

MBL maintains strong growth despite continuing challenges

MBL recorded solid growth for the 2022-23 financial year, with overall revenue topping \$100 million for the first time despite challenging business conditions.

Revenue rose by more than \$17 million to \$110.5 million and resulted in a profit of \$7 million in the face of multiple challenges, including rising costs across all areas.

Despite the headwinds, the co-operative was able to pay members rebates of 16% on merchandise sales and 7.5% on machinery.

CEO Jamie Higgins and Chairman George Ujvary delivered news of another good year at a well-attended Annual General Meeting, followed by a tour of MBL

facilities and a networking barbecue, on November 6.

George says, "It was a pleasing result overall. Turnover was up on the previous year but profit was slightly down, reflecting external factors in the economy, some of which we can't control."

The Proteins Division overcame challenges to increase revenue by over 20% to more than \$74 million due to improved efficiency and increased raw material supply.

Merchandise sales grew by 7.5% and Machinery sales doubled but price increases from suppliers caused lower margins in both divisions.

"Overall, it was a good year with growth

even though, like businesses everywhere, our costs kept creeping up and our margins kept creeping down," Jamie says.

"We're continuing to perform well this financial year but we will need to work hard to meet challenges, particularly relating to costs and wages."

George says, "We face a testing year ahead. Yet, given our past and our resilience, we approach it with measured optimism."

"It's important to stay grounded and keep our eyes on the ball as continued success can't be taken for granted."

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MAKE IT WITH

MBL

Our brand refresh – p7



We begin making our own machinery

Machinery Manager Ryan Mercier (*left*) can afford a smile of satisfaction as the driving force of MBL's first venture into machinery making.

Ryan is pictured with one of our multi-purpose Inline Tenderiser/Stir Fry Machines which we assembled at our Athol Park base in an historic development for the co-operative.

The first 10 have been pre-sold to members, and we're now exploring interstate and international sales through a major distributor.

Meanwhile, Ryan and the team have begun working on two separate machinery projects to solve specific issues of concern to members. **Full story page 3.**

SA RETAIL COUNCIL'S NEW LOOK

Four new faces have been elected to the seven-man AMIC SA Retail Council, bringing fresh perspectives to the State's peak advisory body.

The new councillors are Nigel Rollbusch (Rollbusch Quality Meats, Waikerie), Damien Holmes (Crestcut Meats, Henley Beach), Sam Burt (Windsor Meats, Malvern) and Dan Miller (Tendawrap Butchers, Hallett Cove).

They join re-elected Chairman Trevor Hill (Bruce's Meats), Vice Chairman Jeff Luxton (Indulgent Meat, Port Elliot) and David DiCicco (Seaford Gourmet Meats).

Trevor remains SA's representation on AMIC's National Retail Council. He was recently elected to the Board of MBL.

"There were nine nominations for the seven positions on the State Retail Council so it went to a ballot," says AMIC's State Manager Chris Kelly.

MBL NEWS

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Chris Pfitzner to restart

Stirling butcher Chris Pfitzner's love for the meat industry continues untarnished as he explores Adelaide Hills options for the relaunch of his fire-destroyed business.

Stirling Variety Meats was among shops left ruined when fire destroyed Stirling Village Mall on October 15.

Two 14-year-old boys were charged over the fire.

Chris has not been able to trade since the fire which hit as he was making plans for the important Christmas trading period.

But Chris and his wife Giselle, buoyed by hundreds of supportive social media posts from customers and many

offers of help from the meat industry, were quick to regroup and plan ahead.

The message they prominently posted on their website sums up their mindset: "The fire may have burnt our business down but not our enthusiasm, stay tuned."

Six weeks later, Chris and Giselle say they have been looking for suitable sites in the Adelaide Hills to rebuild the business and have possible options.

"We can't progress yet because our insurance from the fire still hasn't been settled. We've had minimal insurance (payout) so far. It's a slow process but that's the insurance world," Chris says.

"We want to set up again but we are unsure where and when that will be. We want to stay in the Hills but it won't be at the old location in Stirling. Watch this space."

Chris and Giselle spent almost 20 years making Stirling Variety Meats a model business based on quality local meat and superior service, with up to 10 staff and a loyal customer base.

The fire destroyed up to \$15,000 worth of stock and \$150,000 worth of machinery, according to initial estimates.

"The support we've received has been amazing. Special thanks to all the butcher shops and suppliers that offered trucks, refrigeration and help," Chris says.



Nigel Hassall with his popular canine meatloaf which he makes in a butcher shop dating to 1905.

Nigel's a 40-year MBL fan

A loyal member for over four decades, Unley Meats owner Nigel Hassall lays claims to being one of MBL's biggest fans.

"I've dealt exclusively with MBL for 40 years. MBL has always been very supportive, helping my business in many ways, including developing my recipe for Christmas hams which keep people coming back," he says.

"On top of the annual rebates, I've collected

over 100,00 MBL shares, so it has been an important relationship."

Nigel owns an historic building which has been a butcher shop since 1905 – the year when MBL was founded. Like the co-op, the business has evolved immeasurably over the years.

The latest innovation is Nigel's range of pet treats, with his canine meatloaf in high demand. Read the full story on pages 10-11.

MBL begins manufacture of multi-purpose machine



Ryan Mercier in our Athol Park showroom with one of the first Inline Tenderiser/Stir Fry Machines manufactured by MBL.

In an historic first for the co-operative, MBL has ventured into equipment manufacturing by creating a multi-purpose machine with potential for wide sales.

Assembled at MBL's Athol Park base, the Inline Tenderiser/Stir Fry Machine has made an immediate impression, with the first 10 pre-sold to MBL members.

By quickly changing cassettes, the machine can tenderise meat, flatten meat to various thicknesses for products such as schnitzels, or cut meat and vegetable strips of various sizes for stir-fry.

"These functions normally require different machines but this machine offers multiple options for one outlay," says MBL Machinery Manager Ryan Mercier, the driving force behind the manufacturing project.

"Another big plus is that with it being designed and made entirely in Adelaide, back-up technical support and service is locally available."

It is MBL's first foray into machinery manufacturing. Until now, we have concentrated on supplying machinery from interstate or overseas.

"This opens MBL to vast opportunity – we're now not just a supplier of interstate or overseas machines but we're a manufac-

turer with ownership of intellectual property, allowing MBL to sell interstate and internationally through a distributor model," Ryan says.

Potential for wide sales of the Inline Tenderiser/Stir Fry Machine is being explored, with a large supplier of machinery to 80 countries showing initial interest.

"In the past, we have delivered customised machinery in response to members' requests but this is the first time we've developed a machine for broad sale," Ryan says.

"We initially looked at developing a tenderiser but it evolved into a multi-purpose machine with great potential.

"An Adelaide engineering company designed it for us. From the 3D drawings, another local company did the laser cutting, folding and milling for fabrication and another local company did the electrical work.

"The frame and componentry come to MBL where they are assembled, enabling plug-and-play for the consumer."

Examples of the Tenderiser/Stir Fry Machine's multiple capabilities include the ability to prepare 30 pieces of beef or chicken for schnitzels a minute, and to

flatten a chicken breast to 10mm, producing a flat, consistent 10mm product allowing the cooking process in restaurants or at home to be more consistent.

Cassettes for different functions are quickly loaded and unloaded without tools. Disassembling and assembling for cleaning is easy and toolless.

Ryan says MBL has begun working on two separate machinery projects to solve specific issues of concern to members.

"We're hoping to have news of these two machines in the New Year. They will have advances that will benefit many of our members," he says.

Chairman George Ujvary says the venture into equipment manufacturing adds another string to MBL's bow.

"By incorporating members' ideas, we are providing machines that are tailored to their needs," George says.

"We're responding to market pull rather than supplier push; we're not just selling what's available.

"We're looking forward to seeing how it goes and seeing if there's more scope for developing other machinery to fulfill our members' needs."

SOLID, STABLE & GROWING

MBL records another good year, overcoming multiple challenges

Despite challenging business conditions, MBL's revenue topped \$100 million for the first time in 2022-23 on the way to a consolidated profit of just over \$7 million.

Our overall revenue of \$110.5 million was an increase of more than \$17 million over the previous year, a reward for hard work and innovation across our divisions.

As a result, a rebate of 16% was paid on merchandise sales, while the rebate on machinery sales was 7.5%.

"MBL is solid; we're stable and we're growing. Our turnover now sits us in the top 60 of Australia's co-operatives and mutuals. We punch above our weight," says CEO Jamie Higgins.

Chairman George Ujvary says, "MBL has not only stood the test of time since 1905 but continues to be a beacon in South Australia's food industry.

"Beyond numbers, our pleasing figures for 2022-23 represent the collective hard work, commitment and relentless pursuit of excellence by all staff.



Delivering news of another good year... MBL Chairman George Ujvary addresses the AGM, flanked by CEO Jamie Higgins and Company Secretary Darryl McPhee.

"The AMIC Supplier of the Year Award we received this year was a feather in our cap, reflecting our team's unmatched dedication and service."

Our Merchandise Division witnessed a 7.5% growth in sales and our Machinery Division had an impressive 202% surge in sales in

the 2022-23 financial year.

The Merchandise Division's growth resulted from a changing product mix, with more custom blending opportunities and diversification into other food manufacturing markets with better margins than our traditional blending business.

Our collaborations, especially with the national buying consortium Ikon Pack, bolstered our offerings, particularly in eco-friendly packaging – a testament to our commitment to both innovation and sustainability.

However, while sales in Merchandise were 7.5% stronger than 2021-22, our margin was down as we had, and continue to have, price increases from our suppliers.

Despite margins also being lower in our Machinery Division, we were able to pay a 7.5% rebate and remain competitive on prices.

Machinery sales continue to grow, with strong demand in the last few months. We have plenty of stock, some new machinery and a couple of new agencies.

The Athol Park Operations team has operated well given some of the early supply challenges with imports like packaging and PPE due to shipping, >



George Ujvary and Jamie Higgins... pleased with results but challenges linger.



MBL's winning of the inaugural AMIC Supplier of the Year award reflected our team's unmatched dedication and service. Pictured at the presentation were (back row, from left) Edward Selby-Fullgrabe, Ben Smith, Ben Oerlemans, Ryan Mercier, Shane Reynolds, Mark Rosewarne, Chris Rowe and Shane Harrison. Front: Cameron Mansueto, Alwyn Halls, Susie O'Brien, Dale Rowe and Kane Paues.

➤ and, in the second half, a falling Australian dollar.

Warehouse and distribution costs increased by 2.5%. Other costs increased by around 3% during the year. Wages rose by 7%.

Our Proteins Division recorded strong results due to improved efficiency and increased raw material supply, together with increased volumes and strong tallow pricing in the first half.

Improved output from the low temperature plant helped Wingfield Proteins record a revenue increase of 20%, despite being under pressure for most of the year

All meal prices were under pressure, declining as the year rolled on.

"Energy costs were significant and gas continues to be a major focus although we have seen our gas prices drop from the record highs of mid-2022," Jamie says.

"Gas really started to impact the business

from May 2022. We could only contract gas just under \$30gj, so we have stayed on the spot market and averaged under \$20gj.

"Gas contracts for 2024 are being offered at \$16gj and we are again staying on the spot market and expect to buy gas for the remainder of this year in the low teens."

Keith Proteins improved with supply in 2022-23 and volumes increased.

However, the business has been impacted by our premium ovine (lamb) meal selling at the same price as our lower-priced meat meal due to oversupply in the market.

Looking ahead, Jamie says cost pressure together with labour shortages continue to challenge all MBL divisions.

"Proteins has started well in the first quarter with good volumes. However, sales prices have fallen by 60% to impact our revenue and margins," he says.

"Merchandise and Machinery also started the current year well. Blending volumes are

up, and sales and margins are in line with budget.

"Machinery sales are strong but our margin is under pressure partly due to the weak Australian dollar."

George says 2023/24 presents a set of unique challenges.

"From volatility in gas and power pricing to rising operational costs, and even global repercussions like the conflict in Ukraine, we face a testing year," George says.

"Yet, given our past and our resilience, we approach it with measured optimism.

"We stand by the five-year strategy which we developed two years ago. Our results are evidence of the successful execution of this strategy.

"With continued upgrades, like the ones at Keith and Wingfield, we are not only improving our processes but also committing to the well-being and growth of our co-operative and our people."

TREVOR HILL JOINS MBL BOARD



Trevor Hill.

Trevor Hill brings a thorough knowledge of SA's retail butchery scene to his new role as a Director of MBL.

The Bruce's Meat owner and Chairman of AMIC's SA Retail Council joined the four-man MBL Board on a casual basis several months ago, with his appointment ratified at the AGM.

He joins Chairman George Ujvary of Olga's Fine Foods, Anthony Skara of Skara Smallgoods, and former AMIC SA Executive Director Paul Sandercok on the Board.

Trevor replaces the retiring Dave Culbert, of Midfield Food Service, who served on the MBL Board since 2017.

"David's profound experience in the meat industry immensely benefited MBL and we thank him for his contribution," George says.

"We welcome Trevor, who will provide the Board and management team with fresh perspectives."

Trevor, who this year received the AMIC SA Legends Award for outstanding service to the meat industry, says he is enjoying becoming familiar with MBL's wide-ranging activities and plans for the future.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to work with men of high-calibre in such a strong and diverse business," he says.



Tasting, tour and barbecue

The colourful grazing board (pictured above), featuring award-winning smallgoods by MBL members, was one of the highlights of activities after the co-operative's Annual General Meeting.

A tasting of the winning products was held before MBL's Kane Paues and Michaela Rock led members on a tour of our Athol Park facilities. A barbecue followed.

The grazing board was designed by Edward Selby-Fullgrabe with help from Susie O'Brien. "All the colour made it pop," says Edward, who added grapes, strawberries, popcorn, cheese, crackers and nuts to the display of smallgoods.

The smallgoods, which won gold medals or above at the Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards, were supplied by Skara Smallgoods, Barossa Fine Foods, Morphet Vale Butcher, Indulgent Meats and Mt Pleasant Butcher.

Also displayed for tasting were bakery products made by our New Product Development team in conjunction with MBL's bakery specialist/technician.

Later, an enjoyable barbecue featured gold-award-winning products from AMIC's SA Awards, supplied by Campbelltown Centre Meats, Ellis Butchers, Compass Meats and Elder Meat Store.



MAKE IT WITH
MBL



OUR BRAND REFRESH

‘Make It With MBL’ spearheads our new range of logos, colours and tags

A brand refresh is underway for the co-operative, with the name MBL being reinforced and the term Master Butchers being put aside.

“Make It With MBL” will be the cornerstone of marketing plans as we aim to attract more food industry manufacturers to grow the co-operative.

The announcement was made at the recent Annual General Meeting with a soft launch of new logos, colours and tags which will gradually be introduced.

“We will still be known simply as MBL, but we will not use the term Master Butchers as we move to make our brand more relevant,” says CEO Jamie Higgins.

Two years ago, MBL’s charter was changed to allow membership by eligible food manufacturers to grow the co-operative, ultimately increasing the value for all members.

At the same time as creating new opportunities by broadening our membership, we have expanded our services to support and stay relevant to traditional members.

Jamie says the term Master Butchers had proved a constant hurdle when approaching potential new customers and members.



First cab off the rank... our new logo was first shown on MBL’s 2024 calendars.

“A common response was, ‘But we don’t do meat.’ Many thought we were butchers and couldn’t see how we could benefit their businesses,” he says.

In 1991, Kentucky Fried Chicken formally became KFC because the term “fried” in the name had negative health connotations.

Jamie says our adoption of the simple name MBL will help avoid confusion about our

business. “There’s absolute equity in the name MBL,” he says.

As part of the overall naming alteration, the name of MBL Food Service will be reduced to MBL.

“This will stop some confusion as the term food service implies serving cafes with things like frozen chips which we don’t do,” Jamie says.

The new MBL logos have been introduced on our new calendars, caps and knives. They will gradually be used across all divisions and on our new website which is being developed.



Long-term member lavishes praise on MBL

'GOLD STAR, BIG TICK'

A round of applause from fellow members attending MBL's Annual General Meeting followed meat industry veteran Tony Buckley's delivery of a heartfelt tribute to the co-operative's high level of customer service.

In an impromptu speech spanning three minutes, the My Butcher owner told the meeting that MBL deserved a "gold star" and a "big tick" for its markedly-improved performance over recent years.

An MBL member for 25 years, he said, "MBL has gone a full turn in terms of customer support. Members could not get better support; MBL staff go out of their way to help to develop your business."

Tony, 60, described the rebates on merchandise sales given to members in the past three years (17%, 18.5% and 16%) as "phenomenal" in difficult business conditions.

He praised MBL's strong work culture and caring attitude, adding that high-performance in any business "starts at the top."

"For a business to be in such a robust state needs a strong combination of the CEO, Board and staff working strongly together. The culture must be strong," he said.

Tony addressed the AGM when Chairman George Ujvary, after announcing another very good result for 2022-23, asked members if they had any questions or comments.

After appreciating Tony's speech, George, speaking as the owner of Olga's Fine Foods,



Tony Buckley... "MBL is like a silent partner in my business."

said: "I totally endorse Tony's comments about MBL's level of customer support. I experience it as a business owner."

CEO Jamie Higgins thanked Tony for his unsolicited observations.

"It's good to get such positive feedback but we've still got a lot more to do. We have a very solid base and we have a way to go, a lot of work to do," Jamie said.

Tony, a butcher since he was 17, owns meat wholesaler My Butcher, based at Camden Park. His business feeds over 50,000 people a week through restaurants, hotels, clubs, cafes and supermarkets across Adelaide, regional South Australia and the Northern Territory.

He says he went to the MBL AGM to publicly thank the co-operative for its work. He didn't prepare a speech.

"I was a little embarrassed at not attending an AGM before now despite being a member for over 25 years," he says.

"I wanted to thank the organisation. MBL's rebirth over the last three years has been remarkable, to the benefit of businesses like mine.

"For a business to have \$110 million revenue and \$7 million profit in today's business climate is a fantastic statement about the leadership of MBL.

"In the last three years, MBL has been like a silent partner in my business.

"The annual rebate and shares are important and make a big difference to businesses but MBL is about more than rebates and shares.

"MBL supports my business in a number of other ways, including a reliable delivery system. Rarely is MBL out of stock now.

"Our MBL rep Shane Reynolds always works tirelessly to get our products here on time and when we visit MBL to top up, the level of support is very good.

"MBL people are about grow-

ing your business; they go out of their way to help."

When asked to give an example, Tony didn't have to cast his mind back far.

"Yesterday, Ryan Mercier (MBL's Machinery Manager) came here to check a few technical issues we were having with a schnitzel-making machine," Tony says.

"He observed our production flow, which has a lot of stopping points, and looked at how many schnitzels we should be making in an hour.

"He said he thought he could make improvements to the flow, making it more effective with less labour.

"He has taken up the matter with engineers, hoping they can adjust conveyor belts to improve our production.

"Ryan did this off his own bat, going over and above. Most businesses wouldn't operate like that."

Tony has levered equity in his MBL shares to secure an interest-free loan to buy \$300,000 worth of machinery from the co-op over the last three months.

"I was negotiating with a bank for a loan when Ryan said MBL could help. I could use the value of my shares to help to pay for it.

"By using my accumulated MBL shares as security, MBL was able to offer me an interest-free loan.

"I was gobsmacked. It was goodbye bank, hello MBL.

"It's very hard for other companies to compete against MBL's co-operative structure and level of support."

'Members could not get better support; MBL staff go out of their way to help' - Tony Buckley

It seems you can take Edward Selby-Fullgrabe out of the butchery but you can't take the butchery out of him.

Edward's career has shifted in different directions since he was SA's Apprentice of the Year in 2018 but he continues to apply his butchery knowledge daily.

Customers to MBL's Athol Park shop and showroom are the latest beneficiaries, finding Edward a fountain of practical knowledge when seeking advice on everything from using ingredients to selecting the most appropriate knives.

"My butchering background is a huge advantage in my role here," says Edward, 24, who has made a strong impression since joining the MBL team in January.

"The knowledge you get from butchery is vast – I use it on a daily basis in one way or another and I enjoy helping customers by passing it on.

"I'm happy to share information about flavour combinations and passing on practical advice about things like making sausages and pumping silverside."

As well as providing face-to-face customer service in the shop, Edward also helps with phone orders.

General Manager of Sales and Marketing, Kane Paues, says, "He has done very well since joining MBL; he's one of our young stars."

Edward, whose grandfather Don was an Adelaide Hills butcher, spent his teenage years in Moonta and worked as a cleanup boy at a Kadina butchery.

"I liked the idea of being a butcher and when an apprenticeship came up with Bruce's Meat, I applied and got it," he says.

He made an immediate impression for being creative, winning the SA Apprentice

"Meat the Team"

Profiles on MBL staff members



Edward Selby-Fullgrabe... shining at MBL.

of the Year award in his first year.

He excelled in his first mystery box competition against more experienced opponents, breaking down sides of meat and using a selection of supplied ingredients to create value added products.

His winning products included a lamb half-saddle using corn flakes as stuffing with a lamb seasoning; a topside roast with cheese pocketed in and held together with bacon rind, and a butterflied pork medalion with apple, capsicum and parsley.

At the time, Edward found the customer service side equally as interesting as working with the knives.

"You never know who will show up at the counter. It's satisfying to sell people something that makes them want to come back," he told MBL News in 2018.

A year later, Edward left retail butchery to take up a manager's role at the St Kilda Hotel, north of Adelaide, after it was purchased by his father Kane.

He says he learnt new skills which would be valuable into the future.

"My people skills became more developed. You need to handle different people in a pub; sometimes you need to control emotional people," he says.

"I also learnt how a business is run and the money side, including percentages."

In a secondary role, Edward cut steak and

prepared schnitzels (using MBL ingredients, of course) for the hotel's chefs.

"We went in a big competition by a schnitzel appreciation group and we came fourth in the State which was pretty good," he says.

The pub was sold after three years. Edward had several offers to return to retail butchery but he eagerly took up a "front counter" role at MBL.

"I liked the idea of working here, of going one-on-one with customers and having your own customer set. I enjoy helping people and seeing how their businesses grow," he says.

"It has been great. MBL is a good place to work with good people; everyone helps everyone else.

"I've definitely learnt a lot here but there's so much more to learn.

"MBL is a massive business and I don't really know yet which direction I'll be going. I'd like to have my own round as a sales rep but I also like the machinery side.

"I've always been interested in machinery. I like working on my car and seeing how it works."

Q & A

Do you have a special interest or hobby?

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking and working on my 2008 Subaru WRX STI.

What would you do with a spare \$50,000? I would travel to Europe to see as many countries as I could.

If you were a car, what would you be? I would be a 1992 Nissan Skyline R32 GTR.

What food can't you live without? I definitely couldn't live without good chicken parmigiana.

If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would it be? Cam Rayner, my favourite AFL player from the Brisbane Lions.

What's the best thing about working at MBL? It would have to be the team I work with here. It's a great environment!



Edward was the 2018 SA Apprentice of the year when working at Bruce's Meat.



Nigel Hassall with some of the hundreds of photos of dogs who have visited his shop. He gives all dogs a shop-made treat.

How Nigel's love of dogs added a fresh dimension to his butchery

Wanting the best diet for his pet dogs, Nigel Hassall called on his butchery know-how to create a low-fat canine meatloaf laced with vegetables and rice.

His canine meatloaf went down so well that he began making it for sale at his Unley Meats shop. Dog lovers rushed it and sales kept climbing.

After initially making 60 of the 2kg loaves a fortnight, he now sells 120 a week with two varieties, beef and chicken, priced at \$14 and \$12 respectively.

"It's a good product that people can only get here and they usually buy things for themselves as well," says Nigel, 68, whose reputation as a quality butcher has spanned 42 years across three shops in Unley.

On the day MBL News visited, Nigel's first eight customers had come in to buy canine meatloaf or other shop-made canine products such as pig ears, chicken necks, beef strips and liver, chicken and veggie "treats."

Nigel has divided his shop to create a smaller section, with a separate entrance, devoted to the pet food side of his business which he has named "For The Love Of Dogs."

As the pet food industry booms across

Australia, Nigel's reputation has spread. He says a pet food operator approached him about buying his whole shop, and he has had separate offers to sell his canine meatloaf elsewhere.



Outside signage at Nigel's shop.



Making doggie friends... Nigel regularly steps outside to give visiting dogs treats.

But he has knocked back all approaches because his canine products give his overall business a valuable point of difference over other retail butchers.

Nigel's shop is lined with hundreds of photos of dogs who have visited over the years.

"I give every dog a treat. I love making friends with dogs; meeting them gets me out of the shop for five minutes," he says.

"There are hundreds of dogs in this area – they're everywhere around Unley Oval each morning. Branching out into making dog food has proved very good for me."

Nigel began making canine meatloaf in 2016 after one of his pet dogs died of cancer. "I wanted to make a healthy product for my other dogs," he says.

"I played around with a loaf of meat, vegetables and rice until I got the recipe right, with only 7% fat. My dog loved it, so did others and the dog food side of the business took off.

"I also make \$10 Christmas hampers for dogs. I make 200 each year and give half the profits to a charity like the RSPCA.

"I love dogs. They give unconditional love. I strongly believe every



child should have a dog.”

Nigel's butchery apprenticeship was at Woolworths from 1970. By the time he was 20, he had been promoted to supermarket Relief Manager before leaving for Mases Meat at Mitcham.

Mases had 14 shops and was in direct competition with another big chain, Turners, which was renamed Springfield when purchased by Mike Rankin.

“At Mases, I gained management experience and learnt how to run a small shop,” Nigel says.

Wanting wider experience, he joined the old Half-Case supermarket group. He left at age 25 to open his own butcher shop on Unley Rd in 1981, gradually growing the business over the years.

“It was very hard at the start when interest rates were over 20%. I had to borrow and grow at the same time,” Nigel says.

“I later moved the business to another location behind Unley Medical Centre and then 16 years ago I bought the freehold of my final destination in Duthy St.

“This has been a butcher shop since 1905. It's a heritage-listed building. The original smokehouses are still here but are no longer used.

“While I have moved premises a few times, we have always remained in Unley. I was raised in Unley; the community is a part of me.”

Nigel runs the shop with two fulltime butchers and one casual. “At one time when I did a lot of wholesale, I had 10 staff but butchers are so hard to get now.

“I no longer do wholesale; it became too hard. With wholesale comes carrying debt so now I concentrate on the shop.

“Over 14 years of wholesale, I lost a quarter of a million dollars to bad debts. Also, if you



Nigel has offered premium fare for more than 40 years across three shops in Unley.



Another batch of healthy canine meatloaf.

want to sell a business, wholesale is worth nothing.”

Nigel's smallgoods play a key role in the business. “I make 400 hams every Christmas. Old customers who have left the area come back for my ham,” he says.

Also in hot demand is Nigel's pinnekjott, a Norwegian smoked lamb product which is traditionally enjoyed at Christmas with mashed swedes, carrots and potatoes.

“It's a cured loin of lamb which is dried, smoked and dried again. The recipe was given to me by one of my customers Petter Carlmark, who is the Norwegian Consul,” Nigel says.

“I make up to 200 pinnekjott at Christmas. We send some to Sydney and Melbourne, and there's interest from Brisbane.”

As he approaches 70, Nigel says he's financially-secure to retire tomorrow and spend more time at his Encounter Bay property but he plans to keep going for the time being because he loves his work.

“I've thought I'd like to find a manager to allow me to cut back to three days a week. I serve close to 1,000 customers a week and I don't want to disappear,” he says.

Reducing his workload will allow this keen photographer more time to add to his stunning collection of sunrise and sunset photos, compiled over many years.



A butcher shop since 1905, the building oozes character and is heritage-listed.

Kellogg's®

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— 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



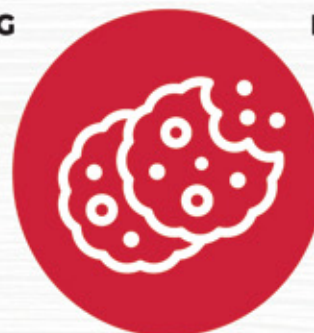
CRUMB COATING



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**

