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CLUB PROFILE:

Dandenong Oasis, VIC

Aqua Fitness Network caught up with Jacinda Hunt, centre manager of Dandenong Oasis, to get the lowdown on this 2006 Fitness Facility of the Year Finalist...

Dandenong Oasis

Corner Heatherton Road & Cleveland Street, Dandenong, VIC 3175

Ph: 03 9791 2200

Fax: 03 9791 8178

E-mail: dandenongoasis@ymca.org.au

Web: www.dandenongoasis.ymca.org.au

Facilities and services

- 50 metre indoor pool with tarzan rope and cargo net, fun pool with waterslide, toddlers pool and separate hydrotherapy pool
- Aquatic education
- Range of pin loaded and free weights
- Circuit room with 30 pieces of Hydraulic equipment
- Cardio and weights are in gym area of 300sq metres
- Pre-choreographed and freestyle aerobics classes. Les Mills BODYCOMBAT®, BODYPUMP®, BODYSTEP®, BODYBALANCE®, BODYATTACK® and RPM®. Also have a 30 bike cycling studio
- Dedicated 21 place crèche room
- Squash courts
- Personal training
- Birthday parties

Snapshot

- Number of financial members: 1587
- Owned or rented: Owned by City of Greater Dandenong – managed by YMCA since 1st July 2006. Previously managed by Royal Lifesaving Society
- Access to parking: Good. Ample parking
- Population to draw on: approx. 30,000
- Proximity of closest competitor: 1km
- Membership prices: fortnightly debit \$17.80 (aquatic), \$ 27.95 (full)

What is the target membership demographic of the club?

Dandenong is an area with a lower socio economic and highly multi-cultural population; the YMCA encourages access for all abilities, which means that we target all sectors of our local community.

What do you look for when hiring staff?

The right people with good organisational fit, rather than just qualifications. You can always train the right people!

What is your staff break down?

14 full time and 98 casual/part time staff.

Do you promote the multi-skilling of your staff or do staff have separate roles?

We definitely promote multi-skilling. 80% of our staff work in more than one area of the centre. We feel that staff who work in more than one area have a better overall knowledge of the centre and are able to service the needs of the customers. Multi-skilling also helps to keep staff motivated and more entrenched in the business. It would be very difficult to lifeguard 38 hours a week, but if it is broken up with a shift in the gym, a couple of classes, some reception and some lessons, it is easier to attract and retain good quality permanent staff.



How do you price yourself in the marketplace?

Given the demographics of Dandenong and being a council owned facility encouraging access for all, we are on the lower end of the price scale compared to comparable facilities in other suburbs.

What is your most successful retention strategy?

Regular member contact ensures members feel that they belong to a community, not just a facility. Regular follow ups, newsletters, health information sessions, social occasions and competitions among other things.

What is your most successful marketing campaign and how did you track its success?

We stay away from campaigns offering discounted fees as we find that they devalue the product and act as a 'quick fix' option that ends up hampering long term growth. Our most successful campaigns have been based on value-adding i.e. join this month and receive a free starter pack with towel, water bottle etc. Such campaigns don't necessarily attract more prospective members, but the quality and loyalty of the prospects is far more beneficial in the long term.

Do you have any programs for special populations? How profitable/successful are they?

We don't look at success in terms of profitability. We run many programs for special populations, both within the centre and out in the community. Any programs for special populations run on a cost recovery basis.

What non membership profit centres do you have?

Casual swim entry, birthday parties, café, merchandise, facility hire.

What is your five-year plan?

Move the gym and group fitness programs into larger facilities. Increase the membership base from 1500 to 3000 with 95% on Direct Debit, and double the number of community programs from 15 to 30.

What is your biggest challenge?

In a population with a lower socio economic and multi-cultural base, our challenge is to increase the perceived value of health and fitness pursuits! ♦



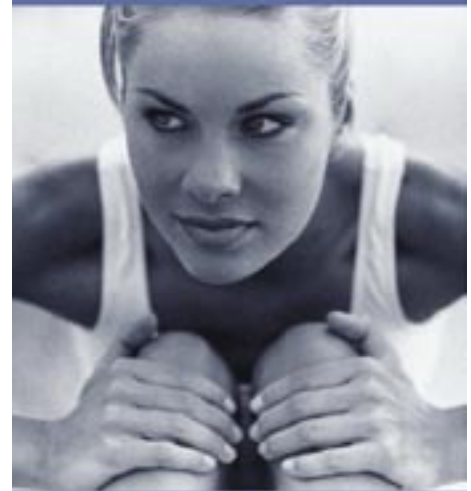
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