

Average 3214 postcode salary well below local figures

North's income struggle

CHAD VAN ESTROP

THE average taxable income in Corio, Norlane and North Shore is more than \$28,000 lower than in other parts of Geelong, according to Australian Taxation Office data.

The 3214 postcode recorded a \$42,348 average income during the 2016-17 financial year — well below the \$70,381 average in Geelong, South Geelong and Newtown.

The suburbs of Corio, Norlane and North Shore recorded the ninth lowest taxable income average in the state and was in the lowest 25 nationwide, according to the ATO's Taxation Statistics report.

Between 2013-14 and 2016-17 the average in the 3220 postcode rose three times as



much as it did in 3214. The average taxable income in Corio, Norlane and North Shore rose just \$1660 and was eclipsed by the \$5252 rise in the 3220 postcode.

CEO of Geelong region advocacy group G21 Elaine Carbines said northern suburbs residents were an "under-utilised resource".

"The great disparity between our northern suburbs and other suburbs in Geelong is hardly surprising and it un-

derscores the reason why G21 has been advocating so strongly for investment in our northern suburbs," Ms Carbines said, adding that addressing the "infrastructure deficit" was key to getting the northern suburbs on par with the rest of Geelong.

"It's really important to see projects such as the Northern Arc (health and wellbeing centre) completed. It would provide construction jobs, apprenticeships and ongoing

opportunities for employment," she said.

Ms Carbines said opportunities for people in Geelong's most disadvantaged suburbs could be provided through a mooted \$20 million redevelopment of Northern Bay College and extra funding for the Northern Futures job ready program and urged private construction companies to provide jobs for people from Geelong's disadvantaged suburbs when settling on major contracts for the region.

Across the region, the 3220 postcode recorded the highest average taxable income closely followed by the 3227 postcode taking in Connewarre, Barwon Heads and Breamlea where residents had an average taxable income of \$69,881.

In Victoria, surgeons recorded the highest average taxable income (\$396,153) in the 2017 financial year.

There were 72 occupations where females had an average taxable income higher than males, according to the ATO's Taxation Statistics report from a total of about 1100 occupations recorded. They included authors, futures traders, magistrates and professional surfers.

Meanwhile, Australians reported donating \$3.5 billion to charity in 2016-17 with an average gift size of \$770.

In the 2017 financial year 16.5 million income tax returns were lodged across the country comprising of 13.9 million individuals, 970,000 companies, and super funds, partnerships and trusts.

THE WAGE GAP

Average taxable income 2016-17

3214: Corio, North Shore, Norlane	\$42,348
3219: Whittington, East Geelong, Breakwater, Thomson, St Albans Park, Newcomb	\$47,743
3215: Bell Post Hill, Bell Park, North Geelong, Drumcondra, Hamlyn Heights, Rippleside	\$52,903
3216: Belmont, Grovedale, Wandana Heights, Waurin Ponds, Highton, Marshall	\$52,960
3220: South Geelong, Newtown, Geelong	\$70,381

Source: ATO

VITAL COG TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

CHAD VAN ESTROP

ABOUT 100 people from Geelong's most disadvantaged suburbs have found work in the past year, thanks to a support agency focused on Corio and Norlane.

Most who have completed courses through Northern Futures have moved into full-time employment — some after years without work.

Stan Sennett, 27, from Corio is one of them.

The father of three was unemployed for about four years before starting a 12-week basic engineering course at Northern Futures last year.

Following the course Stan began a six-week trial at Lara manufacturer Air Radiators.

Five months later he's developed into a valued member of staff and his enthusiasm for work is palpable.

"I could count the skills I had before starting here on one hand," Stan says.

"But I've learnt a lot here, like driving a reach forklift and using different drills all because I was given the opportunity by (Air Radiators)."

Each day Stan completes deliveries of nuts, bolts, screws and other items needed in the manufacturing process to Air Radiators's departments.

He's also helped develop a system that sorts metal rods into holding racks to streamline manufacturing.

And this week he's begun a new job with a North Geelong based pallet-racking installer.

Earning an income has given Stan new-found freedom.

Not only can he better pro-



LIFE-CHANGING:
Stan Sennett at Lara's
Air Radiators.
Picture: PETER RISTEVSKI

\$1M PLAN FOR NORLANE DEVELOPMENT

PLANS for an almost \$1 million development in Norlane have been revealed. The Surrey St site — near the Princes Highway — is proposed to be a mixed-use development, and would comprise two office tenancies and three food and drink premises. Planning documents for the proposed development have

been lodged with the City of Greater Geelong. There would be 12 on-site carparking spaces, the documents say. The proposed two-storey development is estimated to cost \$970,000 and would be on land currently occupied by a vacant site and council reserve.

vide for his children but he has bought a motorbike and he's even saved some cash for a new tattoo.

He now sees himself as a functioning member of the community.

Stan's fiancée, Anna, has also benefited from a course

offered through Northern Futures and works in aged care at Belmont Grange.

Five other Northern Futures graduates are employed with Air Radiators; one is a single mother who now has nine months' experience.

Air Radiators logistics man-

ager Marcus McEwen said: "The majority of people we employ from Northern Futures are (job) ready, keen and willing to get involved."

Northern Futures work adviser Bryan Moore said involvement with the program is helping to change attitudes towards work.

"Eighty per cent of people who go through our courses go into employment," Mr Moore says.

"There's the physical skills that Northern Futures teaches but it's a change in attitude that really counts for most people."

Mr Moore says there's still more to be achieved.

Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows unemployment in Corio and Norlane was above 20 per

cent in the final quarter of 2018.

Northern Futures is facing a State Government funding cut later this year when a contract with The Gordon TAFE's Skilling the Bay program ends.

Other employment programs like it also face an uncertain future.

It is hoped these programs are funded as part of the State Budget due to be handed down on May 27.

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