



INDIA'S HEART  
IN MELBOURNE  
CENTRAL DANDENONG



*Indian Cultural Precinct Profile*

# Indian Cultural Precinct

## Central Dandenong - India's heart in Melbourne

### Introduction

Since the 1990's Dandenong has been home to Melbourne's Indian community, with an active and authentic Little India cultural precinct, and other Indian businesses nearby in the activity centre.

Dandenong is also in the economic and multicultural hub of south east of Melbourne, only 30kms away, and surrounded by a large regional population of people from Indian sub-continent and South Asian backgrounds.

Since the Revitalising Central Dandenong project started in 2006 the face of central Dandenong has changed enormously, with vastly improved public spaces, numerous new office buildings, and the public square and library. These developments have attracted increasing numbers of workers, students and visitors into the area.

Dandenong's Little India Cultural Precinct is located in the midst of all this, and directly next to Dandenong Railway Station where thousands of commuters are exposed to Indian culture and commerce each day as they walk to and from the station.

The highly effective Little India brand developed by traders and Council in 2007 has stood the test of time and continues to promote Dandenong's Indian identity.

### Victorian Government Recognition

In 2015 the Victorian government initiated a process, to develop an Indian Cultural Precinct in metropolitan Melbourne as the primary destination for enjoying Indian culture and commerce.

*“The Indian Cultural Precinct will recognise the important contribution the Indian community makes to Victoria and will be a place to hold festivals, a hub to support business, a drawcard for tourism, and a meeting place for the entire community”*

– Minister for Cultural Affairs, Robin Scott, 24 June 2015.

Later that same year the Andrews Labor Government announced Dandenong will be home to Victoria's first ever Indian Cultural Precinct, Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott was joined by Member for Dandenong Gabrielle Williams to announce the transformation of Little India in Dandenong.

*“We listened to community members and groups to determine the best location for this precinct, and it's a huge win for the people of Dandenong.”*

– Member for Dandenong, Gabrielle Williams, 2 December 2015.

## *Snap Shot*

- More than 12,400 Indian born residents currently live in the City of Greater Dandenong (2016)
- The regional population of Indian born residents in Melbourne's south east reached 52,000 in 2016, (Greater Dandenong and adjacent municipalities). (ABS 2016)
- Dandenong's Little India Cultural Precinct has existed since the early 1990s as an authentic and original precinct, which grew organically on its own accord
- Central Dandenong has 62 businesses with an Indian cultural offering and 33 of these are clustered in the Little India Cultural Precinct
- Nearby Dandenong Station has 2.68 million commuters passing through annually
- Little India Cultural Tours have operated since 2006 to promote and share the unique offer
- The Indian Museum, a first for the Indian community, opened in 2014

## *Located within the Indian Community*

There are 170,000 Indian born Victorians, which represent 38% of Australia's Indian population.

The 2016 census shows that in Melbourne's south east, the majority of Indian born Victorian's (and other South Asian nations) live in the City of Greater Dandenong and adjacent municipalities.

The Greater Dandenong area is well known to Melburnians as a multicultural hub, and attracts day trippers and international visitors alike, especially from the Visiting Friends and Relatives tourism market.

## *Shopping and Retail Offer*

- A cultural and retail gateway to central Dandenong
- Shopper frequency - 57% visit and shop once a week or more
- Spending - 58% were likely to spend up to \$50 per visit
- Young Patrons - 36% of shoppers were aged 20 to 29, and 22% aged 30 to 39
- Shopper heritage - Over half of shoppers identified themselves as of Indian, Sri Lankan or Pakistani origin

*Source: Market Survey and Analysis Report 2009 by the Hornery Institute*



## Maintaining Indian Culture

- Dandenong Library has a wide range of books and audio-visual material in Hindi, Punjabi & Tamil
- Australia's largest Hindu temple is located 12 km from central Dandenong in Carrum Downs
- Of the 30 Indian origin places of worship located around greater Melbourne, 7 of these are in and around Greater Dandenong.
- In 2014-15 Drum Theatre hosted 17 Indian & south Asian performances for over 7,000 patrons
- 80% of Greater Dandenong's Indian language library loans are made at the Dandenong branch
- Dandenong Library had 4,735 Indian speaking borrowers in 2014-2015

## Timeline

