

# Plants at work.

THE FRENCHAMS GROUP NEWSLETTER

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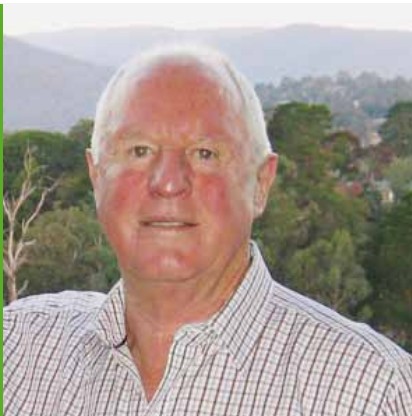


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## Message from the Managing Director



Peter Gerraty

**Welcome to the first edition of The Frenchams Group newsletter. We are pleased to launch this newsletter – to keep you updated with our news, as well as industry information, staff profiles and handy tips.**

My message to all our readers is that our group has defied the world financial crisis and continues to expand. We are competitive in the marketplace and proud that our systems benefit and ensure satisfied customers.

The year – as it draws to a close – has been productive especially due to the great endeavours of the marketing division. They are a dedicated group who work to implement ideas to reduce costs in relation to purchasing products related to our industry, and promoting ideas for brochures and flyers.

We have also developed a consistent branding system throughout Australia. Branding is an important tool as it gives our company credibility and demonstrates to our customers the goods and services we provide.

To all our clients we thank you for your loyalty. All our trained professional staff are committed to the excellent service that The Frenchams Group has been providing for over 45 years to in excess of 2500 customers at present. These customers appreciate the service of dedicated men and women whose deeds are to provide a healthier environment in the commercial workplace.

As we move forward to another hopefully prosperous year may I wish all staff, franchisees and all readers of this newsletter a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.



# Frenchams – greening for generations

Things have come a long way since the business was conducted by horse and dray, but the Frenchams' family focus remains the same.



Company founder, Les Frencham, was born at Burnley, Victoria in March 1881 and started work with Cremorne Nursery in the late 1800s. Les gained experience at several nurseries and by the 1920s was managing Johnsons Nursery in Richmond. Customers included Menzies Hotel (now BHP House), private mansions in St Kilda Road and Toorak, as well as live theatres in the city.

During the depression, Les bought a block of land and house in Camberwell and grew poppies and stocks while building up a plantscaping business – his original business cards describe him as a 'Plant and Floral Decorator'.

After World War 2, plantscaping customers were motor showrooms, hotels, live theatres, cinemas and retail stores.

During the 50s and 60s, the building boom brought the first big buildings and modern office design; cinemas disappeared, television arrived, live theatre languished and motor showrooms boomed.

Around this time, Les's grandsons came into the business, including immediate past CEO, Peter Gerraty, who joined up in 1960. In the early 80s Peter and brother Frank decided to split the business, with Peter buying the contracts of the

plantscaping section and Frank taking over the equity in the growing, wholesaling and retailing of the company.

Operations continued in Victoria and Queensland until the early 90s, during which time Peter franchised existing contracts to long-term employees. These franchisees increased productivity and this has proven to be the foundation of a company with operations in all states.

Current CEO, Tony Gerraty, great-grandson of Les, joined the family business in 1986. He recalls that in the late 90s Frenchams embarked on a growth strategy, saying, 'As people wanted to come in, we were able to approach the opposition and buy them out. We'd always been friendly with other companies ... so when the time came, they were happy to sell to us.'

And the future looks bright. According to Tony, 'Plants are back in vogue. We've weathered the GFC ... people are becoming sustainability-conscious and the future will see us continue to grow as people recognise the benefits of greening their offices.'

Meanwhile, Peter is looking forward to the third and fourth generations of the family consolidating, expanding and growing The Frenchams Group even further. 🌱

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## The beautiful Block

Don Parsons, Centre Manager at Melbourne's Block Arcade is happy with his long relationship with Frenchams and the plants that decorate it inside and out: 'I constantly get compliments about the quality of the plantings here.'

As the only heritage-listed arcade on Collins Street, there's a certain quality to uphold, with stylish plants and containers befitting the gorgeous surrounds and a monthly changing program of plants. Orchids, bromeliads, anthuriums and,

in December, traditional poinsettias are installed throughout the arcade. Don notes that people stop and admire them, often exclaiming 'They're real!' – a point of pride for the Block team.

As to Frenchams' service? Don says he '...never has to say anything to Tony, they appear and look sensational' and he receives 'great, very personal service' from Helen who does the maintenance. 'She's in almost every day – particularly on hot summer days – she likes her darlings to be looked after.' 🌱



# Foliage for clean air

Healthy air, healthy offices,  
healthy staff

**It's widely recognised that indoor plants give an aesthetic boost to an office, but the research shows that plants are also useful in absorbing potentially harmful toxins in modern buildings.**

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) often mean indoor spaces are more polluted than outdoors, with toxins emitted from plastic furniture, fittings and computer equipment. These toxins can cause headaches, coughing and sore eyes and have a serious effect on the health and wellbeing of employees.

The good news is green! By bringing plants – especially those with lots of leafy, green foliage – into indoor work spaces, workplace incidences of ill health, fatigue and irritability are significantly reduced.

NASA research in the US has consistently shown that green and flowering plants can remove many toxic chemicals from the air within building interiors. Research by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) also shows that stress can be severely reduced by the presence of indoor plants, stating that 'plants at work directly increase productivity and

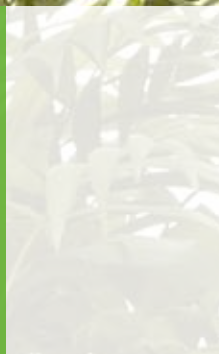
performance'. One UTS study showed that staff who had plants placed in their offices showed reductions in stress levels and negative feelings by 30–60%.

Frenchams has been extolling the virtues of 'green workplaces for a healthier workforce' for years. And as a member of the Green Building Council Australia, is committed to providing clients with a healthier indoor air quality through the creative use of indoor plants.

Says The Frenchams Group CEO, Tony Gerraty: 'It's the bacteria of the potting mix that is the primary agent of VOC removal. The role of the plant is to nourish the root zone, so the potted plant is a functional unit – a symbiotic microcosm for VOC removal.'

Plants are clean air machines, so if you want cleaner air, and therefore healthier, happier employees, indoor plants from Frenchams are the obvious choice. 🌿





## Franchisee Profile

Greenscaping Enterprises  
Melbourne city and south-eastern corridor

**Gabrielle Liedel became part of the Frenchams group nearly 3 years ago after finding her passion for living plants to be the perfect opportunity for working in and around Melbourne with clients who also appreciate the 'greener' side of life.**

With a degree in business administration and a work history in customer service, Gabrielle knew a Frenchams franchise would offer the opportunity to grow her own business. And having the Frenchams' brand behind her was important: 'There's a great support base ... you have the people and processes to help you succeed.'

Gabrielle particularly enjoys the personal nature of the work, interacting with people in different industries and spending time in their workplaces. And the transformations are rewarding: 'I love the product ... it can turn an average office into a special place.' 🌱

## Staff Profile

Bob Morrissey  
Queensland office

**Frenchams' Brisbane office services a huge area from Noosa to Murwillumbah which allows for a fair bit of travel up and down the coast for Bob Morrissey. It's the day-to-day variety of the job he appreciates, whether organising staff, doing quotes or buying plants. 'Plus it's really people-focused' he says, 'you're dealing with the public and never stuck at the desk for long'.**

Bob started out in the indoor plant business in the 90s and has been with Frenchams' Brisbane office since it opened in 1999. He notes that there are good people throughout the company, and low staff turnover, saying 'Something must be going right!'

And the best thing about his work? 'Putting plants in and seeing how happy the clients are. It's amazing to go from a sterile office and see what a difference plants makes.' 🌱



## Useful tips

**The major key elements for growing indoor plants are moisture, light, soil mixture, temperature, fertilizer and pest control.**

Of these, light is probably the most important: through the process of photosynthesis, plants convert the energy from light, to chemicals which fuel plant growth.

The duration of light exposure is as important as the intensity. Quality exposure of 8–16 hours is ideal for most indoor plants. The length of time that light is provided will determine how the plant grows. Positioning indoor plants near windows is the best idea and remember, for every metre a plant is placed away from direct light, the intensity is reduced by 15%. Look out for tips on artificial lighting in our next issue! 🌱



[www.frenchams.com.au](http://www.frenchams.com.au)

*Plants at work!*

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