

MBL NEWS

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2016

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST CO-OPERATIVE ESTABLISHED 1905



Proudly posing outside his refreshed Goodwood shop, Dave Armstrong pulls no punches, "My time here has been the hardest of my career.

"It has been full-on bringing in big changes, but overall it has been a good three years."

Dave bought Goodwood Quality Meats from Mick Hammond who had built up an incredibly strong local following over 48 big years.

"Customers just didn't want to know me. I was a stranger in Mick's shop," says Dave, 42, who put his refreshment plans on ice for a year until he earned customers' trust.

But they're now firmly on his side, particularly after a massive past few months was highlighted by the shop attaining the highest gold standard in AMIC's Awards for Excellence.

As well, shop stalwart Paul Suleyman was

named as an AMIC Master Butcher, and Luke Leyson won API's Creative Pork competition.

And then apprentice Caleb Sundqvist's skills earned him a ticket to Ireland for the World Butchers Apprentice Challenge in 2018.

Customers have again taken ownership of "their store," queuing to get in on Saturday mornings.

Full story pages 6 - 7

MBL Christmas Trading Hours

Please note showroom counter sales and customer / members pick up will be closed early on the days detailed below.



These hours WILL NOT affect customer / members deliveries, however phone orders will be closed in line with these trading hours.

Country deliveries will be limited by regional transport timetables.

DATE	TRADING STATUS	TIME
Friday Dec 23	Early close	8.30am to 12noon
Monday Dec 26	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tuesday Dec 27	CLOSED	CLOSED
Friday Dec 30	Early close	8.30am to 1.30pm
Monday Jan 2	CLOSED	CLOSED

All other weekdays are normal trading hours

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Barossa smallgoods legend Graham Linke says an amazing outpouring of community support has carried him through recent dark days.

Without it, he says he may well have retired after 62 distinguished years at Linke's Central Meat Store, Nuriootpa.

This would have meant the end in the Barossa of a traditional German way of making smallgoods which dates back hundreds of years.

Graham, 77, was blindsided by health authorities' precautionary recall of some of his mettwurst and salami products in late September.

It was the first time a product had been recalled in the 88-year history of the Linke family business, which has spanned three generations.

Health authorities said although there had been no reports of illness, the safety of the manufacturing process could not be verified.

They said the recall of Linke's

Graham stunned by community support



Graham Linke emerges from the smoke of one his blackened smokehouses.

garlic, plain and brandy mettwursts, and Linke's pepperoni, was a precautionary measure while "investigations continued."

After a three-day ban on the sale of the Linke's products, the all-clear was given and Graham resumed production.

He says he will be forever grateful for the rousing community response which encouraged

him to keep going.

"The support by people not just in the Barossa but around Australia was amazing. It was quite incredible, really," Graham says.

"It was the thing that kept Lola (his wife) and I going..."

"There were many phone calls and people kept coming into the shop to support us."

He recalls walking into a Barossa supermarket which he supplies. He was "mobbed" by concerned deli staff.

"Seven or eight girls work there and they we all very supportive. Then they gave me a Thank You card," he says.

Graham says such strong community support was the big "positive" to emerge from the worst time of his career.

Ray, Wakefield Grange star

Kangaroo meat pioneer Ray Borda and innovative Yankalilla butchery Wakefield Grange won major honours at the SA Food Industry Awards.

Ray, the founder of Macro Meats, won the Leader Award for "establishing and guiding the growth of the kangaroo meat industry."

Wakefield Grange, owned and run by Nathon and Sophie Wakefield, won two awards for businesses with less than 15 fulltime employees – in the Primary Producer and Sustainability categories.

Judges praised the business for "50% year on year

growth, successful life balance structure, high animal welfare standards, and contained energy usage and waste management."

Sophie Wakefield says, "We're very humbled to win one award let alone two – it's amazing."

They are particularly pleased to be recognised for their sustainably farmed and butchered local beef and lamb.

"The sustainability award means lot. We're passionate about sustainability, animal welfare and the whole nose to tail philosophy," she says.

BEEF'S AT CROSSROADS

Consumers reject higher prices

Customer tolerance of rising beef prices has effectively reached its limit, jeopardising beef's traditional role as the mainstay of butcher shops.

Most butchers are selling less beef as consumer pushback kicks in, and say there is little room for further retail price rises to recoup increasing wholesale costs.

Retail beef prices have risen by about 25% in the past 12 months despite butchers squeezing their margins in a bid to avert a consumer backlash.

Some butchers say further retail price rises will turn more people away from beef and once lost, it may be hard to win them back, resulting in significant change to the traditional Australian diet.

MLA says Australia's beef consumption has dropped by an average of 3kg per person in the last financial year.

It says consumers responded to rising prices by spending the same dollars on beef at the shop counter and accepting less in the way of kilograms.

But butchers say consumer "tolerance" has

reached its limit as the popularity of cheaper proteins, led by chicken and pork, grows at pace.

This has been reflected by beef being moved sideways in many shop displays as butchers allocate more prominent space to chicken and pork.

(An anomaly is the rise of shops featuring out-front dry ageing cabinets for customers to watch their name-tagged local beef age. These beef lovers don't quibble at paying \$60 per kilogram.)

Australian Bureau of Statistics' indicative retail beef prices averaged \$19.34 per kilogram retail weight in the September quarter, up \$1.58/kg year on year.

In comparison, chicken averaged \$5.30/kg, back 19c/kg year-on-year.

MLA says the surge in cattle prices has outpaced the increase at the retail level, with butchers absorbing part of the rises for fear of a customer backlash.

The beef producer share of the retail dollar has now exceed 50% for the first time since records began in 1998, averaging 51.25% in the September quarter, MLA says.

Butchers say this is largely lost on consumers who, although expressing support for farmers, are now pushing back hard against rises in retail prices.

Chairman of AMIC's SA Retail Council, Trevor Hill, says, "Butchers realise customers have a budget as well and the next purchase they make may well be in the supermarket."

"Instead, butchers are tackling the supermarket discounting with better service, a greater range and higher quality cuts of meat.

"We can tell customers the story behind where the product has come from, how to cook it and we know our customers as individuals so can offer quick and easy, cost-effective meals suited to their particular needs."

How one butcher's customers perceive beef differently

McLaren Vale butcher Ian Shaw (right) is seeing two very different customer reactions to rising beef prices – some customers gladly pay \$60 per kilogram for dry aged beef but others refuse to pay \$1/kg more for beef sausages, switching to other varieties.

He recently began using a dry ageing cabinet which is four times bigger than his old one because he couldn't keep up with demand.

"If you're paying \$60 for T-bones, you want to know that you are getting a quality product and maybe you want to know its story," says Ian, who sources beef from local Fleurieu Peninsula farms.

"I can tell them exactly where their beef comes from and how I dry aged it for three weeks here in the shop in full view of customers.

"Conversely, I use local beef for sausages and as the wholesale price rose, I put up my price by \$1/kg. Many people didn't like it so I dropped the price back.

"Some people regard a beef sausage as just a beef sausage and they'd just as sooner



buy cheap ones at Coles next door.

"Others saw my beef sausages displayed next to my other varieties which were cheaper and they bought those instead. They didn't see any extra value in beef."

Beef sausage sales rose again when Ian dropped the price to match his other varieties.

* A full profile on Ian's flourishing business is across pages 8 and 9.

SA's Pink Butcher success sets a national template

SA's pioneering Pink Butcher campaign has been declared a solid success, with organisers confident it will grow to become a valued national promotion.

About 80 butcher shops across SA turned their shops – and themselves – pink in the month of October to raise funds for a leading breast cancer charity.

The total amount raised had not been calculated when MBL News went to Press, however the biggest single sum raised was \$21,000 by TJ's Pirie Gourmet Meats, Port Pirie.

"It's quite amazing what Tony Marshcall and his team have done in Port Pirie," says AMIC's Paul Sandercock.

Paul says the inaugural statewide campaign achieved good results, creating a solid template for the future.

"About 80 shops took part which is a good number, although we initially hoped about 120 would be involved," Paul says.

"We're happy overall with the promotion. Plenty of people donned the pink as an exercise in community involvement, and customers generally responded well.

"Participating shops will get a certificate, for display, stating their involvement and the amount they raised."

Paul says the initial success in SA augers well for Pink Butcher developing into a national promotion.

He will provide a full report to AMIC's national office, which sees the SA initiative as having potential for wider application.

Victoria followed SA's Pink Butcher lead this year on a small scale, and Tasmania will follow suit in 2017.

"The Victorians only launched Pink Butcher in September at the Royal Melbourne Show and only about six shops did the October promotion," Paul says.

"However, Pink Butcher in Victoria will get more up to speed in 2017 and I'm already working with Tasmania to start next year.

"It's a great concept that strikes a chord with people and I'm pretty confident Pink Butcher will become a national promotion.

"It provides an excellent opportunity for butcher shops to demonstrate their important connections to local communities."

Pink Butcher is linked to Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) which is one of four breast cancer charities operating in Australia.

It directs funds to women and families affected by breast cancer.

BCNA says it is delighted with the success of SA's first Pink Butcher campaign, which was devised by Adelaide butcher Rodney Sims as a statewide promotion. His wife Pat is a breast cancer survivor.

Although AMIC drove the promotion, BCNA in Melbourne issued promotional and other supporting material to butchers, and received raised funds directly from shops.

MBL contributed by subsidising specially-made pink caps and aprons for participating butcher shops.



Craig Pitcher says customers again rallied at Seaford Gourmet Meats.



Windsor Meats, Malvern, was inventive in raising \$5,096 for Pink Butcher, says part owner Sam Burt (above).

"We didn't know what to expect but we're very pleased," says Sam.

Sausage sizzles were held out front on Saturdays, and the shop donated \$1 from every 1kg of popular zucchini meatballs sold.

Tickets, at \$5, were sold for "the ultimate BBQ" involving Lou Zammit and Sam manning a barbecue for 10 at the winner's home.

They will provide meat, salads and dessert – and they'll even stay to clean up afterwards.

The raffle was won by a customer who purchased "25 or 30" tickets.



BLACKOUT WARNING

Butchers urged to check insurance

Major seafood wholesaler and retailer Craig McCathie strongly urges butchers to check their business insurance policies after his \$100,000 hit from SA's statewide blackout.

Craig's The Fresh Place at Port Lincoln was without power for 48 hours during the blackout in late September, causing him problems which are still continuing.

With stock threatening to spoil, Craig scrambled to get 26 pallets of frozen seafood on a refrigerated truck to Adelaide but he still had to dump stock worth many thousands of dollars.

After a complex process, he now expects insurance will cover his \$100,000 loss involving loss of stock, loss of trade and associated costs, including staff overtime.

"I'm so relieved that insurance looks like coming through, otherwise we could have gone under," says Craig, one of MBL's biggest seafood Members, with 27 staff.

As Eyre Peninsula's biggest seafood supplier, he services more than 100 businesses, including leading restaurants in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne.

Craig says of the blackout of September 28-29, "It was a harrowing experience – it was like Armageddon here."

"There was no communication from authorities about when the power would come back. I was panicking..."

"It was the worst business crisis I've ever faced. I couldn't sleep; I felt sick. My wife Sandy was the same."

"Port Lincoln has its own power plant which has always – for 50 years – kicked in when we lose power from the grid, but this time it tripped out."

Craig urges butchers and other MBL Members without their own generators to review their insurance policies.

"They obviously need to ensure that their stock is insured, along with the assorted costs of emergency actions caused by blackouts," he says.

"They should check their policies for business interruption and the length of coverage - a full 48 hours like we suffered here may not be in their coverage."

"I'm no doomsdayer but nothing seems to be being done to stop extended blackouts from happening again."

"SA's increased use of renewable energy is very shaky, and we can't rely on power from Victoria where another coal power station has closed."

"You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know it will get worse."

Craig says MBL Members need to calculate how long they can go without power, and develop a plan to cope during extended blackouts.

"They need a plan. Do they have a generator? Can they get one in a blackout? Will they be quick enough to get one because everyone will want one," he says.

Craig says Port Lincoln businesses have not needed their own emergency generators because the town's power station is meant to kick in when the State supply stops.

For the first time in memory, the town's power station also failed on September 28-29, leading to supermarkets, restaurants and hotels dumping spoiled food.

"I tried to get a generator during the blackout but they were all gone, and all refrigerated trucks were gone," Craig says.

"I finally got a trucking firm to come from Adelaide and take back pallets of frozen stock for storage."

"We bought it all back from Adelaide two days later but we had to reject some of it."

"Sorting out the insurance paperwork has been really time consuming and quite complex, but luckily I had ticked all the right boxes when renewing the policy."

"Now there's more bad news – I've been told my power charges are about to double, going up by another \$16,000 a year."

"We pay too much for power and supply is not guaranteed. I hope people think of this at the next State election."



Craig McCathie and wife Sandy Harder.

WINNING GOODWOOD

Customers didn't want to know Dave Armstrong - now they queue to get in

Inspired butcher Dave Armstrong arrived at Goodwood Quality Meats with rich experience from working in several States and owning five shops around Adelaide.

He had a hat full of good ideas to gradually introduce to the shop while maintaining its long tradition for the finest meat backed by top service and advice.

Mick Hammond had been at the shop for an amazing 48 years, becoming a local institution with fiercely loyal customers. He watched babies become customers who in turn brought in their children.

Dave didn't realise the depth of Mick's "shadow" until he took over in 2013.

"The customers just didn't want to know me," says Dave, 42, who still clearly feels the unexpected hurt.

"Mick had been here for nearly 50 years, but they didn't know me and they didn't trust me. I was a stranger in 'Mick's shop.'

"My background was buying rundown shops and improving them. Customers could see immediate improvement and say, 'Gee, you're doing a great job!'

"Here, it was more like: 'We don't know if you're as good as Mick.'

"People used to pull aside Paul (Suleyman),



Six of the best.... Goodwood's team of (back from left) Brad Schubert, Caleb Sunqvist and Alex Brown. Front row: Luke Leyson, Paul Suleyman and Dave Armstrong.

whom they knew well, to quietly ask him if I was any good. Was I all right?

"Customer loyalty is massive here and it's a good thing – now that I've been accepted.

"My three years here have been the hardest of my career, but we're seeing results now. It has been full-on and that's good.

"Business is good. We are run off our feet on Saturday mornings, with people happy to queue in the street to get in."

Dave says the shop needed refreshing when he bought it but he wasn't game to begin making changes for 12 months until customers trusted him.

"We looked to refresh the facade - you can't have the front of your business looking tired," he says.

"People here like tradition so we used hand-crafted timber for the front, giving an old fashioned look while maintaining our brand.

"We kept the traditional big window display, adding overhead refrigeration coils to give a blanket of cold air.

"The window display is absolutely paramount. With its bright lights, it's an attraction at a time when many shops have done away with them.

"We brought the butchers out from the back so that they could be seen by customers and for interaction.

"We also brought out a dry ageing cabinet, which has attracted a lot of attention, and we've started making smallgoods.

"We've introduced a full range of smallgoods and charcuterie, from hams and mettwurst to jerky.

"We now do over 30 lines.



“We’re expanding out back next year to increase processing and refrigeration areas, and to add a commercial kitchen and a clean room where we can pasteurise and pack smallgoods.”

Growing up on the family farm near Victor Harbor, Dave’s first job was as a cleanup boy at the local Bi-Lo supermarket. He was 13.

A few years later, he moved 150km from home for an apprenticeship at Prime Cut Butchers, Salisbury.

“After 15 months, I moved to work for my brother Philip Armstrong at Campbelltown City Meats where I completed my apprenticeship and became a qualified smallgoods maker,” Dave says.

“I started managing this shop as a third year apprentice. Working with older and more experienced tradesmen, I soon learnt that I had to lead by example to receive respect.”

At 21, Dave opened his first business, Athelstone Quality Meats.

“The business was doing well until I became the target of an aggressive supermarket trying to put me out of business,” he says.

“I ended up selling the shop, realising I had so much more to learn. I needed more life experience, so I travelled.”

Dave spent three years working and learn-

‘My three years here have been the hardest of my career, but we’re seeing results now. It has been full-on’ – Dave Armstrong

ing in Sydney, Melbourne and Katherine (NT) before returning to Adelaide to work for Turners.

“I worked as a relief butcher. Working in all the Turners stores allowed me to understand business in different socio economic areas,” he says.

Stints at Moo Boo Meats, at Foodland as a meat manager, and at Old Town Reynella Butchers followed before he bought Flagstaff Superior Meats.

“I spent three years at Flagstaff and then I took on a business partner to buy a shop at Port Canal shopping centre, Port Adelaide,” Dave says.

“We built it from a bankrupt business to



doing \$16,000 turnover weekly.

“We also purchased Southgate Butchers, doubling its turnover in three months before we dissolved the partnership.”

Dave then took over and improved Taste Quality Meats at Findon, and in 2013 he bought Goodwood Quality Meats.

He says all the experience he gained over the years put him in good stead for Goodwood, but he singles out his time at one of Melbourne’s best known shops, Jonathan’s at Collingwood.

“It was a fantastic experience. I learnt so much about high-end shops and giving people a shopping experience,” he says.

“The shop was set up by Jonathan Gianfreda, an Italian with an Australian finish. He had sensational pizzazz; he was larger than life.

“He maintained a tradition of excellence. Charcuterie was his specialty; his sausages were legendary.

“He had three chefs behind the counter

Continued page 10



FOOD BUDDIES

Ian Shaw drives McLaren Vale's model alliance of butchers, chefs and farmers

McLaren Vale butchers and chefs are actively sharing skills and ideas, broadening their knowledge and having fun in the process.

Ellis Butchers owner Ian Shaw (above) credits the alliance with underpinning the ongoing success of his business, while chefs say their new-found butchery knowledge provides multiple benefits.

"Just about all my friends are chefs – it's just worked out that way," says Ian, 39, a "foodie" who rejoices in McLaren Vale's status as the food and wine hub of Fleurieu Peninsula.

He relishes the area's culinary vibe, forging



a strong alliance with chefs as well as with local farmers who grow beef and lamb to requested specifications.

Five years ago, Ian's business comprised 60% retail and 40% wholesale. While retail remains strong, he says wholesale to restaurants now accounts for 60% of his trade.

"McLaren Vale is pumping with restaurants, and some of the ones we supply promote the name Ellis Butchers – we work together, we are intertwined," he says.

Ian's leading customers include the Salopian Inn, d'Arry's Verandah at d'Arenberg winery, Ellen Street Restaurant, The Elbow Room, The Currant Shed, The Kitchen Door at Penny's Hill winery, and The Retreat at Chapel Hill winery.

He also supplies two other award winning businesses - McLaren Vale Bakery and the Victory Hotel.

"We are proud to be part of the Fleurieu community. Working with chefs and farmers as much as we can is part of the rich food culture here," he says.

"The wholesale side of the business has grown organically, with the chefs steering us that way."

"Chefs like Peter Reschke and Nigel Rich, who were partners at d'Arry's Verandah, taught me exactly what was wanted and then I'd work directly with farmers to produce it."

"I encourage my butchers to occasionally go to the restaurants for lunch, to talk with the chefs, have a glass of wine and experience it all, so they understand what their work here leads to."

"In turn, chefs come here to watch us bone beef and then do it themselves. They do whatever we do, including making sausages." >

> "If chefs are developing a dish, I encourage them to come into the shop and talk with us about it - we can work together and everyone benefits."

Chefs can also play a role in developing products for the butchery.

A recent example was the creation of a Vietnamese style chicken burger, which features external pieces of coconut for visual intrigue.

Ian got the basic idea when visiting Vietnam, and chef Peter Hogg helped him develop it. The burger won AMIC's Best Burger competition for SA this year.

"This burger's a good seller – we always have a tray of them on display. We sell 20kg to 30kg of them every week without pushing them," Ian says.

Also this year, Ian won two SA Sausage King titles - in the Australian Lamb category for his Country Style Lamb sausage and in Continental for Italian Pork & Chilli.

He will represent SA in the national finals of Sausage King and Best Burger in Hobart in February.

Ian did his apprenticeship with David Reynolds at Foodland Goolwa. "It was back in the days when some supermarkets still did their own boning and made sausages," he says.

"By the time I was 19 or 20, I was into fast cars and was generally running amok. Dad suggested I go and see some of the world. I went to Britain.

"I stayed with relatives in Yorkshire but there was no butchery work available. Then I saw a job advertised for work in a boning room in Perth, Scotland."

Ian spent a year in Perth, working his way up from trimming to boning. Hardened workmates quickly dubbed him Skippy, but



Darren Klippel with the chicken "patties" that won SA's Best Burger award.

he says more often than not he was referred to as "the daft Aussie bastard."

"My time in Scotland gave me experience of what it takes to work hard. I worked 12-13 hours a day, five days a week. I'd never worked that long - it was full-on, toughening me up mentally as well as physically," he says.

"It was freezing. The temperature sometimes dropped to minus 18 degrees – or minus 30 degrees with wind chill.

"Holding cold hooks with one hand while cutting was awful. I had to soak my hands in warm, salty water morning and night for relief; I now have light arthritis in my hands."

Ian used his boning room wages to travel in Europe and North America. Back home, he took a job at Ellis Butchers – and hasn't left.



The Best Burger and two Sausage King trophies are prominently displayed.

The McLaren Vale "institution" was started in 1954 as a stand-alone shop by Lloyd Ellis, who later handed the reins to sons Jim and John. They moved it to a central shopping complex in 1987. It has been owned by Ian and his wife Emma since 2002.

Ian says, "I worked for Jim and John for a few years before Dad suggested I talk to them about a partnership. I approached Jim who initially wasn't interested.

"But two years later, in 2000, Jim had a change of heart and I became a partner before buying the business outright in 2002, when I was 26.

"Jim still lives in the area and calls into the shop all the time. He has always been a character – he's very outgoing. Jim knows everyone around McLaren Vale and everyone knows Jim.

"He was a very good mentor for me in my early years, teaching me all about customer service."

When Ian bought the business, it was on

Continued page 11

Time to brush up on jokes

Humour sells – and that's no joke.

Butchers have always been regarded as friendly types, often big on banter and willing to share the odd joke with like-minded customers.

Now it's official – humour is good for business.

A new study has found the use of humour helps keep customers more engaged and satisfied, boosting sales.

University of NSW business school leader Dr Christine Mathies and fellow researchers quizzed 537 people about how they felt after being engaged in clowning antics or jokey remarks.

A majority said they enjoyed the fun which made them feel more relaxed and open to sales advice.

They recorded high shopping satisfaction levels, and most said they would return to the shop in question.



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WINNING GOODWOOD

From page 7

with seven butchers.

"Such was the volume, on Saturday mornings two of us would run back and forth to the back to bring more products into the shop.

"Wine by the glass was sold on Saturdays in the laneway, enjoyed with Jonathan's charcuterie. He was ahead of his time."

Taking a leaf from his varied past, Dave has sent several of his Goodwood butchers on country shop exchanges and to visit some of Sydney's best shops.

Several have visited Jonathan's as well as Meat Smith in Melbourne as an introduction to charcuterie.

"We want to expand our charcuterie. We plan to bring a master of charcuterie to work here for two years so we can learn French ways," Dave says.

"It's something nobody else does in Adelaide where it's more German, Italian and Spanish influences.

"We're moving into a UK high street operation – with a French accent.

"A local French chef comes into the shop to do

Creative Luke wins challenge

Luke Leyson (right) has made a big impression by creating a small pork roast which shone in an APL competition and is proving a hit at Goodwood Quality Meats.

His Kingston Pork Fillet won the SA section of the Pork Butcher Innovation Challenge, ahead of a Mustard Stuffed Pork Fillet by Luke Moody of Leabrook Quality Meats.

Luke Leyson's creation then finished a close second in the recent national final.

"I made it to fill a gap in what we offer here," says Luke Leyson, 24.

"We have different small roasts for one or two people but we didn't have a pork one so I did some experimenting."

"It's basically a butterflied fillet with cheese and a thin layer of chorizo layered across the top."

work. We show him butchery and he gives us ideas.

"I'm active on Instagram and Facebook forming relationships with English and French butchers, swapping recipes."

"What I'm seeing is truly brilliant but their introduction to our shop will have to be slow and steady to be successful."

Dave has hired a part-time chef, Brooke Belle, for developing homemade condiments and charcuterie products including terrines, rillettes, pate, comfits and pies.

"We have been promoting the paddock to plate philosophy, always striving for top quality SA produce," he says.

"Customers have growing expectations, wanting to know what they are buying and where it comes from."

"We've had a great response to bringing a dry ageing fridge out front for customers to see."

"Most importantly, we are still old fashioned and offer high quality service."

"Delivering on quality time after time is essential, along with maintaining honesty and integrity."

"When we put a product on the scales in front of a customer, we treat it like gold – it's her food, her dinner tonight. We show respect."

"I like to put it in a bag, with the two handles up, and gently pass it to her while saying, 'Thanks very much.' It's the personal touch."

"Little things make a big difference."



Richard's 'meaty' inspiration

Adelaide artist Richard Maurovic's fascination with the meat game continues, exemplified by this work titled Lamb Rump.

The painting, which was highly commended in the 2016 Fleurieu Food & Wine Art Prize, was among several with "meaty" themes at his exhibition at Hill Smith Gallery in November.

Richard, now 53, a former drover who worked at Gepps Cross saleyards, became a quadriplegic in a horse riding accident in 1986 and turned to painting.

He has been refining and developing his talents ever since, focusing on a super realist style. He takes photographs and



copious notes in the field and then returns to create his work in his Hyde Park studio.

He has featured in MBL News over the years, and one of his

paintings, showing assorted meat industry scenes, graced the cover of MBL's Centenary book.

His 2007 book *The Meat Game*

told the rich 90-year history of the Gepps Cross saleyards and abattoirs.

It was the largest single government employer in SA.

From page 9

street level but three years ago it was moved to a lower level of the shopping centre, next to Coles.

"We lost 30% of trade overnight when we were moved down here but it picked up again and we knew the wholesale side was growing," Ian says.

This year, Ian responded to space problems by taking over "half a shop" next door to expand the butchery from 133 square metres to 180 square metres.

"We have almost doubled the size of the cool area and deep freeze, and the expansion created space for an office and a small staff room," he says.

"The expansion has had a big impact for storage, including the hanging of beef."

"Our new dry ageing unit is four times bigger than before because we couldn't keep up with restaurant demand for dry aged beef."

"We used to do one or two bodies (of beef) a week and get the rest from cartons but we're up to five bodies since the price of beef went up because it works out relatively cheaper."

"Just a few minutes ago, I sold a lady two

FOOD BUDDIES

T-bones for \$30. If you're paying that price, you want to know that you are getting a quality product and maybe you want to know its story.

"I was able to tell her the beef came from a farm 15km down the road and I dry aged it for three weeks here in the shop."

"Dry ageing local beef in a large cabinet visible to customers is helping build our reputation as a destination shop."

Ian employs six fulltime butchers, two apprentices and two casuals. His shop manager is Tam Henderson, and the wholesale side is managed by Darren Klippel and Ashley Humphries.



"Our staff do a fantastic job – they are a terrific bunch," Ian says.

Ian sources his beef from across Fleurieu Peninsula through Dennis Thorpe, of Kangarilla, while his lamb suppliers include local grape grower Ben Lacey.

"At the moment, we're getting all our lamb from Ben who is just 3km away. In the cooler months, he puts them in the vineyards to eat the grass between the rows of vines," Ian says.

"When the vines start to shoot, he sends them to me via the Strathalbyn abattoir."

"Ben started doing this a few years ago with just 15 lambs; he produced 180 this year."

"I also source lamb from Austral and Bultarra saltbush at other times throughout the year."

Ian says he prides himself on consistency and reliability.

"When you return to Ellis Butchers, you know you'll receive meat of exactly the same quality as on your last visit," he says.

EPA praises MBL's environmental success

Wingfield comes up smelling like roses

The SA Government's Environment Protection Authority has praised MBL for our pro-active solutions to environmental problems at the Wingfield rendering plant.

Complex odour problems threatened the long-term future of the plant before MBL constructed an innovative bio-filter, which began operating seven years ago.

In a recent *EPA Monitor* monthly newsletter, EPA Executive Director Operations Andrew Wood commended MBL's "transformation" at Wingfield.

"This is not only good in terms of MBL's environmental performance and social licence to operate, but it has also been important to its bottom line and growth," Mr Wood said.

The *EPA Monitor* published MBL's story as an outstanding example of how businesses can overcome complex environmental issues.

After previously being told there was no solution available, MBL searched far and wide for answers before adopting innovative technology.

"We travelled to the east and to the west, and as far afield as New Zealand, visiting abattoirs, rendering plants, waste treatment plants and a large sewerage installation," says CEO Warren McLean.

"All had functioning and effective bio-filters, and it was obvious to us that if we could recreate what others had done, it would also work for us."

After much hard work and persistence, MBL's modern bio-filter was switched on in

mid-2009. It has been an unqualified success.

The EPA continues to be full of praise, stamping MBL as a responsible and responsive corporate citizen.

Here's the recent *EPA Monitor* story in full:

“Master Butchers Co-operative Ltd (MBL) was established in 1905 to supply butchers with merchandise and ice, and to market hides.

MBL expanded 35 years later

through the acquisition of land on Grand Junction Rd at Wingfield which had been used to hold cattle before being herded to the Gepps Cross saleyards.

This led to the creation of MBL Proteins which saw the development of the co-operative's first rendering plant on the southern end of its Wingfield site.

MBL now operates three protein recycling plants, two on the same Wingfield site and the other 225km away at Keith.

Over 100,000 tonnes of protein

waste is recycled each year, producing 40,000 tonnes of high quality protein meals and tallow including meals for poultry, pigs, pet food and aquaculture.

MBL CEO Warren McLean said the Wingfield facility which became the catalyst for environmental sustainability is a far cry from MBL's first rendering plant.

"This original facility at Wingfield became known as the 'plant from hell,' emitting strong odours which by today's standards are totally unacceptable," Mr McLean said.

"But it did reflect the isolated location and an absence of environmental planning imperatives during that period of our state's industrial history."

For many years, the Wingfield property had no neighbours and was surrounded by stock paddocks and vacant land.

But in more recent years, surrounding land became progressively developed to a stage where commercial and residential properties surrounded the site.

"With this progress came the added responsibility for our environmental performance which we had to address to secure the stability of the business into the future," Mr McLean said.

"Finding a solution to the odour problem was essential to allow MBL Members to continue to own a viable business and turn their waste into reusable products."

MBL remains committed to its environmental program with its next project focussing on cleaning up its waste water stream.



Warren McLean pictured by a section of the Wingfield plant's innovative bio-filter soon after it came into operation in 2009.