral home of the future' thanks to InvoCare's \$3.4 million renovation of its Le Pine facility on the Princes Highway.

The renovated home was officially opened by the Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong Youhorn Chea on Tuesday 17 April.

Combining White Lady Funerals and Le Pine Funerals under one roof, the Dandenong facility includes two arranging rooms, a viewing room, a memorial lounge with outdoor deck and a 170 seat (200 standing) non-denominational chapel - the largest capacity chapel in the South-East.

Car parking has also been expanded to 55 onsite spaces.

Regional manager of Le Pine Funerals Ashley Crow said the refurbished home continued the company's six decade presence on the site.

"We have been operating from this site here in Dandenong for almost 70 years, after acquiring William Garnar & Sons Funeral Directors in the 1950s," Mr Crow said.

"This project started over ten years ago under our previous general manager John Fowler.

"Today marks a new chapter for Le Pine. This \$3.4 million facility offers more choice in contemporary products and services to cater for the ever changing needs of our client families.

"But more importantly, it allows us to continue to offer a personalised funeral, that embraces innovation while maintaining our core traditional values.

"We are looking forward now to getting the public in to see what we have created."



Le Pine regional manager Ashley Crow, White Lady brand ambassador Tia Worrall, mayor Youhorn Chea and Le Pine Dandenong manager Ian Maxwell.

Brand ambassador for White Lady Funerals Tia Worrall said she and her team were proud to bring the brand to Dandenong for the first time in a state-of-the-art facility.

"There has been a lot of investment in technology. There are lots of options about what is displayed on screen throughout the building," Ms Worrall said.

"There is the capacity to deal with a multitude of different file formats and we also have live streaming available on this site."

For more on InvoCare's flagship funeral home see next week's Journal for a special four-page wrap.

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WHITE LADY
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a woman's understanding



137 Princes Hwy (Cnr Fifth Ave) Dandenong



The Le Pine and White Lady staff, from left, Le Pine Regional Manager Ashley Crow, Suzanne Duffy, Ian Maxwell, Cheryl Good, Andrew Howlett, White Lady Regional Manager Tia Worrall, Dana McAleese, Sally Smith and Kim Home.

A caring funeral home of

Dandenong is now home to one of Australia's most innovative and high-tech funeral homes.

InvoCare opened its flagship home on the Princes Highway on Tuesday 17 April, marking the completion of a six-month, \$3.4 million rebuild and refurbishment.

Operating under the White Lady Funerals and Le Pine Funerals brands, the facility includes two arrangement rooms, a viewing room, a reflection/memorial lounge with an outdoor decked area, and a 170 seat (200 standing) non-denominational chapel - the largest capacity chapel in the South-East Melbourne area.

The home also includes a state-of-the-art audio-visual system enabling families to web cast and record the service to share with family and friends interstate and overseas.

Le Pine regional manager Ashley Crow said the stunning transformation was the result of in-depth customer research into the changing needs of the funeral industry.

Mr Crow said research revealed families wanted a contemporary environment in which to farewell their loved ones.

"Funerals have changed a lot in the last 30 to 40 years, to what is now a very celebratory and personalised event," he said.

"People are now getting quite creative in the funeral services they want. Our staff have similar skills to event planners and provide what families are requesting as well as us sharing with them the various options that are available."

"Funerals are changing so much. We have the ability to facilitate for a service up to 200 guests or hold a more intimate gathering."

Regional manager for White Lady Funerals Tia Worrall agreed.

"It was important to create an environment in which people feel calm and relaxed. They might come in emotionally stressed, so it is a comfort to be able to come into an environment where you can relax and have a team of people who can take you through the process."

InvoCare's research also revealed that families wanted access to the latest technology



The home has a covered outdoor deck adjoining the Reflection Lounge.



The 170-seat chapel with its cathedral ceiling and abundant natural light.



The Reflection Lounge provides a full catering capability.

when paying tribute to their loved ones and connecting those who were unable to farewell the deceased in person.

"So if you have relatives in England for instance we can live stream to those locations via web-casting. People can log on through our website and view the service when it suits

them.

The 170-seat chapel has a cathedral-like roof and is flooded with natural light from a wall of glass.

"The cathedral ceiling creates beautiful sound and the audio in here is amazing because of that cathedral ceiling," Ms Worrall

said.

Real flowers, water features and comfortable soft furnishings add to the warmth of services.

The importance of hospitality was another key finding from InvoCare's research.



the future

"It's important there are tears to assist the grieving process but it is also important to have laughter and celebration of a life well lived," Mr Crow said.

The Reflection Lounge can comfortably hold up to 200 people, with sliding doors opening to an outdoor deck. The lounge is serviced by a full commercial kitchen. All food is served by waiting staff.

"Some families want a less formal service, they want something more like a cocktail party. The Reflection Lounge gives us the option of people standing around informally," Mr Crow said.

"We have deliberately designed the space so guests are served rather than food being placed on tables," added Ms Worrall.

"We've held services where the family has requested that people be greeted at the door with a glass of champagne because that's what

Pop wanted. We can do that in this beautiful space."

Guests can also leave via the Reflection Lounge which offers direct access to the 55 space carpark.

Mr Crow said Le Pine and White Lady had a diverse team of funeral staff across their Victorian network all experts in supporting families at their time of need.

Mr Crow encourages people to wander in, have a look at the refurbished facility and meet the staff.

"Long gone are the days when people had hesitation about walking into a funeral home. We have a wonderful team, just pop in and say hi as you would any other service in the community.

"We are looking forward now to the public seeing what we have created."



The home casts a welcoming glow at night.

Consider a pre-paid funeral for complete peace of mind

Planning a funeral can be stressful and costly for the loved ones of the deceased.

That burden can be alleviated with a pre-paid or pre-arranged funeral, which is planned and paid for by you whilst you are alive.

The plan is entrusted into the care of the funeral director of your choice, to deliver upon when the time comes at no additional cost to your family.

Guardian Plan, an Australian funeral plan provider, offers prepaid funerals through multiple funeral providers including Simplicity Funerals, Le Pine Funerals and White Lady Funerals.

The great benefit of a prepaid funeral is that cost remains the same as the day you planned it.

On average, a pre-paid funeral today costs \$6,000. That cost will remain the same regardless of how long you live.

For example, if you live another 27 years the cost of a funeral at that time would be estimated at \$14,000.

However, as your funeral has been pre-paid at \$6,000 that price is locked in and there is no more to pay.

On the other hand, if you take out funeral insurance today and pay premiums for the same period (27 years) the cost would be \$32,000.

"A prepaid funeral makes it easier on your family by ensuring loved ones have a copy of your funeral plan," said a spokesperson from Guardian Plan.

Funds are safely held with the Over Fifty Guardian Friendly Society, an APRA registered organisation, until they are needed.

"By paying for your funeral in advance, you relieve your family of the funeral costs and the distress of making difficult decisions at an emotional time," said the spokesperson.

"When needed, your family can call your nominated funeral provider to help them begin the arrangements you have already organised and no payout or claim forms are required."

"You make the decisions on what you would like for your funeral so it is planned the way you want."

- In general a pre-paid plan covers:
- Professional guidance for your family
 - Preparation and care for the deceased
 - Documentation
 - Funeral arrangements including the type and style of funeral you want
 - Transportation for the deceased

Instalment plans are available and Guardian Plan offers a 30 day cooling off period.

For more information, simply pay a visit to www.guardianplan.com.au





Plan ahead for peace of mind

Preplanning your funeral makes sense. It is an act of great care that protects your loved ones financially and emotionally.

By prepaying your funeral with Le Pine Funerals or White Lady Funerals at Dandenong you will have peace of mind knowing your wishes are recorded, so your funeral is *exactly what you want and locked in at today's prices.*

To find out more about preplanning your funeral call
Le Pine Funerals on 9794 0511 or White Lady Funerals on 8527 4704



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