

# MBL NEWS

JULY - AUGUST 2023

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST CO-OPERATIVE ESTABLISHED 1905



Delivering sterling service... MBL staffers (back row, from left) Shane Reynolds, Cameron Mansueto, Ben Oerlemans, Edward Selby-Fulgrabe, Jamie Higgins, Ryan Mercier and Shane Harrison. Front row (from left) Chris Rowe, Alwyn Halls, Susie O'Brien, Tayla Meaney, Mackenzie Beames, Kane Paues, Dale Rowe and Ben Smith.

## We're voted Supplier of the Year

MBL's winning of the inaugural AMIC SA Supplier of the Year award is a vote of confidence in MBL Food Service's overall service, reliability and expertise.

It's also a tribute to the professionalism and dedication of our entire team from purchasing and sales through to production and distribution, says MBL CEO Jamie Higgins.

Online voting by AMIC members and general meat industry stakeholders determined the Supplier of the Year award, which was presented at the annual AMIC awards night at Adelaide Zoo on July 29.

Voting criteria, for businesses like MBL with wholesale as their main activity, included customer service, reliability, communication, ease of doing business, invoicing and product development.

Jamie says, "MBL has great people. I'm proud of the way they have continued to improve our service levels despite the challenges of supply issues in recent times.

"A key part of improving has been greater collaboration between our departments – operations, sales, purchasing, production, warehousing and distribution – to deliver the best outcomes."

MBL's General Manager of Sales and Marketing, Kane Paues, says, "We take customer service very seriously and we're continually striving for improvement.

"A detailed membership survey is conducted every year to gauge how we are going. We do a lot of deep diving into the results to determine ways to improve."

Another membership survey was conducted in June and July.

**AMIC AWARDS  
COVER PAGES 6-7**

## Custom blending: it's all systems go

Good news flows from MBL Custom Blending which is undergoing significant expansion as part of a strategy to broaden the co-operative's traditional customer base.

One of our Athol Park warehouses has been gutted for fitting out as a state-of-the-art blending facility to meet rising demand from the wider food industry.

An expanded team of food technologists has been assembled for product development and quality assurance.

The team has three university graduates. One graduate, Nathan Nam Gia Van, 20, recently won the prestigious Food South Australia Prize for best-performing industry placement student in the University of Adelaide's Food and Nutrition Science course.

MBL CEO Jamie Higgins says, "It's all systems go as we work on building our blending capacity. We have an industry-leading team for a new facility, making our expertise and innovation as good as it gets in SA."

**FULL REPORTS PAGES 3-5**



High flyer... food technology graduate Nathan Nam Gia Van.

# Check our bakery and winter catalogues



A catalogue on MBL merchandise for bakery products has been followed by the release of a similar illustrated catalogue covering our winter products.

The stylish catalogues, compiled by MBL Sales and Marketing Administrator Mackenzie Beames, are available from our Athol Park shop or through your MBL sales rep.

MBL's supply to bakeries has been expanded, covering everything from ingredients and equipment to clothing and cleaning products.

Our 28-page winter catalogue includes a section on everything needed for the Italian salami-making season.



## MBL LOOKS TO SOLAR POWER

With electricity prices to continue soaring, MBL is looking to introduce large-scale solar and battery storage systems at our Athol Park, Wingfield and Keith sites.

"We've started discussions with RAA Solar for what would be a significant investment across our three sites," says MBL CEO Jamie Higgins.

"RAA Solar will evaluate our requirements, work out the number of solar panels we'd need and recommend a battery system that ensures we can use stored power when we need it, day or night."

MBL's sites all have ample roof areas ideal for solar panels but assessment is needed to determine the best configuration.

Jamie says MBL currently pays a total of about \$150,000 a month for electricity across the three sites.

"Our electricity contract goes

until the end of 2025. It's an extremely good contract but when it ends, it will become a terrible deal," he says.

"While we're doing our homework now, we probably wouldn't start with solar until late 2024 or early 2025.

"Solar and battery systems have long-term financial benefits and fit with our wider sustainability policy."

Jamie says plans for a new warehouse at Wingfield were changed to accommodate solar panels.

"The original architects' plans had a pitched roof but we've changed it to a flat roof, facing north, for solar panels," he says.

Earthworks have begun for the warehouse on the site of MBL's first plant, which was built in 1942 fronting Grand Junction Rd. The original building was demolished this year after being leased to stone products maker Hewnstone.

"We've started the earthworks but it has been slow going because winter rains turned the site into a bog," Jamie says.

### MBL NEWS

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## Truck tyre hurtles into shop

Butchers at Goodwood Quality Meats say they've now seen it all after a rogue truck tyre crashed through the front door and smashed a new display counter.

The damage bill for the bizarre accident, at about 8am on a Thursday, came to at least \$12,000 and the shop had to be closed for the day while the mess was cleaned up.

But shop manager Luke Leyson says it was lucky nobody was hurt.

"Thankfully, there were no

customers in the shop that early," he says.

The tyre came loose from the trailer of a passing truck on Goodwood Rd and swiped the shop's window display as it hurtled through the glass door and into the display counter, sending glass flying.

"I was out the back but a few butchers were working behind the front counter. There was an almighty bang; I thought a car had come through, it was that loud," Luke says.

"I'm not sure how fast it came

in but it took off our steel-framed door which had been there since the 1960s and was quite solid, so it definitely came with a bit of heat.

"Glass was everywhere. We ditched all the meat in the cabinet; all the bottles and jars in a wall cabinet had to be taken off the shelves and wiped down.

"It was a freak accident; it was nobody's fault. The main thing is that nobody was hurt and we were able to resume trading the next day."



# MBL EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOM BLENDING

MBL's blending operations are expanding at pace, with a state-of-the-art blending facility under construction and a talented team of food technologists assembled.

"Our blending output has doubled over the past two years and it's all system go as we work on further building our capacity to serve the wider food industry," says MBL CEO Jamie Higgins.

"We're expanding our blending facility at Athol Park. Warehouse 4 has been gutted and plumbers are currently creating the necessary drainage system.

"We're building an industry-leading team for product development and quality assurance, making our blending expertise and innovation as good as it gets in South Australia.

"Three highly-skilled food tech graduates have joined us from the University of Adelaide and we'll continue working with the university to source more talented young people in the future."

Jamie says the ongoing expansion of blending and the production of new products for new customers is a key part of a strategy to

## We're industry leaders, growing our capacity to supply new markets

broaden MBL's traditional customer base.

"Until five years ago, we basically made sausage meals and burger mixes but we've expanded into other areas such as bakery where our donut and muffin mixes are selling like crazy," he says.

MBL supplies raw ingredients or manufactures blended ingredients for food manufacturers across diverse sectors including dairy, confectionary and plant-based foods as well as meat and smallgoods.

Blending customers who have become "non-protein" members in the past few years include Spring Gully, Beerenberg, Maggie Beer Products, Relish the Barossa, Weber, and Vili's.

Jamie says supplying blended products for the wider food industry sets MBL apart from our main competitors in SA.

"These products set MBL as category leaders within SA. They are an excellent fit with our co-operative structure, allowing us to support new product development," he says.

"Our challenge is to continually improve our ability to innovate and to be first to market with new trends.

"We're doing this by building a far bigger modern blending facility and forming a very talented team of food technologists

*Continued page 4*



MBL's quality assurance team of QA and WHS Manager Michaela Rock (centre) with Nathan Nam Gia Van and Isabella Ragghianti.



*Creative trio... MBL's product development team of (from left) Jainam Patel, manager Mark Henderson and Darryl Vaitkus.*

From page 3

under Michaela Rock. We're excited about the future."

Michaela, MBL's QA and WHS Manager, heads a department of six people in the QA and product development units. Another highly-qualified food technologist will join the team soon.

The QA unit is run by Michaela with university graduates Nathan Nam Gia Van and Isabella Ragghianti while production development is headed by Mark Henderson with assistance from Darryl Viatkus and another university graduate, Jainam Patel.

Darryl, who was chiefly responsible for developing the popular Butcher's Banquet



rubs which were launched in February last year, also helps with QA when required.

"When the Butcher's Banquet rubs were being developed, there was only Darryl and I here. We're proud of what was achieved," Michaela says.

Michaela took the long-term recruitment path of hiring quality food tech graduates after finding it extremely difficult to source experienced people.

"If we couldn't recruit people with skill

sets, we'd train and develop them here. This has been our big focus over the last six months," she says.

Michaela trialed and eventually hired three graduates – Nathan, Isabella and Jainam – after meeting them at a University of Adelaide networking event.

Students moved from one short meeting with potential employers to another, resulting in some being offered work placement or casual work.

"It was speed networking – a bit like speed dating – and I was very impressed with the students overall. Six came to do some work at MBL and three are now here fulltime," Michaela says.

While Jainam came to MBL on work placement, Michaela engaged Nathan and Isabella to work as casuals during their university summer break, compiling information on hundreds of MBL ingredients for loading onto the Easy Food Labels app.

"We now have a very talented, creative and enthusiastic team. We're all foodies; we all enjoy food and sharing our experiences," Michaela says.

"We celebrate our success. We make a point of beginning our weekly meeting by talking about what has been achieved.

"There's nothing more satisfying than seeing a product that you developed on shop shelves."

MBL's high standards have been reflected by continually-rising scorecards from Quality Assurance inspectors, enhancing our reputation as a trusted manufacturer of quality products.



*Graduate Jainam Patel was hired after impressing during work placement at MBL.*





➤ The drive to significantly ramp up blending operations began in April 2020 with MBL's purchase of innovative food ingredients manufacturer Medani Foods from Shane Harrison, who is now MBL Custom Blending's Business Development Manager.

Our relatively-limited ingredients portfolio greatly expanded with the addition of Medani's customer base which included bakeries, smallgoods makers, poultry and fish processors, breweries of all sizes,

confectionary makers and the fitness and weight loss sectors.

With Shane's industry experience backed by Michaela's QA expertise, blending output climbed to the extent that a bigger facility with additional skilled staff was needed to match growth.

"I went to Jamie at the start of 2022 with what I wanted for QA and product development. We came up with a plan which was endorsed by the Board," Michaela says.

"Our present production area right in the middle of a warehouse is not ideal for proper efficiency.

"The new facility, with a new test kitchen for R&D, will be larger with better flow and efficiency, better security, better segregation and better control.

"Having a purpose-designed space to meet standards will allow us to expand our accreditation and help us to open up new markets."

# Prize-winning Nathan a 'future star' of MBL

University graduate Nathan Nam Gia Van's recent winning of a prestigious Food South Australia award hardly surprised MBL's Michaela Rock, who identified his talent several years ago.

Nathan, 20, joined MBL fulltime early this year as part of Michaela's QA and product development team after impressing with a specific project as a casual employee in 2021.

"We quickly identified his knowledge and excellent focus on safety and QA, along with eagerness to learn and develop," Michaela says.

"He's doing well and he enjoys taking on new challenges. We see him having continued improvement – he's a future star of MBL."

At a major food industry event at Adelaide Oval in June, Nathan was presented with the Food South Australia Prize for the best-performing industry placement student in the University of Adelaide's Food and Nutrition Science course.

MBL CEO Jamie Higgins says, "Congratulations to Nathan. This prestigious award for outstanding performance covers the whole food industry.

"Nathan needed workplace experience as part of his course, we gave him an oppor-

tunity as a casual and now we're pleased he's part of our expanding, highly-qualified team."

While at university, Nathan did work placement at Say Cheese, with cheesemaker and lecturer Gina Dal Santo saying he showed initiative and natural leadership skills.

"He worked well in a team environment, followed instructions and took on a leadership role to prioritise work among the group, decide the work-

load and ensure tasks were completed within the given timeline," Gina says.

Nathan, born in Australia to Vietnamese migrants, graduated from his three-year food and nutrition science course after standing out at Woodville High School where he won the prize for best Year 12 nutrition student.

"I originally wanted to be a dentist but changed direction because I love food so much," he says.



*Tipped for a big future... Nathan at work in an MBL lab.*



*Food South Australia Prize winner Nathan Nam Gia Van.*

"I love working out flavours and combinations. It's really interesting how sweet, sour and savoury flavours affect the taste buds."

Nathan began casual work at MBL in late 2021 with fellow university food technology student Isabella Ragghianti.

They spent months compiling assorted information on more than 750 MBL ingredients for loading onto the Easy Food Labels app.

"I love checking facts about food. I like double-checking, and sometimes triple-checking, facts. If you don't love food, you'd get bored with it very quickly," he says.

"Working in food safety is a big responsibility. You need to be passionate about spreading QA information as it's very important for people to have food safety knowledge."

Nathan says he's enjoying work at MBL. "There is a good work culture here; the environment is good," he says.

"What Michaela has achieved in the industry is commendable; she's very impressive. She sets the standard and really cares about the team."

# 'New faces' shine as regions continue awards dominance

The emergence of first-time award winners and the continuing prominence of regional butcheries were features of this year's AMIC SA industry awards.

MBL was again the major sponsor of the State awards night at Adelaide Zoo on July 29, after the judging of 238 entries a fortnight earlier at Adelaide's Beer & BBQ Festival.

Six of the nine product categories were won by regional butcheries to continue a trend over recent years, with Ellis Butchers of McLaren Vale winning two Sausage King crowns and the top award for Ready To Eat products.

Three other Sausage King winners – Meat At The Market, Campbelltown Centre Meats and Port Augusta Meat Store – enjoyed major award success for the first time.

The winners of the two burger awards – Compass Meats of Mt Compass and Elder Meat Store of Glengowrie – were also first-time State winners.

In a double triumph for Steve Stentiford's Campbelltown Centre Meats, Nicholas Parashakis won the Apprentice of the Year award from Thomas Chamberlain of Crestline Meats, Gawler.

MBL was voted the inaugural Supplier of the Year. A tribute was paid at the awards night to Mark Rosewarne, who has retired after 48 years as an MBL rep.

The AMIC SA Legends Award went to



Poultry Sausage King winner Steve Stentiford of Campbelltown Centre Meats.



Legends Award winner Trevor Hill.

Bruce's Meat patriarch Trevor Hill, who has long served the meat industry on multiple levels, including as chairman of AMIC's State Retail Council since 2015.

It was a triple-treat night to remember for Ellis Butchers, a McLaren Vale "institution" for over 50 years and now owned by Rihann Koekemoer and managed by former owner Ian Shaw.

Wins in two Sausage King categories – in Lamb for the shop's Lamb Merguez sausage and in Continental for its Italian Sausage – were followed by gold for its lamb and mushroom pie in the Ready to Eat section for meat-based pastry products.

Ellis Butchers also enjoyed success with these two sausages at the 2021 State awards, with the Italian winning Continental and the Merguez being runner-up in Lamb.

For father-and-son team Ron and Ben Surman of Port Augusta, success with their beef BBQ Sausage follows Ben's strong push into the barbecue market, including having his own YouTube show.

Meat At The Market, another newcomer to the State winners circle, won the Gourmet category with its Pork, Pickled Fig & Blue Cheese sausage, while the Poultry crown went to Campbelltown Centre Meats for its Chicken & Wild Fennel sausage.

Mt Gambier's Tim Von Stanke, of Swallow Drive Meat Supply, added to his past Sausage King success by winning the Pork category for his Traditional Pork sausages.

Tim last year won the State title in Beef and was runner-up in the national Gourmet category for his Spicy Pork sausage.

Deryk De Kruyf's win in the Beef Burger competition for his Beef, Cheese and Jalapeno burger was a win for perseverance after his original Mt Compass shop burnt down in June 2022.

He was eventually able to reopen Compass Meats and has built a loyal following with emphasis on smallgoods. He has several entries in this year's Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards.

Another win for perseverance was in the Gourmet Burger competition, won by Mark Willcox, of Elder Meat Store, with his Thai burger.

This burger, a firm favourite with customers, was runner-up in last year's Metro competition but, after a little tweaking, it triumphed at State level this year.

For the first time, the traditional smallgoods awards were not part of the SA awards after being absorbed into the new Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards.

The SA Awards may well have found a "home" at the annual Beer & BBQ Festival at Wayville Showground, says AMIC SA State Manager Chris Kelly.

"It was our first time there, it went pretty well and we hope to be back next year. We'll do a few things differently, just some tweaking," Chris says.



Mt Gambier's Tim Von Stanke followed his success of last year by winning the Pork category of Sausage King.

# AMIC SA AWARDS 2023

## APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Nicholas Parashakis,  
Campbelltown Centre Meats

RUNNER UP: Thomas Chamberlain,  
Crestline Meats, Gawler

## SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

MBL

## LEGENDS AWARD

Trevor Hill

## SAUSAGE KING

### BEEF

- 1 Port Augusta Meat Store
- 2 Coopers Butchers, Burra
- 3 Collins Court Butcher, Mt Gambier

*BBQ Sausage*  
*Country BBQ Snag*  
*Beef Sausage*

### PORK

- 1 Swallow Drive Meat Supply, Mt Gambier *Traditional Pork*
- 2 Coopers Butchers, Burra *Old English Pork*
- 3 Compass Meats, Mt Compass *English Pork*

### LAMB

- 1 Ellis Butchers, McLaren Vale
- 2 Peterborough Meats
- 3 Rollbusch Quality Meats, Waikerie

*Lamb Merguez*  
*Lamb & Mint*  
*Lamb Jalapeno*

### POULTRY

- 1 Campbelltown Centre Meats *Chicken & Wild Fennel*
- 2 Swallow Drive, Mt Gambier *Chicken, Pumpkin & Feta*
- 3 Warooka Country Meats *Chicken, Spinach & Pine Nut*

### GOURMET

- 1 Meat At The Market *Pork, Pickled Fig & Blue Cheese*
- 2 Carve 'n Cut, Whyalla *Jalapeno & Cheese*
- 3 IGA Minlaton *Beef Brisket Satay Sausage*

### CONTINENTAL

- 1 Ellis Butchers, McLaren Vale *Italian Sausage*
- 2 Rollbusch Quality Meats, Waikerie *Italian Sausage*
- 3 Carve 'n Cut, Whyalla *Italian Pork Sausage*

## BUTCHERS BURGER

### BEEF BURGER

- 1 Compass Meats, Mt Compass *Beef, Cheese & Jalapeno*
- 2 Tender Cuts, Naracoorte *Salt & Pepper Brisket Burger*
- 3 Peterborough Meats *Beef Burger*

### GOURMET BURGER

- 1 Elder Meat Store, Glengowrie *Thai Burger*
- 2 Peterborough Meats *Chicken, Cheese & Bacon Burger*
- 3 Ceduna Meat Store *Beef Burger*

## READY TO EAT (Meat-based pastry products)

- 1 Ellis Butchers, McLaren Vale *Lamb & Mushroom Pie*
- 2 Riverland Country Style Meats, Renmark *Chicken Mango Curry Pie*
- 3 Peterborough Meats *Beef Goulash Pie*





# After 35 years in one shop, Ash remains as keen as ever

Ash Pfieler has seen multiple changes over his 35 years in the one Riverland shop but the key factor that hasn't changed has been his passion for the job.

"I still love it – it's always changing, always evolving," says Ash, 54, *pictured*, who began his apprenticeship at Loxton "institution" Hygienic Meats in 1988 and purchased the business in 2001.

The corner business has been providing premium meat and supporting locals for more than 50 years, with some current customers being regulars since Ash's first day in the shop.

He joined when the shop still had its own slaughterhouse before health regulations were tightened and a relatively-limited

range of steak, chops and sausages was standard fare.

While maintaining key traditions that have stood the test of time, Ash has embraced changes to meet shifting consumer demands – and to keep his work challenging and interesting.

Along the way, his skill has been recognised by a string of AMIC awards in national and State Sausage King competitions.

"Big changes have been the evolution of value adding and providing ready meals for time-poor people," he says.

"Providing cuts, mainly for blokes in their mid-30s, for low-and-slow barbecuing has

also been important. We source beef from half a dozen feedlots in the area – the steaks really are terrific."

Ash, who sponsors eight local sports clubs, says it's all about quality and service. "I know most people who walk in the door and they generally like a lot of banter," he says.

"We aim to appeal to people across all demographics. Some customers in their 90s were coming here when I started. They have some good stories to tell; they become like family."

Ash was unclear on a career path after completing high school. His introduction to customer service was working as a bowser boy for 18 months in the days when service stations had driveway attendants.

He then spent a year working in a local citrus packing shed, zipping around in a forklift.

"My dad was mates with Bill Ebert, the local butcher who was looking for an apprentice. My name came up and the rest is history," says Ash who began at Hygienic Meats when he was 19.

Hygienic Meats already had a strong reputation in Loxton and





> surrounds when Ash joined. He had good teachers in Bill and Chris Schwarz, another butcher who had completed his apprenticeship with Bill.

The shop had its own slaughterhouse so Ash's meat education extended beyond retail.

Bill retired in late 1988 and sold Hygienic Meats to Chris, who later bought another Loxton butcher shop which eventually closed.

Ash worked with Chris for 13 years before tighter health regulations came into force, effectively requiring the slaughterhouse to be rebuilt to keep operating.

Chris decided to sell the shop in 2001 and concentrate on slaughtering by rebuilding and expanding the slaughterhouse. Loxton Abattoir was created.

Ash and Chris's mature-age apprentice Nigel Rollbusch went into partnership to buy Hygienic Meats. Ash purchased Nigel's share of the business five years later, in mid-2006.

Nigel left to become Meat Supervisor for Eudunda Farmers' three Big River Foodland supermarkets at Loxton, Barmera and Waikerie before becoming a livestock buyer.

He returned to retail butchery in 2016 to open Rollbusch Quality Meats in Waikerie. Awards success followed, highlighted by a national Sausage King crown in 2019 for his bratwurst sausages.

Chris, Ash and Nigel's shared history extends to being strong and loyal MBL



*Passion for quality.... Ash Pfieler in his Loxton shop with prime beef from local feedlots.*

members for many years, their valued support continuing unabated.

Ash runs his business with another butcher and two mature-age apprentices, with his wife Misty and their daughters Shania, 25, and Melody, 23, serving and helping with deliveries during busy times around Easter and Christmas.

While a new online service has proved successful, Ash says a huge attraction of

his work is face-to-face contact with customers and "seeing happy faces."

"A great thing about being a butcher is making people happy with quality products. I enjoy the feedback of happy customers," he says.

"It's great when people who are usually supermarket shoppers say, 'Wow, there is nice meat around here - I wish I'd come here years ago.'"

## LUKE SEEKS ELITE BUTCHERS FOR PARIS



Captain Luke Leyson wants skilled, creative butchers to try out for the Australian team for the World Butchers' Challenge in Paris in 2025.

Luke, *pictured*, manager of Goodwood Quality Meats, hopes to finalise the six-man team by mid-November to ensure time for thorough preparation, including full practice sessions.

Last year, Luke led the Australian team to a close second behind Germany in the WBC in Sacramento, California.

"We were only able to have five months' preparation last time but we're planning ahead for Paris to make sure we have the best preparation," he says.

"We're looking for suitable butchers to join

the team. We're not reaching out to individuals as we don't want to be seen as playing favourites, so it's up to interested butchers to put their hands up."

The Paris event, held over two days, is expected to include 18 teams from across Europe, North America, South America and Australasia.

Teams will have three hours and 15 minutes to turn a side of beef, a side of pork, a whole lamb and five chickens into a themed display of value-added cuts, requiring superior carving, boning and finishing skills.

"It does get a bit stressful when you look down at your bench and you have four or five different things going on but butchers face stress every day," Luke says.

Roger Nickels enjoys just about all aspects of running his own butcher shop – except having to sharpen his knives.

Many a butcher would share his aversion but it's surprising in Roger's case because he once ran a successful knife-sharpening business.

"Yes, believe it or not, I hate sharpening my own knives. These days I have to sharpen by hand with an old oilstone rather than using machinery," he says.

"It's tedious, and sometimes I can't help thinking how good it would be to have someone come in and do it for me!"

Roger, 54, *pictured*, the owner of Clovercrest Gourmet Meats at Modbury North, trained as a butcher and was a supermarket meat buyer before running his own mobile knife-sharpening business for 15 years.

"Everyone needs knives. My customers ranged from butcher shops and florists to hospitals, nursing homes and schools," he says.

"In butcher shops, I sharpened equipment such as mincer blades as well as knives. I got offers for work when it became known I'd been a butcher."

Roger supplemented his week-day knife-sharpening business with weekend work at several butcher shops. He enjoyed the work and was able to keep his hand in as a butcher.

He did some casual work at Clovercrest Gourmet Meats and when it came up for sale in 2016, he grabbed the opportunity and hasn't looked back.

Offering quality meat, caring service and the odd dash of banter, Roger grew a strong bank of customers, from older regulars wanting traditional fare to younger men wanting ribeyes, tomahawks and other cuts for barbecuing.

He is also catering for his area's growing Indian community by supplying goat for curries.

He runs the shop with trusty assistant Lisa Owen. "I describe it not as a one-butcher shop but

# SHARP OPERATOR



a two-person shop," he says.

"Lisa's my assistant manager who does everything from serving to crumbing and running sausages through. She's great with customer service.

"We like making new things. We can both cook and if we see something we'd like to try, we'll test it in our home kitchens and compare notes back in the shop."

Roger says his decision to buy

the shop was vindicated by the March 2020 arrival of Covid-19 which would have "killed" his knife-sharpening business.

"Knife-sharpening would not have been classed as an essential service – I certainly wouldn't have been allowed into hospitals and nursing homes," he says.

Roger grew up in Port Pirie and began working life as a clean-up boy in the meat room of the local Coles supermarket,

earning pocket money after school.

His first fulltime job was at the same supermarket.

"I did my apprenticeship there and later moved to Adelaide as a Coles meat buyer," he says.

Identifying a gap in the market, he opened his mobile knife-sharpening business in 2008 and the venture fared well with a diverse range of customers.

He was a regular to MBL's showroom, buying knives, pouches and other merchandise.

He made chains for pouches and chicken boning cones which MBL would sell.

In his shop, he says he's a 100% supporter of MBL. "You'd be mad not to be. I buy everything from MBL, from sausage casing and ham net to machinery, and there's the annual rebate and shares" he says.

"There's also the convenience of MBL, with rep visits. MBL goes out of its way to help you."



A winning team.... Roger with his trusty offsider Lisa Owens.





# "Meat the Team"

## Profiles on MBL staff members

Throughout his diverse career across the meat industry, Ben Smith has always had a thirst for learning how all things mechanical tick.

MBL members and customers are now benefitting from Ben's knowledge, accumulated across experience ranging from managing small butcher shops to leadership roles on Ingham's huge production floor.

"Having an all-round knowledge of the industry is a definite plus for me at MBL," says Ben, 38, *pictured*, who joined the co-operative in February as Business Development Manager (Machinery).

"I've learnt a lot over the years about machinery and how it works, including getting maximum yield and saving time.

"I've learnt from everywhere I've worked but I'd say I learnt most at the Ingham's plant at Bolivar. I was on the kill floor, in charge of 80 people on the afternoon shift."

With high-volume output, any machinery issues at Ingham's needed to be quickly resolved and Ben was right in the thick of problem-solving. He describes the Ingham's workplace as "fantastic."

But Ben, married with two pre-school children, found shift work that often extended past 11pm played havoc with family life so he was delighted to join MBL.

"I'm enjoying day work at MBL and learning new systems. I've definitely had a busy start," he says, referring to MBL Machinery's strong sales leading up to the June 30 ending of a record tax break for machinery purchases.

Ben's CV runs long and deep, reflecting his

goal of getting as much experience as possible across the many sectors of the meat industry.

"If you stay comfortable in your bubble, you don't become a better version of yourself," he says.

"Rather than stay in retail butchery, I wanted variety. I wanted more well-rounded experience, right along the supply chain from the kill floor through wholesale and retail to the dinner plate."

Growing up in Adelaide's north-east suburbs, Ben did a TAFE pre-vocational course in butchery when midway through Year 12 in 2002 and was a wash-up boy at the old Turner's butchery at Golden Grove.

"I did my apprenticeship there. I went on to manage the shop after it became Springfield when Turner's became part of Mike Rankin's Holco group," he says.

"I left to get wider experience, doing boning at Golflands Pork at Wingfield before moving to get supermarket experience at Woolworths.

"Mike Rankin called to offer me a job as a wholesale sales rep at Holco. I stayed with Holco for a number of years, becoming Wholesale Supervisor.

"I went on to manage a butcher shop in Virginia for several years before assisting with the rebrand and move of the business to Mawson Lakes shopping complex.

"Upon sale by owners after the move, I decided not to stay and reached back out to Mike. I returned to Holco as a Production Supervisor and later became Assistant Production Manager."

Ben's seven years at Holco were followed by time as a meat specialist at wholesale food supplier Bidfood. He then joined Ingham's as a Production Supervisor.

He happened to see a LinkedIn profile on Kane Paues, MBL's General Manager of Sales and Marketing. The pair had worked at Holco and they met for a coffee.

"Kane offered me a position at MBL. It was a great opportunity with day work which is important with my young family," Ben says.

"It has all worked out well. I'm working with great people – the environment at MBL is great."

On the home front, day work has had an important impact, with Ben now able to spend quality evening time with his wife Merinda and their two sons Arthur, 3, and Henry, 2.

## Q & A

**Do you have a special interest or hobby?** BBQ competitions and spending time with my young family.

**What would you do with a spare \$50,000?** Take the family on a nice holiday and invest the rest.

**If you were a car, what would you be?** Holden Torana SLR 5000.

**What food can't you live without?** Nutella.

**If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would it be?** Bruce Lee.

**What's the best thing about working at MBL?** The people I work with, and meeting people and growing industry relationships.

**Kellogg's®**

# CORN FLAKES *Crumbs*

*Deliciously crisp & golden*

— THE ORIGINAL & BEST —



**No artificial  
colours, flavours  
or preservatives**



**Made from  
Australian corn**



**Made in Australia  
from at least  
99% Australian  
ingredients**

Kellogg's Corn Flakes Crumbs are crushed, crispy golden flakes of corn, perfect for cooking. Here are some golden ways to use them in your cooking:



**MINCE FILLER**



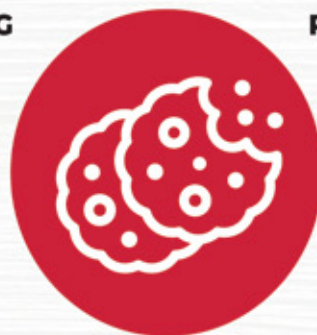
**CRUMB COATING**



**PIE CRUSTS**



**CASSEROLE TOPPING**



**BISCUIT MIXTURE**

## **PACK DESCRIPTION:**

- Bulk box of 4 x 3kg clear bags of Kellogg's® Corn Flakes Crumbs
- Ideal for butchers and food processors
- Convenient packaging for ease of storage and durability

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL THE  
FRIENDLY MBL SALES TEAM ON (08) 8417 6000**

