

Resilient MBL continues strong growth but challenges abound

MBL has posted record results for the 2021-22 financial year, underscoring the Co-operative's ongoing strength and resilience in the face of challenging business conditions.

The Co-operative's overall revenue climbed by \$16.1 million to reach a record \$92.6 million and net profit rose by \$1.5 million to top \$8 million for the first time.

This resulted in the members' rebate on merchandise and machinery sales rising by 1.5 basis points to an unprecedented 18.5%.

Chairman George Ujvary and CEO Jamie Higgins announced the good news at the MBL Annual General Meeting, followed by a networking barbecue, on November 7.

MBL's Proteins Division again drove results. Despite similar volumes to 2020-21, proteins revenue increased by 29.8% to \$61.8 million thanks to high demand for finished products.

Merchandise rose by 6.7% to \$27.7 million and machinery sales increased by 7% to

top \$3 million, pleasing results in light of continuing supply shortages, shipping delays, cost blowouts and staffing disruptions in the wake of Covid-19.

"The merchandise team did a very good job trying to maintain our supply and margins, find alternatives and limit passing on full price increases," Jamie says.

George says, "We're absolutely delighted at the results for 2021-22 which continues the Co-operative's strong growth over recent times but we will need to work hard to meet future challenges.

"Continued success can never be taken for granted and we expect a list of issues will significantly challenge both our Merchandise and Proteins divisions in 2022-23."

As with businesses everywhere, MBL continues to grapple with supply chain difficulties, high shipping costs, delivery delays, rising inflation and skyrocketing energy bills.

As but one example of MBL's rising costs, our gas bill for the Wingfield plant will be

\$6.5 million more this financial year than the previous year.

"There's general inflation to deal with. Everything costs us more and, as a Co-operative, we have to try to limit passing on the full costs," Jamie says.

"We are also challenged by wage growth. Wages have gone up extraordinarily and with it comes the pressure of staff retention.

"All these factors from outside conspire to put pressure on our businesses and it's a credit to the management team that we keep weathering the storm."

George says, "While there are significant challenges, the Board is confident the Co-operative has a bright future, continuing to deliver value to members."

The 2022-23 financial year has got off to a good start, with the proteins, merchandise and machinery divisions all performing well in the first quarter.

Full report pages 4 - 5



iKON pack

MBL FOOD SERVICE

BURGER KING SHAUN

Shaun Watson was over the moon at winning both burger categories at the AMIC SA industry awards night to add to the trophy cluster he proudly displays at his Naracoorte shop.

Shaun and the other winners of SA awards will represent the State in the 12 categories of the national finals in Adelaide in early February. We have full reports inside.

MBL Christmas Trading Hours



Please note showroom counter sales and customer / members

pick up will be closed early on the days detailed below.

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

Country deliveries will be limited by regional transport timetables.

DATE	TRADING STATUS	TIME
Friday Dec 23	Early close	8am to 2pm
Monday Dec 26	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tuesday Dec 27	CLOSED	CLOSED
Friday Dec 30	Early close	8am to 2pm
Monday Jan 2	CLOSED	CLOSED

There's some news on the gas front, even though MBL expects our gas bill for the Wingfield proteins recycling plant to rise by \$6.5 million this financial year.

SA's Minister for Energy, Tom Koutsantonis, voiced strong support for MBL at a meeting with CEO Jamie Higgins and Proteins Division Operations Manager George Handakaris.

"In a discussion around gas supply and possible shortages, Tom said MBL, as a Co-operative with members, had his full support and would support efforts for MBL's gas supply," Jamie says.

"He was really positive and showed a keen interest and good leadership about gas supply and his support for MBL.

"SA can't do this alone because we're linked to the east coast gas market, on the network that also includes NSW, Queensland and Victoria. We aren't isolated like WA."

Jamie has been unsuccessful in efforts to secure gas for 2023 with Adelaide-based Santos, one of the nation's major gas producers.

On another level, MBL's case has been taken up in Canberra by Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals CEO Melina Morrison.

"Melina has taken a strong interest, supporting us by lobbying and presenting our case to the Federal Government," Jamie says.

Treasury has given the Federal Government the green light to pull the gas "trigger" to retain



The gas-powered heart of the Wingfield plant... the rotary Flo Dry dryer (background) and a G Tech separator (foreground).

export-bound gas for Australian use.

Jamie says action must be taken to secure Australian gas for Australians at fair prices for the long-term viability of manufacturers, including MBL.

In the short term, warmer weather has given some relief.

"The price went up to \$55gj in June and July and is now in the lows \$20s because warmer weather and more winds meant less dependency on gas for electricity production. It's as fickle as that," Jamie says.

The Wingfield plant uses around 300,000gj of gas annually.

Support for MBL on gas

MBL NEWS

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Double delight at Spring Gully

Two SA Food Industry Awards have gone the way of Spring Gully Foods, one of MBL's newest "non-protein" food manufacturing members.

Spring Gully won the Innovation in Business award for businesses with more than 15 fulltime employees for its product development process.

"This process is a five-stage gate system, from

the screening of an idea through to manufacturing, that has resulted in a 95% success rate for selling newly-trialled products," says Spring Gully's Head of Commercial, Tegan Hack.

The prestigious Leader Award was presented to Kevin Webb, who was Managing Director for 26 years and is currently a Director and Head of Finance.

Adelaide gears for national awards

AMIC's national awards finals will return to Adelaide in early February after an eight-year break, with MBL-affiliated Ikon Pack stepping up as the naming rights sponsor of the gala dinner and presentation night.

Three days of varied events, on February 2-4, will be held at Adelaide Zoo, TAFE SA Regency Park and Adelaide Town Hall.

More than 100 people from interstate – mainly awards finalists, their partners and staff – are expected to travel to Adelaide to join their SA counterparts in festivities.

"Many of the events, led by a trade show, will be of interest to local butchers who are encouraged to attend," says chief organiser Chris Kelly, AMIC's SA State Manager.

little differently to interest interstaters, such as holding several events at Adelaide Zoo where we've successfully held our SA awards nights."

Judges will preside over 12 categories – six Sausage King categories, two burger categories, two ham categories and one bacon category, plus Apprentice of the Year.

Winners from each category in each State qualified for the national finals (*our four-page wrap on the SA award winners starts on page 8*).

"We're doing some things a The schedule of events is:



Thursday, February 2: Apprentices arrive in the morning, group tours of butcher shops in the afternoon, and an evening Weber Grill Academy Experience.

Friday, February 3: Trade expo at The Sanctuary, Adelaide Zoo. Judging of national finals, including Sausage King, plus theory exam for apprentices, at TAFE SA. Welcoming evening drinks and canapes at Adelaide Zoo's Bamboo Forest Pavilion, home of the giant pandas.

Saturday, February 4: Trade expo and mystery box appren-

tice competition at The Sanctuary, followed by the Ikon Pack-sponsored gala dinner and presentations night for around 250 people at Adelaide Town Hall.

Chris Kelly will email AMIC members once full details are finalised.

The national Ikon Pack group will be prominent, including showcasing its products at the two-day trade expo.

Through Ikon Pack, MBL has become a leader in the growing home compostable packaging market.

BUTCHER SHORTAGE CLOSSES LINKE'S

The national shortage of butchers has forced the closure of iconic butchery Linke's Central Meat Store after 94 years of serving the Barossa.

Third-generation owner Graham Linke, 83, *pictured*, closed the doors for the final time in early October, reluctantly ending his 67-year career at the Nuriootpa shop.

Graham has been fruitlessly searching for butchers for several years. He has been running the business with just one offsider plus his wife Lola who looked after the books. The shop once had eight staff.

"It's been pretty tough over the last few years since Covid. I lost some long-serving butchers and there's just none to replace them" he says.

"I've been working for 12-18 hours a day for years, when you include running the smokehouses through the night, and it wasn't doing my health any good."



Graham, who rarely had a holiday, was the custodian of Germanic smallgoods traditions handed down from Silesian relatives who landed in South Australia in 1838.

A loyal MBL member for decades, he looks back on his career with fondness. "I have

met people from all over Australia and overseas, a lot of tourists. It's been a terrific thing," he says.

"It's not how I wanted things to end but I'm now going to move on and enjoy what they call retirement."



Delivering the good news at the AGM... (from left) CEO Jamie Higgins, Company Secretary Darryl McPhee and Chairman George Ujvary.

MBL ANNUAL REPORT

Address to the AGM By CEO Jamie Higgins

I am delighted to report that MBL achieved record results in 2021-22. Our overall revenue was \$92.6 million which was \$16.1 million more than the previous year.

Our net profit for the year was just over \$8 million and as a result, the rebate paid on merchandise and machinery sales was 18.5%, which was 1.5 basis points higher than 2020-21.

The key drivers of the record result included:

- The Proteins Division's increased efficiency and improved raw material supply together with strong selling prices for meal and tallow. We achieved improved output from the low-temperature plant at Wingfield and the Keith plant's volumes were also up on last year.
- The Merchandise Division's changing product mix, with more custom blending opportunities and diversification into other food manufacturing markets with better margins than our traditional blending business.

Across our businesses, we maintained a focus on costs and margins, including

negotiating some major raw material contracts for the Proteins Division.

Merchandise

Sales in Merchandise were 6.7% stronger than 2020-21 and again fared well through the testing times of Covid-19.

We constantly incurred price increases from suppliers and, as a result, our gross profit across the Merchandise business was 0.8% behind budget.

The Merchandise team have done a very good job trying to maintain our supply and margins, and finding alternatives.

Machinery

Machinery sales were strong, up by 7%, and continue to grow. Margins were maintained at a similar level to the previous year and we were able to remain competitive on prices.

Strong demand has continued in the last few months. We have plenty of stock and some new machinery to offer, with a big display at our Athol Park showroom.

Athol Park operations

Over the year, the warehouse has operated well given some of the supply challenges

we have seen with imports like packaging and personal protective equipment due to shipping disruptions.

Warehouse and distribution costs remained steady as a percentage of sales. Other costs were maintained during the year.

In July, we installed a new warehouse management system. We had some challenges with the rollout but the teething problems have now been resolved.

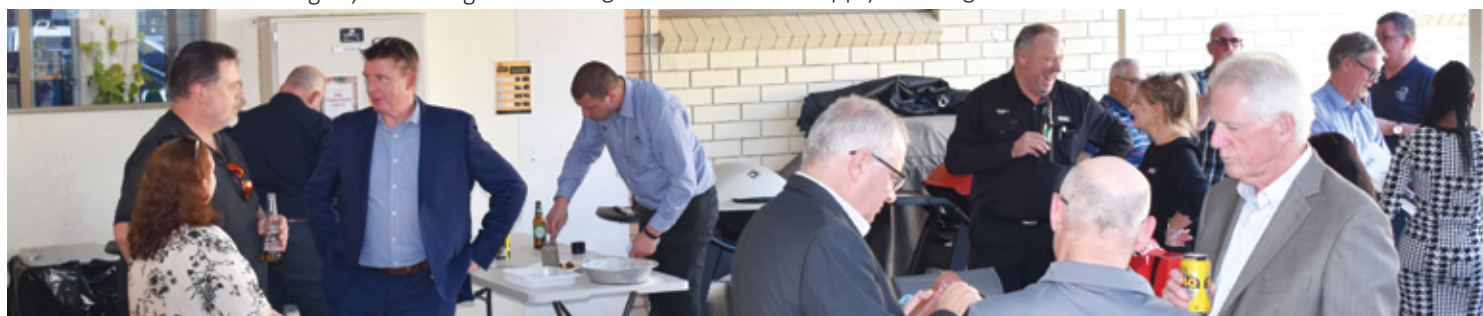
Proteins

Wingfield Proteins is a strong, amazing business. We were under workload pressure for most of the year - so much so that we have not had the time to shut down to finish installing a new cooker.

Mixed meal prices were under pressure, declining early and increasing as the year rolled on.

Low pork demand affected our exports of pork meal for the first half of the year, while increased poultry volumes and pricing helped to underpin volume efficiencies.

Rising energy costs are significant, with gas a major focus. In June 2021, our gas bill for Wingfield was under



The post-AGM barbecue gave members an informal opportunity to mix with MBL representatives and other members.

> \$300,000 plus MBL had to put up \$600,000 in security or bank guarantee. In July this year, gas bill was \$846,000 and we have nearly \$2 million cash tied up in security.

Gas price rises really started to impact the business from May so there is only two months' worth of extraordinary gas cost for FY2022, but we expect we'll pay around \$6.5 million more for gas at Wingfield in FY2023.

Keith Proteins improved with supply this year, processing ovine, duck, goat, feather and blood.

Volumes of ovine material were strong in the second half of FY2022 and prices for meal and tallow were higher.

Prices of ovine meal for pet food have improved, however shipping availability and costs remain a constant challenge.

This current year 2022-23

Proteins started very well in the first quarter with the utilisation of the low temperature plant exceeding expectations with volumes and efficiency.

Gas pricing and wage costs together with labour shortages continue to challenge MBL and all manufacturing businesses.

Prices for meals and tallows have also remained strong.

Our Merchandise and Machinery divisions performed well in the first quarter, with blending volumes up and machinery sales strong.

A strong focus on stock levels and operational improvements will further improve our service levels for members.

COMMENT

By MBL Chairman George Ujvary

The strength of MBL in the face of challenging business conditions has been strongly demonstrated in the Co-operative's record results for the 2021-22 financial year.

But with outside challenges persisting and fresh ones expected, MBL will need to work hard to meet our targets for this financial year. Continued success can never be taken for granted, particularly in today's uncertain world.

Our 2021-22 success is down, in part, to last year's work by the Board and CEO Jamie Higgins to create a five-year strategy for the Co-operative.

The strategy set MBL a direction to follow. Jamie and senior management then worked tirelessly to develop the organisation to deliver on this strategy.

The financial results of 2021-22 are a result of management and staff successfully delivering on strategic goals for the benefit of members.

One goal was broadening our traditional customer base to admit eligible "non-protein" food manufacturers such as Spring Gully, Beerenberg and Maggie Beer Products.

While MBL will always stick to our core values of supporting our traditional butcher membership, an expanded customer base increases the Co-operative's buying power and creates new

opportunities, such as in custom blending.

Broadening our customer base creates a bigger pot to be shared by all members through the annual rebate. It's win-win for everyone.

Among other areas for MBL growth is the supply of sustainable packaging. Sustainability and the use of recyclable and compostable packaging is a big strategy, on the front page of agendas, for supermarkets.

MBL is already sourcing and supplying Drakes, butchers and other customers with quality sustainable packing and we expect this will only increase ahead of the ban on plastics in 2025.

For 2022-23, we expect a list of issues will significantly challenge both our Merchandise and Proteins divisions. These challenges won't alter our strategic direction but it's possible they may slow us down.

Global shipping is continuing to see delays and extremely high pricing for our Merchandise and Machinery divisions.

Our Proteins division will be significantly challenged by the availability of raw material and energy pricing, particularly gas for our Wingfield plant.

Bearish global economic indicators, inflation, rising interest rates and staff recruitment and retention issues will affect MBL. Additionally, other factors that are presently unknown may come into play.

While MBL is a strong, growing organisation with a bright future, we'll need to work hard for continued success. We can't take our eyes off the ball.



MBL's Merchandise Division was well represented at the AMIC awards night. Pictured (back, from left): Ryan Mercier, Shane Harrison, Ben Oerlemans, Dale Rowe, Cameron Mansueto, Chris Rowe, Greg Goodfellow, Shane Reynolds, Jamie Higgins, Kane Paues and Mark Rosewarne. Front: Susie O'Brien, Tayla Meaney and Mackenzie Beames.

Now's an unbeatable time to buy machinery but it's first in, best dressed

There'll never be a better time than now to buy machinery from MBL but butchers and other customers are urged to strike while the iron's hot.

A number of factors have converged to make this an opportunistic time to upgrade machinery, led by:

- MBL stocking up on machinery in response to delivery delays and ahead of significant manufacturers' price rises next year, and
- The looming finish of the Federal Government's record Covid-inspired tax break which requires new machinery to be in use, or installed ready for use, by June 30 next year.

"Today's machinery prices are the cheapest we'll see because the tax break's ending is coinciding with machinery manufacturers already increasing their prices by up to 18% for delivery next year," says MBL Sales Manager Ryan Mercier, a former butcher.



A Nexus Chop Cutter in MBL's Athol Park showroom which is brimming with machinery.

"We have a large amount of machinery in stock for immediate delivery but it's first in, best dressed. Butchers and others should contact us straight away.

"We can discuss finance options for

purchase - we'll work to find a way to help approve applications.

"We have technicians who can take care of installation and factory-backed servicing and maintenance as



Here's another one ready to go.... Sales Manager Ryan Mercier positions a new Gaser 240 Crumbing Line in the MBL showroom.

➤ part of our policy of taking care of our members.”

As well as benefiting from competitive prices and expert after-sales service, MBL members also receive rebates on machinery purchases.

Traditionally, MBL has delivered competitive machinery prices due to our buying power but we have never previously held such a large volume of stock.

“We responded to severe Covid-induced delays in the shipment and delivery of our overseas orders by ordering larger volumes of stock which we now have available,” Ryan says.

“While most is stored in our warehouses, our showroom at Athol Park is packed with machinery. We’ve tried to display a good array for people to inspect.

“But while we still have a large amount of machinery for immediate delivery, the volume will reduce as orders increase ahead of the tax break’s June 30 deadline.”

The unprecedented tax break, introduced as a part of the Federal Government’s Covid-19 stimulus incentives in October 2020, dwarfs all previous machinery tax breaks by allowing businesses to claim immediate tax deductions for any number of machinery items at any cost.

As machinery must be installed, or installed ready for use, by June 30 next year for the tax break to apply, businesses wanting to upgrade should get the ball rolling by contacting MBL now.

They should also consult their accountants for specific tax advice.

Ryan says machinery prices will rise next year due to the ending of the current tax break combined with machinery manufacturers increasing their prices.

“We’re now ordering machinery from overseas for delivery in six months’ time and we’re paying significantly more – some machinery is up by 18%, others by 12%,” he says.

“A lot comes from Europe where inflation and oil and gas prices are hurting manufacturers. The price of stainless steel is up, and manufacturers are struggling to obtain electronic parts, adding to delays.

“All of this combines to make now the ideal time for butchers and others to contact MBL to upgrade while our stocks last at current prices.”

MBL has a range of Australian and imported machines to satisfy the requirements of

every member, from the smallest butcher to the largest processor.

Our range of machinery can help improve efficiency and ease the widespread problem of staff shortages.

“Machines like the new Rex automatic sausage fillers, Mainca automatic batter and breading line, and Foodlogistik automatic portioning machines are essentially plug-and-play,” Ryan says.

“Once set up, a butcher shop’s value-add-

ed product, portioning, smallgoods and sausage manufacturing capacity can greatly increase with reduced labour.

“The right machinery creates efficiency and adds value, helping businesses remain sustainable into the future.

“Being a butcher is hard work and the right machinery can make working life much easier and save precious time.”

For more information, phone the MBL Machinery team on 08 8417 6000.



John Hughes with the Foodlogistik SlicR portion cutter at Hahndorf Gourmet.

CREATING EFFICIENCIES

Hahndorf Gourmet exemplifies the significant ongoing benefits of creating efficiencies by investing in the latest machinery from MBL.

A German-made Foodlogistik SlicR is making light work of portion cutting at the Royal Park smallgoods manufacturer, saving time and labour as well as delivering perfect portioning.

“At a time when we find it hard to find workers, this machine has helped us out tremendously,” says owner Malcolm Hughes, who runs the expanding business with sons Liam, James and John.

James says, “It saves a lot of time. We use it mainly for bacon and it cuts 400 slices a minute. What used to take us three days to cut manually is now cut in a day by machine.”

He adds with a smile, “I don’t have to get up at 1am now – I can sleep in until 5am!”

Malcolm says the Foodlogistik SlicR represents an investment of almost

\$40,000 and describes it as “money well spent.”

“We’re pleased with it, although we don’t use it to its potential. We use it for bacon and salami, but different blades cut through bones to slice T-bones and chops,” he says.

After beginning in the Adelaide Hills, Hahndorf Gourmet moved to Glenelg in 2006 before shifting to bigger premises at Royal Park in 2014 enabled expansion.

“As we further expand, we’re looking at automating our slicing and packing operations. The Foodlogistik SlicR is a step in the right direction,” Malcolm says.

“We’re doing our research and MBL is helping. MBL has always played an important role in our business, giving us a lot of advice over the years.

“We’ve bought all types of machinery from MBL, paying off machines over x-number of years – and we receive the annual rebate as well.”



Mt Gambier's Tim Von Stanke with his trophies for first, second and third in three different Sausage King categories.

COUNTRY TRIUMPHS

Creative butchers from small shops emerge as big winners

Country butchers stamped their skill and flair on this year's AMIC SA industry awards by collecting two-thirds of trophies awarded.

MBL was the major sponsor of the SA awards night which was attended by 235 people at Adelaide Zoo on November 5.

Of the 53 trophies awarded across 18 sausage, burger and smallgoods categories,

regional butchers collected 37 trophies compared to 16 by Adelaide entrants.

Seven of the eight gold trophies in the six Sausage King and two burger categories went to small country shops, with the winners progressing to the national titles in Adelaide in February.

Naracoorte butcher Shaun Watson won both burger categories to add to his host of

trophies displayed in his Tender Cuts shop.

In other highlights, a rising star and a retired high achiever were honoured.

Edward Potter, of Churchill's Butchery at Glenelg, was named Apprentice of the Year (see story page 10) and former long-serving MBL Director Mike Rankin, of Holco fame, received the AMIC SA Legends Award (story page 11).

Retailers of the Year were Bos Taurus Butchery at Norwood (metro zone) and Warburton's Butchers at Renmark (regional zone).

Overall, the 2022 awards night will go down as when country butchers stood tall.

City butchers have traditionally dominated the awards but the strong country push that emerged last year snowballed this year, with winners spread from the South-East and Riverland, up to Burra and over to Port Lincoln.



Andrew Mills, of The River Farm Products near Port Lincoln, won seven trophies.



AMIC awards night sponsored by MBL

➤ The reintroduction several years ago of regional awards being judged and presented in the regions is a key driver of country success at State level.

"We took the awards back to regions, rather than butchers having to send their entries to Adelaide for judging," says AMIC State Manager Chris Kelly.

"More entries from country butchers resulted and with more entries, there's been more success at the State awards."

The Sausage King winners were:

Beef: Swallow Drive Meat Supply, Mt Gambier, for its traditional Beef Sausage.

Lamb: Coopers Butchers, Burra, for its Station Saltbush Hogget Sausage, for the second year running.

Poultry: The River Farm Products, near Port Lincoln, for its Chicken Sausage.

Pork: Barossa Fine Food, Edinburgh North, for its Cambridge Chipolatas.

Continental: Rollbusch Quality Meats, Waikerie, for its Bratwurst Sausage.

Gourmet: Jamestown Meat Service for its Chilli Con Carne Sausage.

In the burger competitions, Shaun Watson's twin success came with his Salt and Pepper Beef Burger (Best Butchers Burger) and his Thai Chicken in Shredded Coconut Burger (Best Butchers Gourmet).

He also won a bronze trophy for his garlic mettwurst.

"We're pretty excited. The trophies are rewards for effort we've put in over the years," says Shaun, a national 2015 Sausage King champion who farms his own lambs at Eastlea, near Naracoorte.

The burgers were developed by Shaun and



Five-trophy haul... Waikerie's Nigel Rollbusch with his wife Toni and sons Cody and Alex.

his wife Sophie in their farm kitchen from basic ideas seen on TV cooking shows.

"The salt and pepper burger's on the menu of a restaurant in Robe but we have had most competition success with the Thai chicken one," he says.

The Thai burger was judged SA's Best Butchers Gourmet in 2017 and 2019, and won the national title in 2018.

"When we first created it, I was worried the coconut on the outside would burn, but instead it just turns a nice golden brown," Shaun says.

Success stories abounded at the 2022 SA awards, with butchers such as Mt Gambier's Tim Von Stanke and Eyre Peninsula's Andrew Mills among the new faces to shine.

Tim, 48, quit his career as a South-East crayfisherman at age 41 to do a butchery apprenticeship with former national Sausage King Mick Lamond before buying own small shop in 2019.

Tim entered his sausages in AMIC's combined Riverland and South-East competitions in 2021 but had no success. Undeterred, he entered again this year and surprised even himself by winning four of six regional categories.

"I would have been surprised if I had won just one category, let alone four. It was very satisfying and a great way to promote the business but I didn't expect too much at the State awards," he says.

But success kept coming at State level. As well as winning the prestigious Beef gold trophy, Tim's Spicy Pork sausage took silver in the Gourmet category and his Butter Chicken sausage took bronze in Poultry.

In the days after winning the awards, over 100 people posted congratulations on the shop's Facebook page. "The trophies are on the counter and I'm getting good comments," he says.

Andrew Mills, a farmer on a property overlooking Boston Bay some 20 minutes' drive north of Port Lincoln, gained butchery qualifications to open a farm shop selling his own beef and lamb in 2011.

He enlisted the help of local butchers and began making smallgoods. The farm shop is now closed as he concentrates on selling smallgoods around Eyre Peninsula.

He entered the AMIC awards for the first time last year, his five entries all winning minor placings at State level.

Andrew had seven entries at State level this year, breaking through for a gold-trophy win



Naracoorte's Shaun Watson (right), his wife Sophie and their MBL rep Dale Rowe.

Continued page 10

COUNTRY TRIUMPHS

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in Sausage King's poultry category and winning minor trophies for his six other entries.

He took silver trophies for his cheese kransky, sliced chicken and heat-treated garlic mettwurst, and took bronze trophies for his seasoned lamb sausage, lamb mint burger and bung fritz.

"Bung fritz was the only thing I entered both years as I wanted a range of our products to be judged. Next year, I'll enter different products again to test how we are doing," Andrew says.

Waikerie's Nigel Rollbusch won five trophies, led by gold for his Bratwurst Sausage which won him the national Continental crown in 2019.

His smoked leg ham won gold in Boneless and silver in On The Bone and he took bronze trophies for his Spanish bacon and cheese kransky.

Dieter Knoll and his production team at Barossa Fine Foods also won a total of five trophies, four of them gold.

Their pork sausages shone in Sausage King, with their Cambridge Chipolatas winning gold in Pork and their Scottish Pork Sausage taking silver in Continental.

They also won gold for their Vienna sausage in the Cooked Sausage In A Casing category as well as gold for their gourmet presswurst and Spanish salami.

Four trophies were won by Jamestown Meat Service. In addition to winning the Gourmet section of Sausage King, they took silver for bung fritz and beef jerky, plus bronze for Strasbourg sausage in Deli Meat.

Hallett Cove's Tendawrap Butchers won gold for their redgum smoked middle bacon and dry cured maple bacon, and silver for their redgum smoked leg ham and redgum smoked porchetta.

Costello's Smallgoods won the bung fritz crown for the second year in a row.

Riverland Country Style Meats won the value adding title with its sticky pork belly in fried rice, following its 2021 success with lamb shank pies.

Gold trophies were also won by Athelstone Quality Meats for its pepperoni and by Balhannah Butchery for its redgum double smoked bone-in leg ham.

Hard work bears fruit for Edward

SA's Apprentice of the Year Edward Potter says long hours working on his family's stone fruit blocks gave him the stamina to work demanding hours as a butcher.

"I loved helping Dad with the nectarines and mandarins on weekends, after school and during holidays," Edward, 20, says of growing up at Swan Hill in Victoria.

"I've always liked working. I can't sit still and like being busy so I had a good background for the constant work of being a butcher. It gave me a good work ethic."

Edward, *pictured*, a third-year apprentice at Churchill's Butchery, Glenelg, won the Apprentice of the Year title at his second attempt, nudging out Jesse Castle of Bruce's Meats, Stepney.

While finishing his high school education in Adelaide, Edward started working as a clean-up boy at the Glenelg shop because he "liked being busy and learning new things."

He enjoyed the many aspects of butchery, especially learning about different cuts, and took up an apprenticeship with Gary Churchill.

"I already knew the butchers and customers so it was an easy decision to do my appren-

ticeship with Gary. I was taught the basics and built on from there," Edward says.

"I'm curious about the industry, forever looking at what other shops are doing. Some butchers have been happy to show me around after I say I'm an apprentice."

AMIC's Apprentice of the Year competition revolved around a one-day competition at TAFE SA Regency Park in August.

Edward impressed judges with his knowledge and skills in the mystery box competition, breaking down a leg of lamb and a beef rump before making assorted products from a selection of supplied ingredients.

He made an easy-carve lamb leg stuffed with macadamia nuts, capsicum and onion, and a rump cap roast, pocketed and stuffed with macadamia nuts, mushrooms and fresh parsley.

From the beef rump, he also made mignon medallions, kebabs, patties with onion and parsley, and cordon bleu with crushed-macadamia crumbs.

"I entered last year but had no real idea what I was in for. This year, I knew what to expect so it was not massively stressful," says Edward, who completes his apprenticeship at the end of January.



Mike Rankin's a Legend

Being honoured with an AMIC SA Legends award caps a fabulous career for Mike Rankin, who served as an MBL Director for a record 28 years from 1989 to 2017.

He was Chairman from 2008 to 2012, the most progressive period of growth in MBL's history which saw the modernisation of the Wingfield recycling plant, the purchase of the Keith plant and the opening of our Athol Park base.

Mike began with his own one-man shop in Dulwich at age 18 soon after completing his apprenticeship and later purchased processing and wholesale business Holco, growing it into a multi-State operation with 300 employees.

Such was his work ethic that even as the boss, he'd arrive at Holco at 4am daily to work, as told, on the processing line for hours before heading to his office.

He retired, at age 60, in 2017 from both the MBL Board and his Holco business with a reputation as a valued mentor who guided and encouraged numerous people.

"When I meet people, I say I'm a retired butcher and I say it with pride," he says.

Mike is the fourth recipient of the AMIC SA Legends award after former AMIC veteran Paul Sandercock, TAFE SA lecturer Graeme Elliott and Windsor Meats stalwart Lynne Zammit.

"I feel pretty humbled. I didn't put my name up in lights and most people didn't know who I was, but I was up at 4am beaver away like everyone else. I tried to have a positive effect on people's lives, Mike says.

"I don't see this (AMIC award) as a business award but recognition for helping apprentices and others who have gone on to have successful businesses in their own right.

"I'm proud of my time on the Board of MBL, particularly of the amount of money we put back to members through rebates. That made me feel good, making a difference to people's lives."

Current MBL Chairman George Ujvary paid tribute to Mike, saying he's highly deserving of the AMIC award.

"Mike's a highly impressive individual with a highly impressive record in the SA meat industry. He has had a huge and positive influence on me," George says.



Mike Rankin receives the award from Trevor Hill, Chairman of AMIC's Retail Council.

"He guided me during my first three years on the MBL Board. His influence, along with that of Bruce Carter, remains with me as Chairman."

Mike began his career in 1972 when he was engaged as an apprentice at Lazy Lamb, O'Halloran Hill, by none other than Bruce Carter.

He was fresh out of his apprenticeship when he purchased his first shop in 1976 for the then substantial price of \$2,200 to a butcher who was retiring.

"I purchased an historic shop at Dulwich, low on automation with sawdust on the floor and an old chopping block. It was a throw-back to the 1940s or 1950s," he says.



Mike opened MBL's new Athol Park base in April 2013 by removing a butcher's apron to unveil a plaque.

"A friend taught me how to do a simple profit and loss statement. In my first week, I made \$297. I took out \$50 for weekly living expenses and banked the rest, so I was doing all right.

"I built up some funds for two and half years, then I got an offer to sell. It was too good to refuse, so I had to take it."

Mike bought several other small shops, building their profitability with sheer hard work. He acquired Turner's shops which were renamed Springfield. There were 11 shops in Adelaide and two in Darwin.

In 1980, he started the company that went on to acquire Holco in 1995. Holco became the largest meat food service business in SA and the NT. Expansion followed into Queensland.

Mike says butchery remains a good trade for young people to enter.

"Butchery is a great training ground and there's a big industry behind it – you come out with skill sets for other areas," he says.

"It gives you a great background that can lead to other things if you add some accounting skills. You never know where it might land you.

"There are opportunities in wholesale, in abattoirs, with processing companies and in management roles for supermarkets, as well as opportunities to work overseas.

"We need a way to show young people that butchery offers more than they may think."

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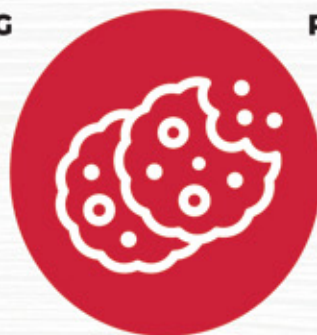
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