

Pleas for The Hub



Positive action: Peter Jabbour walks through the almost empty section of what used to be, as its name implies, 'the hub of Dandenong'. **Picture:** Robert Carew

By Marg Stork

A GROUP of shopowners from The Hub, Dandenong, are asking the City of Greater Dandenong to breathe life back into the struggling complex.

The landlords say that more than half the shops are now empty, that it has suffered seven years of neglect by the council's concentration on the Dandenong Plaza.

They say other arcades such as Vanity Court have been similarly neglected, and storekeepers of long standing have walked away from their businesses with nothing, and many tenants could not even make their rent.

One landlord, Mr Carmine Bernardo, told *The Journal* he had lost thousands of dollars in rent from his empty shops.

His claim was backed by landlords Ms Maria Teresa, Mr Peter Jabbour, Mrs Rosa and Mr George Masip, Mrs Carmen and Mr Craig Jenner and Mr

'Something must be done to rejuvenate Dandenong's heart and uplift its flagging image, and now.'

— landlord Peter Jabbour

Shaun Dawson. They say that big corporations had provided unmatched incentives to lure tenants to nearby shopping complexes.

Mr Bernardo, who owns three shops, said his investment had gone backwards to an unacceptable level.

Some landlords were letting tenants use empty shops to display their goods just to allay the feeling of emptiness.

They produced a statement for the Hub body corporate's outgoings and the budget for July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 totalled \$232,000.

"On the plus side the landlords said The Hub is in a great situation in the heart of town; the rentals to the shops

are cheap, the shopkeepers offer a friendly caring service and the centre is very secure," Mr Bernardo said.

The group would press the council for action, and if the landlords were just swept aside, they would take up a petition and call a meeting with federal MPs and go to the media.

"In 1989-90, when I invested in The Hub, the complex was a vibrant place central to Dandenong city, shops were fully let with long-term leases and there was a huge traffic flow of people," Mr Bernardo said.

Mr Jabbour said the landlords were paying council rates of more than

\$40,000 a year and were receiving "nothing" in exchange.

"I believe that council and the politicians in Dandenong can no longer hide behind the skirts of the recession. Something must be done to rejuvenate Dandenong's heart and uplift its flagging image, and now," he said.

Greater Dandenong's chief executive officer Mr Warwick Heine said there was "no simple solution".

"A lot of it comes down to the mix of shops in the area and market forces, not what decisions the council makes.

"The council has been very active, more than ever before, working with traders to try and revitalise those areas. But the council can't put tenants in shops. The more shops become vacant, the more people stay away."

He said landlords and business owners had to take some responsibility and create niche markets and viable businesses amid fierce competition.

News Briefs

Springvale burglaries decline

BURGLARIES in the Springvale area are lower than average this month. Just over 60 offences had been recorded this far into November last year, but to date only 45 incidents have been reported.

Injecting clinics discussions

THE City of Greater Dandenong will be meeting regularly with four other councils of municipalities nominated by the State Governments as sites for injecting clinics. The mayor, Councillor Naim Melhem, met 12 other mayors at Melbourne Town Hall on Wednesday to discuss joint action on drugs.

RSL extension on cards

GREATER Dandenong council will tonight (Monday) consider plans by the Dandenong RSL for a major extension. The league has applied to the council to extend its bistro and gaming room, after the council discouraged its original proposal to relocate to the council-owned car park opposite the library in Stuart Street. The RSL intends to stay in Clow Street.

Church donates to needy

WE Care is holding a 'helping hand day' this Saturday, giving away clothes, presents, back-to-school packs and toys to the needy. The organisation has filled a church hall at Dandenong North with 30,000 articles of clothing, 1000 food parcels, 1000 school stationery packs, school uniforms and toys. The helping hand day will be held from 10 am to 1 pm at the Assembly of God Church, 307 Gladstone Road, Dandenong North.

Free parking

DANDENONG shoppers will be able to park free twice a week during December in the lead-up to Christmas. Meters will be bagged on Wednesdays and Thursdays in the city's western precinct following talks between the Dandenong Retail Traders' Association and the City of Greater Dandenong Council.

The free parking area will be in Lonsdale Street from Clow to Foster streets, Thomas Street from Clow to Foster streets and Walker Street between Lonsdale and Thomas streets.

Casey council takes awards

CASEY council has walked away with two major awards at the Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria City Pride Awards held last Friday.

The council received the EcoRecycle Victoria Waste Wise Resource Management Award and the Australian Automotive Air Commercial and/or Industrial Site Award.

A special commendation was also awarded to Cranbourne Station for the Department of Infrastructure Stationeers "Right On Track" program award.

Narre Warren offices robbed

NARRE Warren detectives are investigating a spate of burglaries at commercial premises at Narre Warren.

Offenders ransacked 12 businesses overnight last Monday, stealing cash and valuables.

They broke into four businesses

in Magid Drive including a design and construction firm, a community centre, medical centre and a former office of a local parliamentary representative.

Offenders also broke into six businesses in Princes Highway, near Webb Street, and two premises in Overland Drive.

In all cases, the offenders broke in through the front or back doors and stole money and small valuables.

Detective Senior Sergeant Ian Wilcox, of Narre Warren CIB, said it was possible the same offenders were responsible for all. He is calling for anyone with

information to come forward.

"People need to be security-conscious, especially in areas without 24-hour occupancy," he said.

Anyone with information should contact Detective Senior Constable Rob Mynott on 9705 3111.

POLYCARBONATE PRICES SLASHED

10yr Warranty

All Colours & Lengths

WE INSTALL

\$11.00

1/m

760 Cover Greca & Corrugated

2005622 2371

OPEN 7 DAYS

THE PROJECT CENTRE

21-25 VESPER DVE NARRE WARREN

9796 6899

LP Gas Conversions

FREE!

Compare & Save \$\$\$!

PAY NOTHING FOR 6 MONTHS *T.A.P.

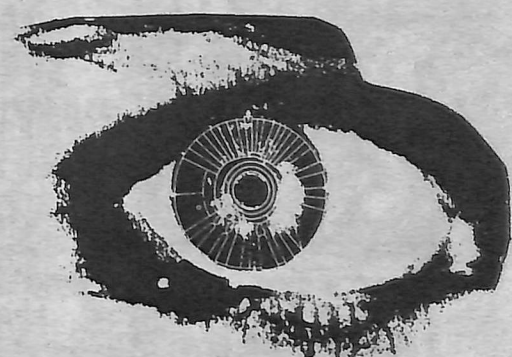
LPG 29.9c	OR	LEADED 77.9c
65 Litres		65 Litres
\$19.43		\$50.63

***Convert today with no up-front charge or payments for 6 months**

National Auto Gas Pty Ltd

9510 4400 (24 HOURS)

2011038 247 JJ



FREE

INTRODUCTION TO IRIDOLOGY

BY: *Qualified Naturopath*

IN STORE

Thursday 13th May 9.30-4.30PM

*** Make your appointment NOW! ***

Free Home delivery

Servicing the Dandenong Community for over 25 years

Moore's **AMCAL PHARMACY**

J. Daglian & Ptns. Props.

HUB ARCADE, LANGHORNE ST, DANDENONG 9791 7385

9 to 9 365 days

Your Caring Community Pharmacy

211771 2034