



Get clarity and confidence about building your business with help from a business mentor

Applications now open for the April intake of the Mentor Partners Program

Are you a local business owner, working hard to provide quality products or services for your customers? Do you find it hard to make time to work on developing your business? Are you unsure if you are focusing on the right goals and actions?

Glen Eira and Kingston City Councils' *Mentor Partners Program* is a free and confidential service that matches local business owners with experienced volunteer business mentors.

Once matched, business owners have six months to work with their mentor to review and reflect on their business approach, and develop a strategy and action plan to strengthen their business.

This highly successful *Program* has assisted almost 450 small and medium sized businesses from a diverse range of industries.

A recent beneficiary of the *Program* is Mathew White of Mat White Painting, a domestic and commercial painting service offering customers environmentally friendly paints and quality craftsmanship.

Prior to joining the *Program*, Mathew wasn't sure how to monitor and improve the financial performance of his business;

or how to create a plan for the future.

Mathew applied for the *Program* and was matched with mentor Andrew Schwarz.

Mathew said that Andrew was a great match for him.

"Andrew guided me through the financial side of my business, and show him how to use the numbers to monitor its performance and find opportunities to streamline and improve it," Mathew said.

He said Andrew was easy to talk to and that he took the time to understand his business and support him to develop a business plan, including putting systems in place so that the business could run on its own, giving him time to develop other aspects of it.

"I now have renewed energy and confidence about building my businesses. I can already see the impact of the changes I have made on the bottom line, and I now know what to focus on in order to grow it. Being in the *Program* was a wonderful experience and I am very grateful for Andrew's support," Mathew said.

Andrew, who joined the *Program* in 2014, was impressed with Mathew's motivation and willingness to take action to improve his business.

"Mathew was like a sponge — he was

open and engaged and took the time to think about and implement the actions that arose from our sessions," Andrew said.

"It was a pleasure to mentor Mathew and I have no doubt that he will continue to have much success in the future."

Businesses based in the Glen Eira or Kingston municipality, which have been trading for at least 12 months and do not operate under a franchise or license agreement, are eligible to apply.

For further information or to apply, visit www.mentorpartners.com.au or contact the *Program* co-ordinator on 9524 3333.



Small Business 2016 events

The *Small Business 2016* events calendar will continue 'peeling back the layers' in May and beyond with inspirational speakers delivering valuable information and skills, including:

- *Stop being invisible! — The scorching impact of social media on small business* with Debra Templar.
- *Learn how to manage your social media during times of crisis:*
- *Being brave and creative — marketing through social media* with Dee Madigan.
- *Crisis is an opportunity not to be missed — keynote and workshop* with Fabian Dattner.

For further information, dates or bookings details, join Council's Business Development mailing list: BusinessDevelopment@gleneira.vic.gov.au

Ormond, McKinnon and Bentleigh Shopping Centres are changing in front of you.

They're open for business.

Be there and support them through the change.

Think local first



Think local first

Now is the time for businesses to consider how to develop and promote a *Think local first* strategy.

This will enable you to create a strong and unified message based on the importance of shopping locally during the level crossing removal project.

The *Think local first* branding and marketing collateral is available for you to access and use. *Think local first* is a philosophical brand, designed for local business to adopt and grow.

To access *Think local first* logos and other free collateral, visit www.gleneira.vic.gov.au