

Starting strong in Greater Dandenong

“I wanted to help my 60-year-old mother,” recalls Tatiana, who completed an economics degree in Russia and a Master of Economics in Japan. “So I went to Council’s Economic Development Unit in 2012 and we met so many good people. They recommended I complete some food courses and introduced me to Jane DelRosso at My Other Kitchen – a kitchen incubator.”

Rising to the top

From Granny began making dumplings in Jane’s kitchen in 2013 and after a year, Jane recommended they set up their own factory due to overwhelming demand.

The next business priority became finding the right equipment to automate some of the manufacturing process, so Tatiana, her husband Victor Seldimirov and Nina visited some of the dumpling capitals of the world – Russia, Japan, China and Malaysia – finding the most suitable machine in Japan.

Tatiana quit her day job in real estate and From Granny opened its Dandenong South factory in 2014, utilising local suppliers for quality ingredients such as flour, vegetables, cheese, pork, chicken and Halal-certified lamb and beef.

The business received a City of Greater Dandenong Small Business Grant around the same time with Tatiana utilising the mentoring component for more than a year to build on her existing knowledge. “It helped a lot with the cultural and management side of the business,” says Tatiana. “We received a good response from the associated article in the local paper with people calling us up for orders.”

+ **From Granny** THE MANUFACTURER ON EVERYONE’S LIPS

When the toughest of food critics – children – tried and adored Nina Kuzovova’s Russian dumplings, daughter Tatiana teamed up with her family to create From Granny, a thriving food manufacturing business.

A fortuitous dinner party

Tatiana Kuzovova’s mother moved from Russia to Australia in 2011 but wasn’t impressed with the European dumplings in her new home country. Although time and labour intensive, Nina began making her own and served them at a dinner with friends one night.

They were a hit with the children in attendance and one of the mothers asked Nina to make her a batch.

Word spread among friends about the delicious dumplings, leading to order requests from a Russian restaurant and a grocery shop.



“We’re trying to employ people who have had difficulties finding jobs because of language barriers or childcare commitments – you can find really good workers.”

Tatiana Kuzovova, Owner



Spreading the dumpling love

From Granny currently produces both machine-made dumplings and a combination of hand-made and machine-made for a more authentic look.



It sells under its own brand and other brands throughout the east-coast of Australia, employing three full-time and three part time staff.

The business began exporting to New Zealand in 2016 after a distributor found From Granny online and visited the Dandenong South factory.

Tatiana and her team have been making sales visits to European grocery stores and visiting food exhibitions organised by local councils.

With plans to expand into Asian markets, From Granny recently participated in a roadshow with Asian buyers. “We made a few contacts and it was good to know people like our product.”



www.fromgranny.com.au

Factory

Unit 7/27 Swift Way, Dandenong South

We also learned from like-minded business people with similar issues,” said Tatiana

From Granny has just launched gluten-free dumplings “I feel sad if people can’t try our dumplings so we created these! It took us a year to find the right flour to give us a similar taste and texture and I’m really proud of it.”

From Granny’s start-up lessons

Challenges

- ✗ Tatiana has found marketing difficult as she lacks sales skills so most customers have approached From Granny directly – the positive is that business growth has been organic and manageable
- ✗ Deciding on the right packaging for products such as size and design – market research has helped

Achievements

- » Expanding into the Sydney and Brisbane markets in 2015
- » Beginning exports to New Zealand in 2016
- » Perfecting a gluten-free product that took a year to develop

Top three start-up tips

1. Make sure there is interest in the market for your product – lots of people have a good idea but don’t actually know whether it will sell.
2. Have a back-up plan in case money isn’t coming in, such as another job or savings – in the first few years of a start-up, you will need to invest a lot back into the business.
3. Don’t compromise on quality and you will have a good response from customers.

