

ROLE MODELS



SA now has four AMIC Master Butchers with Dave Armstrong joining Franz Knoll, Wilson Lowe and Paul Suleyman.

Master Butchers inspire young guns like Kiara Marrone

Talented young butchers like Kiara Marrone are drawing inspiration from the growing Master Butcher program, motivating them to “reach for the stars.”

SA’s new Apprentice of the Year admires Dave Armstrong becoming SA’s fourth AMIC Master Butcher, joining last year’s inductees Franz Knoll, Wilson Lowe and Paul Suleyman.

Kiara, 24, says, “I want my own shop one day and I definitely aspire to be a Master Butcher - I’d love to be a Master Butcher.”

“It would be a career highlight and it would be great for your business, giving you a real story you can pass on to customers.

“I’ve loved my three years as an apprentice, enjoying learning from experienced butchers. I want to eventually teach other people and being a Master Butcher would be perfect.

“To do your apprenticeship and gain experience for a number of years - maybe 15 years - before trying to qualify as a Master Butcher seems like a good career path for people to follow.”



Flying high... new SA Apprentice of the Year Kiara Marrone.

Franz Knoll believes talented and dedicated young people can attain the Master Butcher title in eight years.

“That’s three years of an apprenticeship followed by five years of experience,” he says.

Page 3: Dave Armstrong on being a Master Butcher

Page 12: Why Kiara Marrone’s star is on the rise

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are advised that the date for holding the 2017 Annual General Meeting has been fixed at **6.00pm on Monday, November 6, 2017**

Please note that the venue of this year's Annual General Meeting will be at the Master Butchers Co-operative Ltd's office at

203 - 215 Hanson Rd, Athol Park.

**Master Butchers Co-operative Ltd:
"Your other business"**

***Proud to be
Member-owned***

Facing challenges, MBL is acting to secure the future

It's rebate time again!

After another challenging year, MBL's books have been finalised and the annual rebate was paid September 30.

"As all of our Members are well aware, trading conditions were again tough over the year, with the added burden of steeply increasing energy prices," says CEO Warren McLean.

"MBL saw our electricity cost increase by 100% and we are facing steep increases in gas cost from January 2018.

"Our Merchandise and Machinery divisions found no growth over the year, reflecting the stagnant retail economy. Some product groups did well while others saw reduced sales.

"We have maintained prices where possible and increased sales came from new product lines and new customers, to give our Members the best possible purchasing power.

"On the protein recycling side of the business, volumes of raw material from traditional butchering have shrunk in recent years.

"To replace this volume and efficiency, MBL Proteins has invested heavily in modern processing equipment.

"We now partner closely with the poultry, pork, duck, ovine and kangaroo industries, producing quality assured, single species 'pet food ingredient' protein meals for export. We are continually seeking new markets for our niche products.

"This shift of focus is producing better returns for our Members, although the heavy investment carries the need to protect the financial health of MBL."

On a "one off" basis, MBL has paid the rebate at 15% in cash and 85% B Class share issue and 1% interest on B Class shares, to minimise cash outflow and reduce debt as soon as possible.

Most Members will receive a similar payment to last year from increased rebate rates.

The Board and staff of MBL would like to thank Members for supporting your Co-operative.

MBL's vastness impresses visitors



MBL Sales Manager Dale Rowe leads a tour of trade-day visitors through Warehouse 2.

The sheer size of MBL's warehouse capacity and operations impressed butchers and other guests on guided tours during our two trade days in September.

MBL Sales Manager Dale Rowe, who led the tours, says, "People were surprised by the size of MBL, flabbergasted by the size of the warehouses and the amount of stock we hold."

While most Members and customers have an

understanding of MBL's size, visiting our warehouse operations left strong impressions.

Dale led a series of small group tours through our four warehouses and other facilities, including our modern blending room.

MBL showcased the latest products, with some 75 butchers and managers attending.

A report is across pages 4 and 5.

MBL NEWS

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Master Butcher lifts status of butchers DUE RECOGNITION

While Dave Armstrong is a stickler for getting the small details right, he's always conscious of the bigger picture.

So it's hardly surprising his motive for completing the testing Master Butcher program was about "things wider" than personal glory.

"I've been doing these things (meeting the high standards of Master Butcher) for years without formal recognition," says the owner of Goodwood Quality Meats.

"The reason I did Master Butcher was more for my staff and the industry than personal."

Dave believes the more skills and qualifications butchers acquire through industry programs the better, and senior butchers can set the example by undertaking Master Butcher.

While butchers continually refine their skills through experience, the Master Butcher qualification process is now another step in their professional development.

Dave also believes the industry should consider "going back to the future" by increasing the apprenticeship period from three years to five.

"Training used to be for five years, now it's three years and butchers are finding it hard to find good young butchers," he says.

"We should add a fourth year for small-goods and a fifth year for finishing off people as craftsmen.

"I put this idea to a group of apprentices and they all said they'd want to do it."

While pleased to attain Master Butcher status, Dave says he hasn't dwelt too much on what it means to him personally.

He says he knew customers would respond after Goodwood colleague Paul Suleyman became a Master Butcher last year.

"I watched Paul go through the whole process and I was surprised just how happy people were for him," Dave says.

"The common response was, 'Wow, that's fantastic.' People were really impressed and pleased for Paul.



the only shop in Australia to have two AMIC Master Butchers.

"And we're the only shop with two reps going to the World Butchers Challenge in Belfast in March – Luke Leyson is in Australia's team and Caleb Sunquist will represent in the apprentices event."

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

Now with Master Butcher status, he has certainly come a long way.

To which he quickly fires back with a grin, "I'm still the cleanup boy..."

"Over the years, butchers have not been properly recognised for our skills. Master Butcher can help change this.

"We're a small shop at Goodwood but we're

Page 12: Goodwood's Gold



Delighted at receiving his Master Butchers jacket, Dave Armstrong wasted no time in trying it on for size at AMIC's Awards for Excellence presentation night.



It's a fine fit... Dave looked resplendent as he addressed the audience.

TRICKS FOR THE TRADE

MBL showcases different ways of adding value and increasing profits

MBL's trade events, showcasing the latest products and trends, proved successful with some 75 butchers and supermarket managers attending over two days in September.

"We're really happy with the response; the turnout was reward for our people making much effort to assemble an interesting display and organise product tastings," says MBL Operations Manager Bexley Carman.

"The events were designed to show ways to add value for customers and add profit for businesses at a time when shoppers are watching every cent they spend.

"We showcased a range of new lines and offered special deals, as well as having Newly Weds providing tastings and explaining the latest trends in flavours."

The trade events were held in a section of MBL's Warehouse 2 at Athol Park. Guests were offered guided tours of all four warehouses.

An impressive display was set up by Ennio's National Sales Manager Tracy Greenaway, and many visitors paid particular attention to a range of recyclable and biodegradable packaging which is seen as the way of the future.

Products displayed ranged from sauces, spices and sprinkles to crumbs, cutting boards and cling wrap. MBL machinery,



from benchtop slicers to mixer mincers, was displayed.

The Newly Weds pair of Executive Chef Hayden Williams and Technical Sales Manager Stan Stern held tastings of assorted new products including coating options, dry glaze premixes, sausage binders and pastry ideas.

Hayden demonstrated using gluten free BBQ Rib Dry Glaze for delicious lamb shank pie filling (*see the recipe on this page*).

The same glaze can be used for chicken thigh fillets, giving butchers multiple use of

the one product.

Chicken rissoles with parmesan, garlic and parsley sprinkle impressed, along with southern style buttermilk and dill chicken bites.

Newly Weds recipes as demonstrated by Hayden will be published in the next MBL News.

Hayden Williams'

LAMB SHANK PIE FILLING

Using Newly Weds' X4652410 GF BBQ Rib Dry Glaze

2 litres beef stock

1/3 cup tomato paste

1 leek sliced (green part only)

8 lamb shanks

500ml red wine

Coat lamb shanks in BBQ glaze at 10% pickup, brown in pan then place in large ovenproof dish.

Fry leek in lamb shank pan then deglaze with red wine. Add tomato paste and stock, and bring to boil.

Pour over lamb shanks and cook at 160C for 4 hours covered.

Strain liquid and make into gravy. Add quarter cup of BBQ seasoning. Pull down meat and then mix with gravy.



Newly Weds Executive Chef Hayden Williams preparing tastings at MBL.



Tracy Greenaway manned Ennio's display, explaining a range of products headed by innovative ham netting.



An extensive range of products was showcased at MBL's trade events in September, as illustrated by these photos.



A range of recyclable packaging, along with a separate display of biodegradable packaging, drew strong interest as they are seen as the way of the future.



TICKLED PINK!

Why Rodney's elated at Pink Butcher going nationwide

The Pink Butcher promotion will be held across Australia in just its second year, realising a cherished dream of veteran Adelaide butcher Rodney Sims.

"It was always my goal for Pink Butcher to be national but I thought it would maybe take three years," says Rodney, pictured here in a new promotional poster.

"Going national earlier than expected is extremely pleasing - I'm just really pleased that people have grasped the concept and are running with it.

"I can only see it going from strength to strength. It started in SA last year like a ripple on a pond and it's getting bigger."

Rodney devised Pink Butcher to lift the community profile of independent butchers by raising money for women and families affected by breast cancer.

The promotion, driven by AMIC, was well supported in its debut last year in SA with some 80 butchers raising almost \$36,000.

Rodney thought it would take years to spread nationally but such is the concept's strength that interstate butchers have jumped at the chance to adopt it.

"Butchers in WA heard about it and approached AMIC to be part of it," he says.

"It's still really a baby now and we're nurturing it. I expect it will become a big thing over the next few years, playing a major role in lifting the profile of IRBs (independent retail butchers).

"It's a great way of showing that independent retailers can connect with local people and that we do what we can to help our community."

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

"BCNA directs funds to people - women and children affected by breast cancer - while the three other charities channel raised funds into research," AMIC's Paul Sandercock.



"It's very good that all States have committed to Pink Butcher next year - it's a great concept that really strikes a chord with people.

"We thought Pink Butcher would spread this year to Victoria - where six butchers got involved at short notice last year - plus Tasmania and Western Australia.

"But NSW and Queensland have now come on board and BCNA is delighted, believing Pink Butcher has big national potential."

Rodney says, "There's a chance that this year, with a lot of hard work, we may get 75% of independent butchers to be involved in Pink Butcher.

➤ “This may be hard to achieve this year but I’d like to think that we’ll reach 75% in 2018.

“The challenge is to get the message across to non-AMIC butchers – you don’t have to be an AMIC member to take part.

“We’re getting support from different bodies, including MBL which obviously sees Pink Butcher as being something worthwhile. MBL’s support is terrific.”

MBL has again lent its support and is this year making it easy for butchers to register for Pink Butcher through the tablets used by our visiting reps.

“Our reps’ tablets carry details of individual shops as part of the speedy ordering process and we’ve now factored in Pink Butcher,” says MBL Operations Manager Bexley Carman.

“To register for Pink Butcher, all butchers have to do is sign the form on the tablet and we send it off to the organisers.”

MBL contributed in 2016 by subsidising



Sam DiCicco, of Seaford Gourmet Meats, as featured in a Pink Butcher poster.



Master Butcher Wilson Lowe, of Bruce’s Meats, in another Pink Butcher poster.

specially-made pink caps and aprons for participating butcher shops and will do so again this year.

This year’s gold partners in SA are MBL, Holco, Positive Group and D.R. Johnston.

Rodney initially devised the Pink Butcher concept after the distressing experience of seeing his wife and her best friend battle breast cancer.

“My wife Pat went through hell and high water but she’s survived,” he says.

“In six months during 2005, she had three major operations plus chemotherapy, but she’s a fighter and she survived.

“It was funny in the weird sense that Pat’s best friend Charmaine was diagnosed with breast cancer only the week before Pat was diagnosed.

“They supported each other and went through the treatments together.

“And now, a close friend of mine has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Glenda is a former staff member of mine and I’ve regarded her like a daughter.

“Glenda gave support when Pat and Charmaine were diagnosed and we’ll now be supporting her.”

PICNICS REVISITED

One of Wendy Polkinghorne's treasured possessions is an MBL newsletter from 1956 showing her enjoying a pony ride at the annual butchers picnic at Belair National Park as a girl of nine.

She happily points to the young girl with the bob cut hairstyle, saying: "That's me - I might be older but the haircut's the same!"

"I loved the picnics – they were on Mondays so I got a day off school and I got to play with other children."

Wendy's old Meat Industry Digest, a forerunner to today's MBL News, is now a little worse for wear, held together with sticky tape, but Wendy's memories of that 1956 picnic are crystal clear.

"Butchery runs deep in my family; I come from a line of butchers," she says.

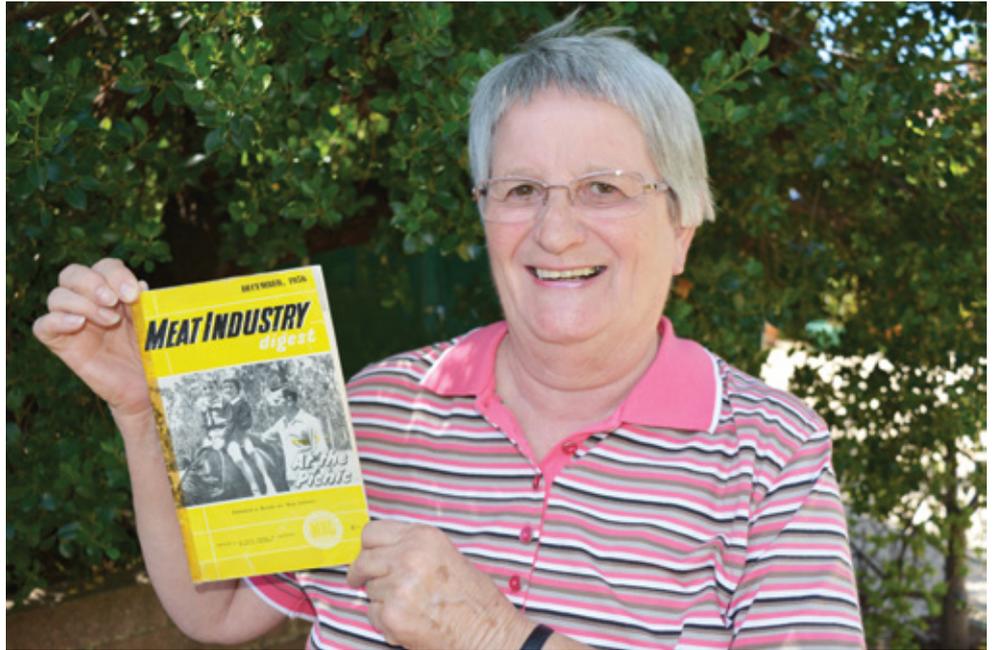
Her maternal grandfather, Alex Jacobs, opened Mylor's first butcher shop in 1912 and later built a shop attached to his house at Torrensville.

Her father, Jack Polkinghorne, was well known as an innovative butcher, big on customer service, at shops around Adelaide.

"Dad became an apprentice butcher at age 14 and worked until he was 75," says Wendy, 70.

"With fellow butcher Keith Ryan, Dad opened shops in the 1950s at Croydon, Enfield and Bank St, city. They were very successful, and Dad later had his own shop at Grange.

Our 'cover girl' from 60 years ago recalls happy days at Belair



Now and then....Wendy Polkinghorne with her copy of MBL's Meat Industry Digest of December, 1956, showing her on a pony ride at the butchers picnic.

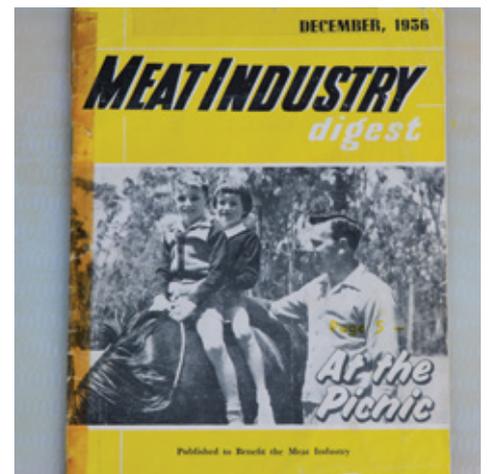
"Dad was ahead of his time regarding value adding, making things we now take as normal like little beef wellingtons and even simple rissoles."

But while Wendy has detailed knowledge of her family's butchering past, it's her childhood memories of the annual Master Butchers and Stock Agents picnics at Belair that still put sparkle in her eyes.

The picnics were popular events in simpler times, attracting crowds of 700 people to socialise and network - long before the term "network" had been coined.

Indicative of the industry's interest in the picnics was that Meat Industry Digest covered the 1956 picnic across four inside pages, with 11 photos and detailed results of events.

The cover featured the photo of Wendy's pony ride with a young boy, identified as Kevin Wood. Walking alongside the pony, to ensure the children didn't topple, was butcher Allan Turner.



"I don't know anything about the boy in the photo – it would be interesting to somehow find out," Wendy says.

"I remember eagerly looking forward to the picnic day as it gave me a day off school, and with Mum and Dad and 700 other people, we enjoyed the day's events.



Mrs Ern Franklin throws a crafty quiot at the 1956 butchers picnic.

HISTORY

By RICHARD MAUROVIC
Author of *The Meat Game*

In South Australia's earlier days, butchers worked between 80 to 90 hours per week and shops opened on Sundays till 11.00am.

In 1973 an 8-hour working day was proclaimed in SA but only for those in the building trades. It covered other trades later.

Butchers picnic days were the brainchild of former butcher Charlie Ferrors, publican of the Norfolk Arms Hotel in Rundle St, Adelaide. He invited masters and journeymen butchers to meet at his hotel in August, 1880.

Charlie implored all present "to make an effort to stand together and arrange at least one day in the year as their own and be free from work."

That night a Butchers Picnic Committee was formed.

However, it was not until October 19, 1893, that the Master Butchers' Association (later MBL) and the Journeymen Butchers' Picnic Committee welcomed participants to Mr W Wright's property Olive Farm, at Glynde, for a picnic.

It was a day for butchers, stock agents and their families to have a day of fun together.

In 1902, another picnic was held at Belair National Park. It was reported that, "Butchers and their families departed Trades Hall in Grote St and headed with bands and butchers carts along King William St.

"They passed G & W Shierlaw's shop at 18 Hindley St where tailors dummies were set up, dressed in butchers coats and striped aprons. The party then made their way through Unley and Mitcham on the way."

A tradition was born, with butchers picnics held on the first Monday in November.

Butcher shops across SA were closed and the weekly Monday Gepps Cross cattle market was suspended.

Interestingly, Pooraka primary school was the only school to have a gazetted holiday for butchers picnic day.



This photo of families at the 1956 picnic was published in *Meat Industry Digest*.

➤ "The day started with a cricket match between the butchers and the stock agents.

"Each side batted for 90 minutes and it became a real slogging match. Was this the start of one-day cricket?"

"This was followed by numerous novelties for the children and adults. Some of the events included a sack race, three-legged race and quoits.

"For the more serious were the single and married ladies' sprints, the Master Butchers handicap, and the Old Buffers race.

"The girls' and boys' events were conducted in age groups so it was fair for all the competitors.

"At the end of the day, I remember all of us children sitting in the big pavilion and receiving our prizes and special treats for our journey home."

Meat Industry Digest's extensive coverage of the 1956 picnic was written in the style of a school essay under the conservative headline of *Annual Picnic Great Success In Fine Weather*.

The report stated, "The annual Master

Butchers and Stock Agents picnic was, as usual, held at the main oval at National Park on the first Monday in November.

"The picnic weather is often unkind, but on this occasion, all was well and the 700-odd people present thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the warm sunshine.

"Highlight of the morning was the annual cricket match. For the first time in years, the master butchers' side defeated the stock agents, and in a photo finish by the narrow margin of two runs."

Details of the match, won by 147 runs to 145, indicated the carnival spirit, with five batsmen retiring in their 20s.

The picnic's coverage aimed to publish as many names as possible.

However, initials rather than Christian names were used, with females always identified as Miss or Mrs. There were separate running races for single and married women.

Other events included a race for MBL and stock agents clerks, a girls' skipping race, and ladies' quoits, plus "novelty events" like guessing the length of string in a bottle and guessing the number of peas in a jar.



To conclude the 1956 picnic, children assembled for the trophy presentations.

Mistake? What mistake?

In one of Sausage King's most unusual twists, a "mistake" by a young butcher ultimately led to McLaren Vale's Ellis Butchers winning the Poultry section of the SA Sausage King awards.

The apprentice was asked to fetch pork for sausage making but instead retrieved turkey.

Shop owner Ian Shaw, acting on an inkling, decided to use the turkey in the intended pork recipe and after a number of refinements, he developed the winning Turkey, Duck and Fennel sausage.

"People really liked the new turkey sausages; some said they were the best sausages they'd ever tasted so we kept making them, doing some fine tuning along the way," Ian says.

"So what started as a mistake has led to a very pleasing win in Sausage King.

"I wanted to have a fair crack because I've never had any success in the Poultry section. I'm delighted."

For the second year winning, Ian won two Sausage King titles by taking the Continental section with his Italian Pork, Fennel and Chilli sausage.

This pork sausage won the Continental section last year when Ian also won the Australian Lamb category for his Country Style Lamb sausage.

Another double winner at this year's awards was Jason Mathie, of Clare, who was previously inducted into Sausage King's Hall of Fame for winning three successive national Traditional Australian titles with his Saltbush Hogget sausage.

This year, Jason won the SA titles in the Australian Lamb section for his Lamb Curry sausage and in the Gourmet category for his Beef & Blue Cheese sausage.

"The win in Lamb was a little surprising as I gave this entry the least chance of my four

Sausage King win after turkey was mistaken for pork



entries across the whole Blue Cheese creation. competition," he says.

But while Jason describes his winning Lamb Curry sausage as "not strong", he says the opposite is the case for his Beef &

"People who love blue cheese love this sausage because of its strong flavour. If you won't like blue cheese, you won't like this," he says.

A Kiwi, Jason developed the blue cheese sausage after visiting his parents at Tauranga in the middle of New Zealand's north island.

"Mum and Dad wanted me to try the blue cheese sausages made by a local butcher. They were delicious," he says.

"I went to his shop and I ended up out the back helping him make them.

"I make them back in Clare but with changes to our liking. The Kiwis tend to make sausages in the English style; not as coarse as we like them."

Back at SA Sausage King, prolific winner Franz Knoll surprised nobody by winning Traditional Australian Beef with his Traditional Beef sausage made for Sandom Smallgoods.

The Traditional Australian Pork section was won for the second year running by Mick Lamond, of Collins Court Butcher at Mt Gambier, for his Thick Pork Sausage.

Mick, who runs a small shop, has been making this traditional pork sausage with no herbs or spices for six years, using MBL Old English Pork meal.

"We're really delighted at winning again – it's a great boost for us and we get plenty of nice comments in the shop," he says.

Shaun excels with burgers

After previous Sausage King success, Naracorte's Shaun Watson is now standing out with his burgers.

Shaun, of Tender Cuts, won one burger category and took third place in another burger section in AMIC SA's Awards for Excellence.

In the Butchers Gourmet Open section, Shaun's Thai Chicken with Shredded Coconut took the top prize ahead of the Bush Burger by Mathie's Meat Shoppe and the Chicken Parmigiana Burger by Crestwood Meats.

(This category was won last year by Mathie's Bush Burger. It is made from the Burra area saltbush hogget which Jason Mathie used to win three national Sausage Kings titles).

In the Best Butchers Beef Burger section, the Salt & Pepper Brisket Burger by Bruce's Meat took first place. Second was the Beef, Onion & Spices burger by Desmond's Meat Service, Kadina, with Shaun Watson's Beef Burger third.

The two winning burgers will be SA's entries in the national titles in Melbourne in February.

Carly's two shops awarded gold

Attaining AMIC's highest gold standard for management of her two shops in Adelaide's north-east has reassured Carly McLean that she's steering the right course.

Carly attained the gold standard for Bruce's Meat at St Agnes and nearby Fairview Park after she and her husband Keith became majority owners early this year.

It's the first time in the Awards for Excellence that the one butcher has attained gold standard for two shops.

Goodwood Quality Meats, owned by Dave Armstrong, also attained gold standard this year after achieving the same feat last year (see story below).

The only other shop to attain gold is Leabrook Quality Meats, run by Michael Lawrence and Luke Moody, in 2015 and 2016.

Carly, a third generation butcher, says attaining double gold is reward for her team and the overall Bruce's Meat chain.

"This reflects the hard work that's been done at our two shops; it's nice to know all our work is taking us in the right direction," she says.

"We aim to do everything to gold standard and now we have the gold award hanging in each shop to show for our efforts – it's good for customers to see the big certificates."

AMIC SA Executive Director Paul Sandercock says the awards recognise businesses which are "highly professional, innovative, aspirational and sustainable."

"Judging takes into account every aspect of a modern retail butcher shop," he says.

"It's about butchers being recognised for the good things they do, and to help identify any 'gaps' in the way their business operates."

Carly says, "The questions you must address make you sit back and think carefully about what you are doing and can



'This reflects the hard work that's been done; it's nice to know all our work is taking us in the right direction' – Carly McLean

lead to you making improvements.

"Much of all this comes down to training, which has always been a strong point of Bruce's Meat.

"We're red hot, for example, on WHS issues. We train people right down to all the little things that make a difference."

Judges praised Carly's St Agnes store for staff development, customer service management, and product development and marketing.

The Fairview Park store was praised for management planning, staff training and performance, and marketing concepts.

Carly, who spends most of her time at St

Agnes, credited Ryan Watson for running Fairview Park at gold standard.

"Ryan worked with me at Fairview Park for two years before I moved down to St Agnes and he has flourished as manager," she says.

Passion for doing the work is the key to a good shop, Ryan says.

"I'm pleased to continue Carly's good work since she moved from manager to owner, and the award is recognition for the training and policies we have in place," he says.

Trevor Hill sold the majority of the two north-east shops to Carly and Keith, and now stays in the background although he's available for advice.

Gold for Goodwood, too

Goodwood Quality Meats' high reputation has been underscored by attaining gold standard in AMIC's Awards for Excellence for the second year running.

"The awards are valuable in that they make you look at yourself and your business," says shop owner and new Master Butcher Dave Armstrong.

"You do the good things anyway but having judges come through gives you an extra push. It's about raising the bar."

Judges praised the shop for shared business management, staff training and development, and marketing concepts and strategies.

Dave purchased the store from veteran Mick Hammond in 2013 and has made improvements while retaining traditional values and proven products.

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Flying high as SA's new Apprentice of the Year, Kiara Marrone is more puzzled than annoyed that some customers find it hard to accept females as butchers.

"Some people think I'm a server and ask to talk to a butcher, and they're surprised when I say I am a butcher," says Kiara, 24.

"One woman actually said to me, 'But why are you doing this? You're a girl.' She simply couldn't understand why a girl would want to be a butcher."

"It's amazing that this type of thinking still goes on. There are a lot of female chefs - I just decided to work at the start of the food chain rather than at the end."

Interestingly, most of the negative vibes come from female customers.

Kiara loves her work too much and her ambitions are too strong for her to be too distracted by small mindedness. She's simply intrigued by the way some people think.

"I love what I do, I enjoy learning and I want to own my own shop," she says.

Kiara has now completed her apprenticeship at Liam West's shop at Prospect, My Local Butcher, which she says is a great place to work.

"I'm learning from everyone in the shop - what I've learnt in my first three years is mind boggling," she says.

"The other butchers have shown me the way they do things and from there I've adopted the practices that best suit me as I develop my own style.

"I find it really interesting that there can be a number of ways to achieve the same result; you can cut some things 10 different ways to get the same result.

"I most like breaking down

animals. Going from a whole animal to a small chop is an interesting process; getting a large hind quarter of beef and cutting it down is fascinating."

A petite woman, Kiara achieves

toes to see over it and cut straight," she says.

With her common sense and ambition, Kiara looks set for a bright career as she illustrated by winning the SA Apprentice of

After lunch, they were given a further 90 minutes to use their cut meat and a selection of supplied ingredients to create value added products.

Kiara made seven products including rolled pork belly stuffed with bread crumbs, onion, capsicum, prosciutto and cheese; and pork medallions with pineapple and prosciutto.

She created two flavourings for crumbs - orange zest and almond for crumbed French cutlets, and rosemary and lemon for crumbed loin chops.

"Towards the end, I was so nervous my legs felt like jelly but I got into my zone and moved on, just like at work," she says.

Runner-up in the competition was second year apprentice Zachary Young, of Bruce's Meat, with Jaidyn Penn-Clayton, of Ian's Quality Meats, third.

As well as receiving a gold trophy, Kiara received the inaugural Rob Black Memorial Young Achiever Award, which will be awarded annually.

Rob, who died last year aged 68, was a master butcher who founded the Adelaide meat trading company Samex. He made a huge 50-year contribution to the meat industry.

Over many decades, Rob was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable and experienced people in the international marketing of red meat.

Kiara will now progress to the national Apprentice of the Year final in Melbourne in February.

Kiara's star is on the rise



'What I've learnt in my first three years is mind boggling' - Kiara Marrone

excellent results but she says her size can be testing.

"I have to stand on my toes to cut straight. It happens mainly with rump steak - because it is so large, I need to stand on my

the Year title.

In demanding a mystery box competition, six apprentices were first given 90 minutes to break down sides of lamb and middles of pork.