

Humans of the Melbourne Market

David Dawood



I finished my final year of high school in 1989 and was immediately drafted to do my army service. The Iran-Iraq war had ended in 1988 and the

Gulf War was in early 1991. With so much war going on I decided that I would try to make a better life elsewhere and so I left in 1991 and went to Turkey. From there I was fortunate to be able to come to Australia as a refugee in October 1992.

I belong to the Chaldean Catholic church and in Melbourne the church was led by Father Emmanuel Khoshaba who became famous for helping refugees from Iraq to settle in Melbourne. Once he heard about you, he would put your name and details up on the church notice board and someone would come forward to act as your sponsor. That's how I came here.

When I arrived I worked in various jobs. One of those was working for a company building houses. But in Iraq our family had been business people and that was what I really



wanted to do. We had run a clothing store there but I thought that in Australia we would do better with a fruit and vegetable shop. So in 2002 when my brother Zoheer joined me in Melbourne, that's what we did—we started the Green Apple. Two more brothers joined us from Iraq and our business has grown. We are still in the same shopping centre but have moved from one small shop to a bigger shop and now in 2020 we are opening in an even larger space.



I do the buying so my day starts around three o'clock in the morning at the market in Epping. It's not just about buying. I love the produce and it's the culture of the

fruit and vege market that I love. I talk to my friends, have a coffee, maybe some breakfast. The people in the business are good people. You have to be

fair and develop a good reputation. I can pay with cheques because people trust me. They know I am good with my payment.

I leave the market around eight o'clock. Then I might take a rest or see how things are at the shop. And now I have another business to look in on.

Together with my three brothers and another partner we have established an Iraqi restaurant called Al Tanoor in Roxburgh Park just near my shop. It's

beautiful food and has become a popular place. One man I know has family in



Ballarat and whenever they come to Melbourne, they always meet at my restaurant.