

## KEY CHANGES TO MBL BOARD

- **George Ujvary is our new Chairman**
- **Paul Sandercock joins as a Director**

George Ujvary brings a wealth of experience at multi levels of the food industry to his new role as Chairman of MBL.

The Managing Director of expanding Olga's Fine Foods joined the MBL Board in 2015 and takes over as Chairman from Bruce Carter who leaves the Co-op after 27 years in various executive roles.

The vacant position of Independent Director has been filled by Paul Sandercock, who is well known to MBL Members from his 23 years as AMIC's head in SA.

Paul's appointment will be up for ratification by the Members at the annual general meeting in November, in accordance with MBL rules.

The other members of MBL's four-man

Board are long-standing Director Paul Slape and David Culbert, of Holco.

George says, "It's a real honour to be elected as Chairman. I have some pretty big shoes to fill.

"I've been really passionate about the Co-op for many years and I look forward to working with the management team and the other Directors to advance the business.

"There are challenges, but MBL has good management and a good Board to continue to run the business well."

George says Bruce will be missed after contributing so much to MBL, firstly as



*New MBL Chairman George Ujvary.*

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**Nigel Rollbusch's the toast of Waikerie - see pages 4-5**

# KEY CHANGES TO MBL BOARD

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General Manager for 17 years and then as a Director and Chairman for over a decade.

“Bruce has been a key part of MBL for as long as I can remember. He has been a real stalwart for MBL and the wider industry,” George says.

“He has contributed a huge amount and it’s important that his contribution be recognised.

“There’s no doubt Bruce has left MBL in a far better position than when he first joined.”

Bruce began his working life as a butcher and worked in meat wholesale for many years.

He joined MBL as General Manager in 1991 from Metro Meat where he was the manager of the Murray Bridge plant, in charge of 500 employees.

He took the Co-op from a struggling marginal business to a strong butcher merchandise supply business and a serious renderer of their waste streams.

In April 2008 at age 65, Bruce handed the reins to MBL’s then Chief Financial Officer Warren McLean, who continues to head the management team as Chief Executive Officer.

Bruce joined the Board of MBL in late 2008. He was appointed Chairman in 2012, a role he occupied until March this year.

Warren says Bruce oversaw significant investment in recent years including:

- Purchasing a new warehouse
- Acquiring the Dalriada rendering business at Keith
- Purchasing and commissioning the Flo-Dry Low temperature rendering plant at Wingfield in 2010, and
- Purchasing and commissioning the Haarslev Low Temperature plant at Wingfield in 2016.

“During his time on the Board, Bruce oversaw significant investment decisions that have set the business up for the future,” Warren says.

“He leaves MBL after seeing the Co-op’s transformation into a significant player in the pet food ingredient business, with exports to North America.

“During his 27 years, he saw revenues grow from \$15 million to \$74 million last year.”

George brings broad experience to his role as Chairman. It was once written that he has enough food degrees, certificates and awards to wallpaper a hall.

He has sat on the Board of Food SA and its predecessor Flavour SA for a combined 10 years, and his Foodologist blog has long had a strong following.

George completed the Le Cordon Bleu Master of Arts in Gastronomy at Adelaide University, and for two years he lectured on product development at Le Cordon Bleu, Adelaide.



*Bruce Carter... gave MBL 27 years of sterling service.*

He has a Master of Business Administration degree, and he has led Olga’s, with a staff of about 30, to strong growth, particularly over the past five years.

In welcoming Paul Sandercock as Bruce’s replacement as Independent Director, George says Paul’s experience with governance issues and his knowledge of the retail sector would be valuable to MBL.

“Paul already enjoys really good relationships with our Members through his previous role at AMIC, putting him in good stead to work for MBL,” George says.

With Olga’s Fine Foods being an AMIC member, Paul has known and worked with George for many years.

“I had many dealings at Olga’s, including helping George with HR issues and training some of

his staff,” says Paul, a chef who ran his own restaurants.

“I’m very pleased to be appointed to the MBL Board; it’s quite exciting.

“I’ll be calling on my experience of running my own businesses as well as AMIC in SA.”

Already well versed in the retail side of the industry, Paul is busy gaining a thorough understanding of MBL’s proteins operations at Wingfield and Keith.

He says he didn’t fully understand the size and importance of the Proteins Division until he joined the Board but he’s quickly getting up to speed.

He recently enjoyed a Board tour of the Wingfield plant and says he looks forward to the annual Board meeting at Keith which includes a plant and property tour.



*Paul Sandercock... well known by MBL’s Membership.*

## MBL NEWS

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# APPRENTICES GET COOKING

A chef will instruct apprentice butchers in cookery skills, including how to make quality value added products and ready meals, as a key part of a new training package set to launch in Adelaide.

The aim is to arm young butchers with cookery knowledge to pass onto customers, and equip them on how to make quality products to compete with supermarkets.

Chef Ben Sharp (*pictured*), an experienced trainer of cooks, has teamed with AMIC Master Butchers Wilson Lowe and Dave Armstrong for the accredited Certificate III Course in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher).

Three quarters of the course will teach traditional butchery skills, with Wilson, an accredited trainer, visiting butcher shops for on-the-job training.

The rest of the course will be cookery-based, held by Ben at Career Employment Group's Adelaide Institute of Commercial Cookery in Pirie St, city.

Dave Armstrong will add his expertise to train apprentices in smallgoods making.

The course will begin in late April. The first apprentices will be from Brighton City Meats, followed by those from Skara Artisan Smallgoods and Bruce's Meats.

"We have gained all the necessary approvals to begin. This will be big, we see it having national potential," says Wilson, one of SA's most respected butchers.

"I've had the idea for about 10 years of making cookery a big part of training as a way to help future-proof the industry and I'm very pleased it's about to happen."

Ben says, "The response to this course has been very positive. Cooking skills are clearly something that have become important for modern butchers.

"We'll take butchery apprentices into our cooking facility and teach them to prepare and cook quality products and restaurant dishes.

"Apart from value adding, this knowledge will be valuable to butchers when guiding customers in the best cookery methods matched to specific cuts.

"At CEG, we have the track

record for delivering cookery training, and having two Master Butchers on board gives this new butchery course instant credibility."

Ben, who wrote a regular cooking column in MBL News in 2013, says course topics will include:

- Matching the correct cuts of meat to the correct method of cookery
- Techniques for cooking different cuts, the resting process and storage methodology
- Marinating, brining and smoking techniques
- The relationship between fats and moisture, and
- Making pates and terrines using bain marie and sous vide techniques, hygienic cooling and storage methodology.

"Butchery is not just cutting meat these days, it's about the whole experience. The custom-

er wants to know how to cook the purchased meat and how it will turn out," Wilson says.

"Apprentices need to be taught about cooking for value adding and this is where Ben Sharp and his team at CEG come in."

Wilson says he'd like to see butchers gaining cooking experience in restaurants and hotels, and chefs spending some time in butcher shops.

"Chefs think they know how to cut meat and butchers think they can cook. We can marry the two for everyone's benefit," he says.

Dave says, "Over the past 10 years or so, supermarkets have evolved (meal options) but independent butchers as an industry have not kept up.

"Cooking has now become such a big part of our industry that it needs to be a bigger part of training for young butchers coming through.

"Our industry is reaching out for this and we're pretty excited that this new training program is getting underway."

Ben says there are many similarities between chefs and butchers.

"Keeping up with both ever-changing industries takes passion and constant improvement," he says.



Dave Armstrong, chef Ben Sharp and Wilson Lowe.



# LIVING THE DREAM

## Given a rare second chance, Nigel storms to a stunning national Sausage King win

As a conversation starter, Riverland butcher Nigel Rollbusch (*pictured*) regularly asks customers, “How are you going? Living the dream?”

Nigel’s now the one living the dream following a remarkable run to win a national Sausage King crown as a relative newcomer to the competition.

He was originally eliminated from the Continental section after coming second in the SA final with his bratwurst sausages, as only State winners can progress to the national finals.

But months later in rare circumstances, the genial Waikerie butcher was called back to represent SA and he defied the odds to score a stunning national win.

The SA Continental competition had been won by Richard Gunner but, after he had put his business into voluntary administration, his AMIC membership lapsed and he was deemed ineligible for the national final.

Nigel, as SA runner-up, was given an unprecedented reprieve and he stormed to a victory which surprised even himself and made him the toast of Waikerie.

“It doesn’t really matter how I got to the final; it hasn’t diminished our achievement. We won! Winning a national competition is a big achievement for a small shop in a small country town,” says Nigel, 47.

“It’s a national award and the town has claimed ownership – in a sense, it has put Waikerie on the map.”

“We’re seriously looking at putting a big sign up on the (Sturt) Highway: ‘Home of the national Sausage King!’”



After working as a stock agent for several years, Nigel returned to retail butchery in August, 2016, to open Rollbusch Quality Meats in Waikerie.

“I’ve always enjoyed butchery and when this shop became available, I was keen to get back into retail after being out of it for many years,” he says.

His only experience in Sausage King was in 2017 and 2018, making his national triumph even more remarkable.

He used to make 15kg weekly of his winning bratwurst sausages, made from local pork and beef, but this rose to 120kg



*Nigel’s expanding trophy collection holds pride of place on the shop’s counter.*

➤ weekly as shop visitation soared thanks to the Riverland media embracing the good-news story.

The local media was quick to empathise that Nigel was the only South Australian to win an award at the AMIC national awards night in Fremantle in February.

Nigel was feted by Waikerie's favourite son, former Adelaide Crows champion Mark Ricciuto, on his Triple M radio show, sparking extra business for the butchery, including orders from Adelaide.

The shop has about eight staff in various capacities. Michael Reichstein, Graeme Ziggler and Barry Strefford are qualified butchers while Nigel's son Alex, 20, is a third-year apprentice with a talent for developing recipes, and Matt Avery is a new apprentice.

Seeing the benefits of Sausage King, Nigel first entered in 2017 and his bratwurst sausage came third in the State Continental category.

He entered again in 2018. This time, his bratwurst was Continental runner-up to Richard Gunner's Italian Pork & Fennel sausage, but Nigel was happy to win the SA Poultry title for his Turkey, Spinach, Cheese, Bacon & Cumquat sausage.

The Poultry win qualified him for the national final and he organised a four-day trip to Fremantle with his wife Toni and their twin daughters Jess and Erin, 16.

But later the trip was made doubly worthwhile when he was told he would also be flying the SA flag in Continental.

"I thought I had the best chance in Poultry. Even if I got third, I would have been over the moon but that was not to be," Nigel says.

"After the minor placegetters were



*Like father, like son... Nigel with son Alex, 20, an enthusiastic third year apprentice.*



*Sales of local fruit and vegetables have helped boost the shop's turnover by a third.*

announced in Continental, I thought that was it and I was feeling happy enough to take home two certificates.

"I was fairly new to Sausage King. I had been out of retail for years; I would have been happy to take home two certificates.

"I was absolutely stunned when my name was read out (as Continental winner). It was a great feeling; I was a little overwhelmed, a bit like winning lotto."

Nigel supplies the sausages to local establishments including the Waikerie and Loxton hotels, the Renmark Club, Salt and Pepper Catering at Berri, and Banrock Station Wine Centre at Kingston on Murray.

He also supplies two local bakeries, including one which wraps a lighter version of the winning bratwurst sausage in pastry.

"We make a version which is not as coarse and has a thinner skin for use on breakfast menus and for a bakery to wrap in pastry," Nigel says.

Raised on a Riverland farm, Nigel began his apprenticeship at age 17 at a small Loxton shop but he couldn't complete his training as the shop closed and couldn't find placement elsewhere.



*Installation of 100 solar panels has reduced the shop's electricity bill by two-thirds.*

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# Duane puts his own stamp on a shop he helped run for 15 years

## ADVANCING A LEGACY



MEL and DUANE WILLIAMS

In six emotional and surreal months of 2016, Duane Williams lost his best mate and purchased his busy butchery in a major shopping mall.

He took ownership of Australia Fare Butcher which was developed by Barry Fitzgerald at Westfield Tea Tree Plaza from 1997.

Duane was Barry's trusty offsider there for 15 years. The Modbury shop flourished under their dual guidance and they became best mates.

Then out of the blue, Barry was diagnosed with an advanced tumour on his brain stem. He died within six months, in November, 2016, aged 60.

"Barry had time to sort out his affairs and he asked me to take over the business, saying he didn't want to sell it to anyone else," Duane says.

"He said he wanted the shop to continue; he said only I could keep running it like we had run it.

"I didn't know what to say; it was a big shock. I thought long and hard, taking a few months to eventually accept the offer to continue Barry's legacy."

Two years later, the business, staffed by eight, continues to tick along strongly, ideally placed next to a large Woolworths



Barry Fitzgerald in MBL News in 2013.

supermarket and close to a flash new food court.

"It's hard work and there are always challenges, but we're pleased that we took over," Duane says.

Barry hired Duane in 2002. Duane soon became Barry's right-hand man. The best mates regularly played golf.

"Everything changed in 2016. Barry didn't seem himself. He didn't seem fully coordinated, and one morning at work he had trouble drinking some iced coffee," Duane says.

"The drink went everywhere, but he didn't want a fuss and continued working.

"Then soon after, in June or July 2016, we were playing golf and Barry lost coordination and balance; he stumbled around and couldn't do anything.

"I insisted that I get him to hospital. He had a tumour on the brain stem. >

➤ They couldn't do anything because it was too advanced. He died a few months later."

Barry did his apprenticeship at Woolworths and worked in regional SA and interstate.

He spent six years as an MBL rep from 1985, and he ran three northern suburbs shops before moving to Tea Tree Plaza.

He built Australia Fare Butcher into a shop with high turnover, building trust with a loyal customer base.

When it became time to pass the baton, Barry immediately turned to Duane who previously ran his own shop at Taperoo before working for several wholesalers.

Duane says, "In many ways, it was like it was my shop. I knew it well, being the main cutter and doing all the ordering.

"I ran the place two days a week when Barry had his days off. I ran it when he went on holidays, and I ran it for months when he was in hospital.

"But the key to buying the business was my wife Mel deciding to leave her good public service job to join me here, running the front counter so I could concentrate on working out back with three other butchers."

While Barry was pleased with Duane and Mel's decision to take over, he first wanted to increase certainty over a new lease with Westfield.



Mel Williams runs the front counter.

Barry called on the experience of Bruce's Meat owner Trevor Hill, the Chairman of AMIC's SA Retail Council.

Duane says, "There was only about eight months of the standard five-year lease remaining but uncertainty surrounds our site here because Westfield plans to eventually further expand the food area.

"Trevor joined with us to negotiate with Westfield to take over the lease and extend it; Westfield was really good about it.

"We thank Trevor for his friendship and continuing support, not only for us but the wider meat industry."

Most of the practices started by Barry continue, but Duane and Mel have naturally

added their own touches, including organising the display by species.

The long display continues to be a magnet for shoppers. "With Woolworths next door, the display has to appeal. Customers buy with their eyes," Mel says.

"We strive to produce consistently good products at consistently fair prices, backed by friendly, personal service.

"We want customers to receive exactly what they want and to walk away smiling. We never say, 'Sorry, we don't have that.' We always offer an alternative.

"If a customer has a special request, such as steak cut to a certain thickness, the server presses a door bell for a butcher to come out. He fully takes over and the server moves to another customer."

Mel heads a team of four servers in red shirts, distinguishing them from the four butchers wearing black.

For Mel, it's been a return to retailing after a successful career as a federal public servant, working as a property manager.

"It was a big decision to leave a good fulltime job with a car but it has worked out well, allowing Duane to further his passion for butchering," she says.

"I've had earlier experience in retailing, starting at Target when I left school. I met

Continued page 10



Duane Williams... "It's hard work and there are always challenges, but we're pleased that we took over the business."



# Tradition continues

## RON CHERISHES PROUD HISTORY OF PORT AUGUSTA SHOP DATING TO 1903

Ron Surman has clear boyhood memories of standing on an old wooden soft drink box to do the washing up at the historic Port Augusta butcher shop which he now owns.

"I started here when I was only about 10, I did my apprenticeship here and I'll be here until retirement," says Ron, 56, of Port Augusta Meat Store.

Such unswerving devotion is a family trait as his father, Lloyd, also did his apprenticeship at the same shop and spent all his working life there, from 1953 to 2008.

And now Ron's son Ben, 25, is following suit with the aim to eventually own the shop which dates to 1903.

Four generations of the Fullerton family owned the business and four generations of the Surman family were employees before Ron Surman purchased the shop in 2008.

The history is colourful, from supplying ships at the once-busy wharves to holding the contract to supply the 1,000 men building the railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie in the 1910s.

In the late 1940s, the Fullartons landed the prized contract to supply the defence village of Woomera which had 6,500 people.

"This shop has a lot of history and tradition. I'm very conscious of it and it's something that we want to continue," Ron says.

"There was an uproar early this year when one of Port Augusta's jetties was demolished after falling into disrepair. It was 137 years old and a lot of people were upset at losing history.

"It's up to people to keep history alive, and that's what we're doing with this shop."

Originally called Fullarton's Meat Store, Ron changed the name to Port



A butcher serves Outback customers on the Tea And Sugar Train, in this 1958 photo from an MBL newsletter. Fullarton's supplied the famous train for many years.

> Augusta Meat Store when he purchased it 11 years ago.

He expanded out the back to double the space and began to systematically refresh the shop, including updating to new machinery from MBL.

“It was all a bit old when I took over so I had to buy just about everything new, from sausage machines to scales,” Ron says.

“As far back as anyone can remember, this shop has absolutely supported MBL.

“The MBL reps have been very good over the years, having good knowledge and bending over backwards to help.

“Growing up around the shop, I always thought I’d be a butcher and continue the family tradition. I started my apprenticeship with Dad when I was 16 in 1979.

“It wasn’t a hard decision; if I could turn back the clock, I’d do it all over again. I still love coming to work every day.”

Ron employs two butchers, including son Ben whom he trained, as well as an apprentice and three women who serve and prepare value added products.

“We still break carcasses but not as much as we used to do. We buy lamb from a property at Boolerloo and beef from Crystal Brook, sending it to a small local abattoir,” he says.

Ron supplies several hotels and sporting clubs, and has customers from Outback stations and towns including Oodnadatta, Woomera, Roxby Downs and Leigh Creek.

But while Ron runs a sizeable business, the past owners ran a vast operation which, at its peak, had five shops in Port Augusta, a large iceworks before refrigeration, and pastoral interests.

Retired butcher Geoff Fullerton was the Fullerton family’s fourth generation owner of the Commercial Road shop before selling it to Ron. He’s a history buff.

He says Port Augusta once had nine



wharves, rivalling Port Adelaide as a port. Butchers did good trade selling meat to the ships.

“My grandfather used to offer a leg of lamb as a spotter’s fee for anyone telling him when a ship arrived, so he could race down to get the business,” he says.

Lloyd Surman recalls, “A Chinese ship came in one time and bought every pig’s head and trotter in the town.”

Geoff’s great grandfather Robert Fullerton began at the Commercial Road shop in 1903. Robert died in 1911 and his sons - John, Edward and Robert - continued trading as Fullerton Bros until 1917.

“They won meat contracts to feed 1,000 men building the Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie railway line. Work started in 1912 and was completed in 1917,” Geoff says.

To cater for the contract, a special van was

loaded at Port Augusta with beef and sheep.

As well, livestock was loaded onto trucks for killing further along the 1,690km line.

Cattle were killed at the Cook siding while sheep were killed while the train was in motion. “It was big; they used 50 bullocks a week,” Geoff says.

“Edward and his brother Robert left the business in 1917 and my grandfather John, better known as Old Jack, began trading as Fullerton’s Meat Stores.

“We later supplied the Tea And Sugar train, holding the contract for many years.”

Geoff worked as butcher on the Tea And Sugar. “We’d hang three sheep carcasses at a time outside the train to dry as we went along,” he says.

Lloyd Surman says, “My uncle Frank, who started here in 1923, was a butcher on the Tea And Sugar when the war broke out in 1939.

“We had the meat contract to supply 700 servicemen based around Port Augusta during World War II.”

Geoff says Old Jack continued to expand its holdings and ran five shops after obtaining the contract in 1949 to supply the expanding Woomera defence town.

“This was a significant contract at a time when Woomera had a population of 6,500 compared with Port Augusta’s 3,000,” he says.



Lloyd Surman (left) and his son Ron have spent all their working lives in the one shop.

# LIVING THE DREAM

"I went back to working on the farm for six years, keeping my hand in by doing private kills and processing for farmers," he says.

"It always annoyed me that I didn't finish my apprentice so I joined Chris Schwarz at Hygienic Meats in Loxton. I finished my apprenticeship at 30."

Chris went on to establish Loxton Abattoir, selling Hygienic Meats to Nigel and another of his apprentices, Ashley Pfeiler.

After five years, Nigel moved on to become Meat Supervisor for Eudunda Farmers' three Big River Foodland supermarkets at Loxton, Barmera and Waikerie.

"I purchased livestock at Loxton market or directly off local farmers to supply the supermarkets. Slaughtering and processing was done at Loxton Abattoir," he says.

"In all, I bought livestock for 23 years as a butcher and then I had two years working as an Elders stock agent immediately before I bought my shop in Waikerie.

"All that I've done previously has prepped me for this business, giving me a lot of confidence.

"I'm working with the same industry contacts that I previously worked with.



Nigel Rollbusch

"I'm out buying every Wednesday. I get beef from three local feedlots and I buy local pigs and lambs. All are killed at Loxton Abattoir and we process in the shop.

"This region is a real hotspot for livestock. I buy from feedlots where the cattle are fed for a minimum of 120 days.

"The ageing process is also important. All our beef is hung for a minimum of three weeks. You lose a lot of weight but the flavour quality makes up for it."

Like all retail butchers, Nigel is continually battling rising costs.

"Overheads are so high, there's not a lot of cream left to keep the cat fat," he says.

"Like other butchers, we try not to waste anything. I'm always onto the boys about it.

"We invested in 100 solar panels for a 30kW system which has cut the electricity bill by two thirds."

More recently, Nigel expanded into the shop next door to include a big selection of local fruit and vegetables, milk, cheeses, condiments and packaged smallgoods.

He says the new section has gone "gang busters," increasing trade by 35%.

"People want quality local produce and this area is fantastic for it," he says.

"It's not rocket science – if you have quality, people will come from miles."

# ADVANCING A LEGACY

Duane when I worked at jewellery store here (Tea Tree Plaza).

"Having retail experience has been important; I didn't know much about meat at the start but I've learnt to pick it up very quickly.

"It's great to be working as a husband and wife team."

The store's huge range caters from customers of all types, from the young male barbecue set craving premium steak and gourmet burgers to older customers who want tripe, liver, ox tails, kidneys, brains and rabbits.

Duane says, "We are continuing Barry's insistence of stocking speciality things that supermarkets don't have.

"Older people want things like ox tails and ox hearts and come back for them; rabbit is now making a comeback," he says.

"We have suet for puddings, and we sometimes get in pig's heads for people.

"One bloke asked about huge turkey drumsticks for slow cooking. I chased it up and found I had to buy a minimum of five boxes of them for about \$200.

"The customer said, 'No problem, I'll eat them all year long.' So we keep them frozen here and he buys as he needs them.

"It's all about maintaining a reputation for customer service. We have a number of customers who have moved out of the area continuing to bulk buy."

Mel says, "A man from Yorke Peninsula comes in every three or four months and spends about \$1,800 each time.

"He comes to the counter and makes a selection; we vacuum pack much of what he buys in meal-specific amounts for freezing.

"We pack some things on trays. He's big on barbecues and we cut him huge, double-thick steaks."

But Duane says customers get the same service no matter how much they spend.



Duane Williams

"Every Thursday, an older lady orders just two lamb cutlets and, boy, is she fussy about them!" he says.

Many years as a butcher have not dimmed Duane's sense of satisfaction at exceeding customer expectations.

"It's great when someone says, 'That was the best steak ever.' It sends shivers down my spine and keeps me going," he says.

To its credit, AMIC has responded positively to widespread membership concerns by reverting to its former operational model for SA.

It has appointed a South Australian to be its SA rep, based in Adelaide and working from an AMIC office in Adelaide.

This was the simple yet proven operational formula until a major restructure was implemented in late 2017 when AMIC

# AMIC's backflip

closed its Adelaide office on Greenhill Rd.

Paul Sandercock was left to work from his home office until he retired in April last year.

Since then, AMIC has had three fly-in, fly-out reps coming into SA from Melbourne.

To say this left many butchers, both in the city and country, unimpressed is an understatement.

They objected to what they saw as a reduction of services over the past year following the retirement of Paul Sandercock after 23 years.

AMIC has listened to its members and has appointed Adelaide's Chris Kelly, with 40 years' industry experience, as its Adelaide-based rep for SA and WA.

This now opens the door for AMIC and butchers to move forward.

**Comment by Peter Morgan,  
Editor, MBL News.**



## CHRIS KELLY: AMIC's new man based in Adelaide

Chris Kelly, a widely-known and respected meat industry figure, has been appointed as AMIC's Adelaide-based representative for South Australia and Western Australia.

A qualified butcher since 1980, Chris, 57, brings solid retail and wholesale experience to the key position.

Most recently, he has been in sales and marketing roles at Murray Valley Meat Company.

"After being in wholesale for years, I saw the AMIC role as something different and a challenge," he says.

"It attracts me on a number of levels and I'm keen to get out and meet the membership as soon as physically possible."

Chris began as AMIC's Member Relationship Officer for SA and WA in February, fully aware that all eyes will be on him.

He will be based in a new AMIC office at 100 King William St, city.

Chairman of AMIC's SA Retail Council, Trevor Hill, says of Chris's appointment,

"He's well recognised and well respected in the industry, making him an obvious choice."

While Chris has his own firm thoughts on the tasks ahead, he says an early priority is to open communication with the membership.

"It's still early days for me in this role. I'm still finding out what's what; I'm still learning the ropes," he says.

"I have already been out talking to many members in and around Adelaide and I plan trips out to the regions.

"The various competitions will also give me opportunities to meet members."

Chris is a strong supporter of competitions. In 2017, he was a judge at the South Australian, Victorian and then national levels of the World Butchers Challenge.

He says the various AMIC competitions raise standards and help to raise appreciation for the skills of butchers.

"One thing that I don't like hearing is butch-

ers saying that they are 'just a butcher.' Butchers are highly skilled tradesmen," he says.

"AMIC's competition for apprentices is one way we are increasing the industry's appeal to young people."

Chris began his apprenticeship at Modbury Meat Market at Ridgehaven in 1980 before moving into retail store management.

He was later self-employed as a "relieving contract butcher" for 10 years.

"I'd work as a butcher and sometimes manage smaller shops, in the city and country, for people taking a break," he says.

"At some one-man shops, I'd walk in and be simply told, 'Here's the keys, see you in a few weeks.' It was nice to be trusted."

Chris had various roles, including supervisor and stock purchaser at Subway Meats, before joining Murray Valley Meat Company.

"I bring a lot of experience to the AMIC role and I'm keen to get going," he says.

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The imminent rise of the instant asset tax write-off to \$25,000 will make it more attractive for butchers and other MBL customers to buy larger equipment.

Presently, single purchases of machinery must cost less than \$20,000 to qualify for the instant tax break.

Although Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced in January that the threshold will increase to \$25,000, the necessary legislation making it law had not been introduced to Parliament when MBL News went to press at the end of March.

However, this was expected to happen soon, most likely in April, after Mr Morrison said it was "a very high priority."

MBL Machinery Manager Chris Mountford says the new ceiling of \$25,000 will cover some larger equipment which exceeds the \$20,000 threshold.

"This opens the door for butchers and others who may have been putting off larger machinery upgrades to seriously consider buying," he says.

"With this new amount available, there's absolutely never been a better time to buy new machinery and other equipment from MBL.

"When you also factor in MBL's interest-free terms to approved Members, why wouldn't you take advantage?"



Chris Mountford

# \$25,000 Tax break rise promised



The tax break scheme for items less than \$20,000 was due to end on June 30, 2019.

But Mr Morrison announced on January 29 that the amount had been increased to \$25,000 and the scheme had been extended to June 30, 2020.

"It takes effect from today (January 29)," Mr Morrison announced.

"It means from today small businesses can instantly deduct each and every asset under \$25,000.

"Businesses that go out today and invest up to \$25,000 (will access an) immediate write-down."

MBL News obtained clarification from the Australian Taxation Office.

An ATO spokesman said, "This proposal is not yet law. Until such time as the proposal becomes law, the existing limit of \$20,000 applies."

However, when the \$25,000 tax break becomes law, it will be backdated to January 29 when Mr Morrison announced it.

Under the scheme, small businesses with turnover of under \$10 million can upgrade equipment and will be able to claim up to \$25,000 at their next tax return rather than having to depreciate the item over a number of years.

Any number of purchases for under \$25,000 each can be made, and each can be instantly written off.

Members and customers should consult their accountants for specific advice.

MBL always delivers competitive prices thanks to our buying power, and Members also receive the annual rebate.

We have a full range of Australian and imported machines, including Hall, Barnes, Thompson and Henkelman machines, plus smaller equipment.

The range satisfies the requirements of every Member, from the smallest butcher to the largest processor.

Some machines are displayed at the MBL showroom at Athol Park.



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