



Toyota officially closes its local manufacturing operations with its last Australian-made car.

Waving goodbye and saying hello to uncertain future

By Helen Velissaris

Keysborough manufacturers who supplied Toyota's plants for years have said goodbye to an era.

The last Camry rolled off Toyota's production line in Altona on Tuesday, ending 54 years of Australian production.

More than 3000 people attended a ceremony at the Altona factory, with current and former employees, suppliers, affiliate companies and officials from Toyota Japan on hand.

Venture DMG managing director Dean Lomas was at the ceremony alongside fellow Greater Dandenong suppliers and said it was a sad day for Australian manufacturing.

He is closing down his Keysborough factory at the end of the year. The Toyota contracts made up more than 50 per cent of the workload of the Keysborough workshop, which supplied plastics and mouldings to the car maker.

"It's almost unbelievable that a country such as

this can do away with the whole industry," he told the Dandenong Journal.

"The automotive industry is a breeding ground for technology and capabilities that are used in other industries and other sectors.

"It's incredibly sad."

He said the effects of Toyota's closure will be felt for a long time in the broader manufacturing industry.

Toyota announced its impending closure in 2014 and has provided its 3900 workforce with transition programs. Mr Lomas said Toyota has been excellent in the transition phase, and assisted its suppliers as well.

While a few workers will be transferred to other locations, Mr Lomas admits there will be layoffs from DMG's Keysborough factory.

Next door to DMG is TNG Industries, which has recently gone from about a 50-person workforce to 11.

Specialising in metal pressing and moulding,

TNG Industries used to supply the motor car industry but moved away from it to start supplying more general engineering projects.

Having been in business for 47 years, chief executive Robert Stewart said he doesn't know if it will last to his 50th.

"We've got millions of dollars' worth of plant equipment which we're holding on to by the fingertips," he said.

"We only run three days a week. At our peak we were running 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

At 76, he says he is not worried about himself but will be working until he "can't walk anymore" to ensure his workers have a future.

He thinks Australia has outpriced itself from the market thanks to high wage costs and taxes.

Toyota joins Ford and Holden in ceasing local production this year.

It will retain 1300 workers and its 270 existing dealer network sites.

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