

Vale pastor Don

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Bloods dripped dry

SPORT



Property liftout

INSIDE



Rich cultural flavour

SPRINGVALE South students celebrated their rich diversity with food, clothing and dancing from across the globe. Athol Road Primary held a multicultural day on Tuesday 15 March to mark Cultural Diversity Week, which ran from 12 to 20 March. Family and friends joined in the celebrations, which included a multicultural feast for lunch, Vietnamese singing; Cambodian, Cook Island and Indian dances; and African drumming.

Aneelia, Venus and Awdea with food from around the world. 151402 Pictures: STEWART CHAMBERS



Opponents seek to stall market plans...

Sowing dissent

By CAM LUCADOU-WELLS

A WHOLESALE fresh produce market has been proposed in Bangholme's green wedge to tap into the south-east's vast farming region but has already sown dissent among conservationists.

Dandyfresh CEO Rod Kerley said the \$15 million-plus project in the pad-

docks at 84 Harwood Road will create about 200 jobs.

It would also be attractive to the Gippsland region's farmers and florists trekking their products across town to Epping market.

"We're trying to make it easier for the retailer and for the grower," Mr Kerley said.

The project is still at least 18 months from fruition, taking into account the expected planning objections.

It would not be open to the public, hence not a rival to Dandenong Market, Mr Kerley said.

"We see Dandenong Market as a good client base."

Its nearest equivalent is the Epping wholesale market, attracting buyers from independent supermarkets, fruit shops and florists.

Mr Kerley said Greater Dandenong Council planners had sent back several "green wedge questions" in response to Dandyfresh's plans.

He said the company consulted "three legals" who ticked it as a permitted use on the basis that it involved fresh food distribution and was a market.

"We're not going to smash on the requirements. It's a legitimate green wedge use."

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Sowing dissent as greenies oppose market

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Defenders of the South East Green Wedge spokesman Barry Ross said the group would oppose the market, which would also be within the buffer zone next to Eastern Treatment Plant.

“Our group is wanting to keep the green wedge’s rural character, the views and the openness.

“This (proposal) is going to be a large scale commercial activity and inconsistent with that.

“There’s a lot of hurdles to jump.”

The site is owned by developer Intrapac’s subsidiary Fendenbrook.

Intrapac launched a failed bid to the state’s Urban Growth Boundary Anomalies Advisory Committee for the parcel to be rezoned industrial in 2012.

Mr Kerley had hoped to launch the concept at the Logis industrial estate in Dandenong South five years ago.

It was “killed” by the then state government which did not want an equal-sized competitor to the under-construction Epping market.

Mr Kerley said the Bangholme proposal has “quite a high level of support” among politicians.

“They don’t have a problem with a private market and the fact it will create jobs in Dandenong.

“As Epping has developed the justification for doing the facility in Dandenong still stacks up when you consider the amount of food produced in Gippsland and the Mornington Peninsula.”

There had also been discussions with local TAFE network Chisholm Institute about training opportunities such as food handling, retail and production.

The market would also have export sales potential for local growers, he said.