



Yesteryear meets tomorrow

One business feeds its local community just as it has for over a century; the other is in the business of feeding 85 countries across the globe.

A world apart in size, ambition and just about everything else, they share the link of being long-term MBL Members, underscoring the Co-op's diverse reach.

Bower Road Meat Store opened in Ethelton in 1915, a decade after MBL was established. With its unchanged facade, the quaint little shop is a fascinating blast from the past.

It continues to prosper under butcher Jason Dick (*above*) yet according to today's business models, it should have shut decades ago because "it's too small and in the wrong place."

Within days of MBL News visiting the two-man shop for a feature story (*see pages 6-7*), Thomas Foods International announced it will invest hundreds of millions of dollars on a huge abattoir to eventually employ 2,000 people (*see page 10*) at Murray Bridge.

It will be business as usual at Bower Road as Thomas Foods builds



An artist's impression of an entrance to the new abattoir.

what it says will be "the best, most advanced multi-species processing facility in Australia, if not the world."

The two businesses graphically illustrate how the South Australian meat industry has expanded over the past century, with continuous help from MBL since 1905.

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SA Retail Council elections

Experienced butchers are being invited to join AMIC's SA Retail Council, with elections taking place in August.

Five butchers presently sit on the council but up to 12 are permitted. The council usually meets on four nights annually.

"There's always space for people on the retail council," says Chairman Trevor Hill.

"It's a chance for people to put back into an industry group that supports them."

Chris Kelly, AMIC's rep for South Australia and Western Australia, urged experienced butchers to nominate.

"The more heads you get together, the better for a wider representation of the industry," Chris says.

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The pies have it... chef Troy Kaderes makes his own stock to improve pies at Bruce's Meat.

Chefs in the mix

A chef has joined Bruce's Meat, representing a tweak in traditional hiring criteria at a time when skilled butchers are in short supply.

While Troy Kaderes wears his chef's hat to develop new products and improve existing ones, he's equally engaged in serving and being trained as a butcher.

Troy, 41, a chef for 25 years at hotels and restaurants, found that juggling a young family with night and split-shift work didn't mix so he applied to work at Bruce's Meat.

"I wanted to stay in the food industry and, knowing meat and how to use a knife, I thought I could use my skills in a butcher shop," he says.

Bruce's Meat owner Trevor Hill saw Troy's potential and hired him, saying that part of the reason was a shortage of skilled butchers.

"The lack of experienced people is the biggest challenge facing the meat industry," says Trevor.

"If we don't train more apprentices, who'll be running butcher shops in five years? In the meantime, we need to look at redeploying people."

"Chefs can have basic butchery skills which can be further developed and they should have an eye for presentation and cleanliness."

"If they've got personality, they can serve and give cooking advice."

"I saw these qualities in Troy. He has been with us for four months now and he's doing well."

Troy is based at the Mitcham store where there are ovens, with products delivered to other Bruce's Meat stores.

Trevor says Troy understands that "keeping it simple" is a golden rule.

"He's not cooking food and putting it on a plate and he's limited by our cooking facilities compared to those of restaurants," Trevor says.

"At first, he tended to say we could blast this or make that but you can't do some fancy things in a butcher shop where things need to be kept simple."

"For example, Troy makes a clear stock with just bones and water; no salt or anything let alone getting fancy by adding celery. It's a simple, beautiful product that people want."

"People aren't buying just one litre, they're buying three litres at a time. It won't make me a rich man but it's a nice addition to our range."

Trevor is awaiting MBL delivery of a tray sealer for CPET trays (see story page 3) so that Troy can then develop ready meals.

Troy says, "I enjoy working here, using my old skills and learning new ones."

"I haven't broken a body of beef yet but I'm using a bandsaw and chopping steak for the window."

"My goal is to improve my skills to the level where I can try out for the Australian Steelers team in international competitions."

READY MEALS READY

Butchers are snapping up MBL's second shipment of CPET tray sealers which represent a breakthrough in making ready meals production easier and cost effective.

The arrival of the shipment of 36 machines was eagerly awaited, with 16 butchers placing pre-orders weeks before the sealers were manufactured in China.

Another 15 butchers asked to be placed on a list to be contacted by MBL once more of the compact benchtop sealers became available.

"The fact that almost half of the second batch of sealers was pre-sold shows their popularity," says MBL Merchandise Division General Manager Bexley Carman.

The sealers are the core of a ready meal "starter kit" which is proving one of MBL's most successful initiatives.

The package consists of a sealer, 300 premium CPET trays and 500m of film for under \$1,600 which is almost \$400 cheaper than if all components were sold separately.

Until now, similar tray sealers



Ready to seal... Stirling's Chris Pfitzner with his parmigiana chicken rolls (left) and Asian chicken stirfry in CPET trays.

cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

As Stirling butcher Chris Pfitzner says, "It's a breakthrough. Before, I would have expected to have to pay up to \$5,000.

"This is a good machine that's really simple to use and overall it's a great concept."

MBL Machinery Manager Chris Mountford says, "We've worked with suppliers to put this package together so that everyone can afford to get into ready meals.

"It's now possible for a small two-man shop to produce ready meals without breaking the bank.

"It's not just the cost of this machine that appeals – it's also very simple to use and it's compact for small work areas.

"We've spent a lot of time getting everything right with

this package. The response has been excellent; I couldn't have expected more.

"The feedback has been very positive. There have been no issues (from the first batch of sealers) which is testament to the simplicity of use."

A key to MBL's foray into the ready meals sector came when we secured premium CPET (Crystalline Polyethylene Terephthalate) trays, made with cutting-edge technology in Israel.

CPET trays offer supreme convenience, allowing meals to be cooked, refrigerated or frozen before being heated in microwave or conventional ovens – all in the same container.

This is possible because CPET trays can be used within a temperature range of minus 40C to plus 220C, giving amazing versatility for a broad range food.

While the trays are ideal for cooked meals, they equally accommodate uncooked products that can then be cooked in the tray by the customer.

Butcher interest grew after a story in the last MBL News about the first shipment of 16 tray sealers selling out in four days.

This strong response prompted a MBL trip to China to successfully negotiate an extended supply deal with the manufacturer.

The manufacturing of MBL's latest batch of 36 sealers began in May while Chris was visiting the Chinese factory. They arrived at MBL in mid-July.

Master Butcher Wilson Lowe is pleased with the performance of his new sealer and CPET trays at his Bruce's Meats store at Mt Barker.

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*Behind every great cook
IS A GREAT BUTCHER*



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Confident about the future of independent butcher shops, Ben Gordon is looking to add more stores to the present five in his SA Gourmet Meats group.

He has taken over the five stores in less than five years and says he has no set plan for the number he may eventually control.

"The sky's the limit, provided we can find shops in the right locations and find the right staff to run them," says Ben (*pictured above at his Glenelg shop*).

"Several butchers have approached us about buying their shops. They wanted too much, but we're looking at several other shops now."

"Five years ago, we saw opportunities in some locations to provide better meat backed by better service, and meeting local demand has worked out well for us."

"Our formula is to look at struggling shops and update them, offering better quality and service while trying to retain their butchers if possible."

Ben looking to add to his stable of five shops

"Getting the right staff is important. We look after our staff and they look after us."

Ben, who has a background in sausage manufacturing, has shops at Magill, Marden, Walkerville, Glenelg and Unley. They are run by a total of 17 mainly fulltime staff.

There is no blanket "generic offering" across the group. Each shop offers proven products tailored to the demands of the local area.

Four of the five shops are close to major supermarkets which Ben says bring passing foot traffic but pose little direct

competition to his business.

"I don't see supermarkets as competition. We know we can do it better than them so we just get on with doing our own thing," he says.

"It all comes down to quality and service. If you look after customers, they'll stick with you."

"Price is not the big thing anymore, provided you provide quality and service. We're not cheap but we're not too expensive either."

Ben was born at Jamestown, in SA's Mid North, where his butcher father Trevor Gordon worked with the town's long-time butcher Denis Ganley.

Trevor later bought his own butcher shop at >



Glenelg manager Dan Rutter... "We were busy from the start."

O'Sullivan Beach in Adelaide's south, resulting in the family moving to Christies Beach when Ben was 12.

Ben chose not to follow in his father's footsteps as a butcher but took a job at the old Bangers sausage factory at Magill, making sausages and delivering them.

He then managed Pizza Haven restaurants at Christies Beach, Seaford and Murray Bridge before returning to Bangers.

"My father-in-law owned Bangers and my wife Leah and I bought it as a wholesale business," he says.

"We added a small shop out the back before we opened a purpose-built shop out the front and changed the name to SA Gourmet Meats.

"Then in 2015 we moved down Magill Rd to take over Magill Meat Service. We sold the wholesale side because wholesale sausage prices were too lean with not enough margin.

"We were now solely into retail."

Later in 2015, Ben purchased a second shop, Walkerville Meat Store, across the road from the Sussex Hotel, and he bought Fair Cuts Meats at Marden shopping centre in 2017.

He closed the Walkerville shop in early 2018 to move up the

road into the former Springfield shop at Walkerville shopping centre, and in late 2018 he opened on busy Jetty Rd, Glenelg.

The Glenelg site, once home of Brian's Gourmet Meats, had been vacant for 18 months after being extensively damaged by fire. It needed a total refit.

Ben opened shop number five in March this year, taking over Feast Fine Foods at Unley after the collapse of the Richard Gunner group.

As his overall business has grown, Ben has been struck by how demand for products varies greatly from store to store, including those which are relatively close to each other.

"They are all different, often completely different," he says.

"That's why each shop has its own manager, to best cater for local demand, but we keep the same high standards across all shops.

"For example, our Walkerville and Marden stores are only 5km apart but they have different product lines.

"Walkerville demand is relatively high end, people there are happy to pay for things like rib eye and scotch fillet steak. At Marden, they want things like osso bucco and gravy beef.

"Our Marden customers want to do all their own cooking from



Lachlan Deller prides himself on creating an impressive display daily at the Magill shop.

scratch. We can't part-prepare anything, other than schnitzel, to make it easier for them."

Sausages for all five stores are made at Marden and a smoke oven has been installed at Walkerville to supply bacon and hams to the group.

Ben says branching into supplying fresh fish has gone "quite well."

"There aren't enough fish retailers around so we have it at four shops, the exception being Magill where there already was an established fish retailer nearby," he says.

Manager of the Glenelg store, Dan Rutter, says offering seafood was a selling point when the new shop opened last November in the leadup to Christmas.

"We were busy from the start

and everyone was excited by the seafood," says Dan, a butcher who organised the refit of the classy store.

A feature is large artwork, on a wall of white subway tiles, of a bull's head which can be seen from the street and draws much comment.

"This was an established old shop before it was ruined by fire and we were able to start from scratch to fit out a bright, modern shop," Dan says.

"The shop worked for us straight away, starting even better than we had expected."

With the business continuing to grow, Ben recently hired an external bookkeeper to ease his workload.

"This frees me to do other things – like get more shops," he says.



Ben Gordon at the Glenelg store... 'Our formula is to look at struggling shops and update them, offering better quality and service.'



Looking every inch a traditional butcher, Jason "JD" Dick cuts an imposing figure, his ginger beard inspiring his shop's logo.

The little shop that time forgot

RELIC FROM 1915 STILL GOING STRONG

By today's business models, this quaint old butcher shop in Adelaide suburbia is simply too small and in the wrong place to cut the mustard.

On a road to "nowhere" with no supporting shops and surrounded by homes, it should have folded decades ago under the principals of "location, location, location."

Hundreds of similar two-man shops closed down across Australia over the past 50 years, gobbled up by the twin rise of malls and supermarkets.

But Bower Road Meat Store at Ethelton has been operating continuously since 1915 and continues to hold its ground against the big boys, chugging along nicely for butcher Jason "JD" Dick.

"It's quaint and quirky, a traditional shop that has been here forever," says Jason, 38, who did his apprenticeship in the old shop before buying the business 14 years ago.

"People love the old look, saying it stirs childhood memories, and they are often surprised at what's inside.

"We've been modernising slowly but surely. We're mixing the old with the new, and offering products for today's consumers."

"The first thing many people say is, 'I love the smell – it smells like a real butcher shop!'

"We are often asked, 'Where's the sawdust?' We kept it on the floor for as long as we could but it had to go, of course."

"Customers sense when they walk in the door that they'll be getting >

> something good and we do all we can to exceed their expectations so they keep coming back."

While Jason acknowledges that his stand alone "destination" shop is in the wrong place by modern retail conventions, he says there are advantages.

"People can park right out front, and importantly as a sole trader, my rent is lower," he says.

Built on a foundation of slate, the shop is a purpose-built butcher shop. Jason believes the original butcher, named Evans, lived across the road.

But this is all Jason really knows about the shop's early history and he's disappointed that he has been unable to find more information.

"We have instigated several stories in the local Messenger newspaper asking for information about the shop or photos from family albums but nothing turned up," he says.

"We tried other avenues but as far as we can find, there's just nothing. It annoys me."

While the early history largely remains mysterious, only two butchers – Brian White and Jason – have run the shop over the past half century.

Royal Park butcher Graham White bought the Bower Road shop for son Brian, who ran it for 37 years. Brian sold the business to Jason in 2005 but retains ownership of the building.

"I did my apprenticeship with Brian, working for him for seven years before buying the business," Jason says.

"In Brian's time, the shop was extended out the back and three flats were built on what was originally a large block of land.

"I learnt a lot from Brian, who often used to say that small fish are sweet, meaning that individual sales may be small but they're substantial when combined.

"This resonated with me from the start and it remains important today."

Banter plays a big role at the shop. "Butcher shops are meant to make people happy. We love the banter that goes back and forth across the counter.

"We see people park out front, jump out and stride in, ready to rock and roll. They want to have a laugh and we'll oblige. I've ruffled some feathers over the years..."

Jason's offsider is Brenton White (no relation to Brian White) who has been work-



ing at the shop for more than 30 years.

Brenton, 63, says, "I was on my honeymoon at Surfers Paradise when I got a call from Adelaide, saying Brian was looking for a butcher. I called him and he saved the job for me.

"I was working at Turner's at Unley at the time but I was living at West Lakes and wanted something closer to home. I've been here ever since.

"I was here when Jason started as an apprentice and I reckon I'm still serving 30 or so customers who I've served from when I first came here.

"Some lovely ladies come in and we have a chat. They've been coming here for so long



This classic butcher's block has been part of the shop for as long as anyone can remember. Brenton White (pictured) says he's been using it for more than 30 years, making it a talking point for customers.

that I know what they want.

"When I'm out and about, I always stop and talk to regulars if I see them, and I visit a few old customers in nursing homes."

An end section of the counter display is dedicated to products which older customers have always wanted, such as silverside, lambs fry and chicken maryland.

Thanks to TV cooking shows, younger customers are drawn to some of the traditional products like lamb shanks and osso bucco.

"We've moved with the times to meet the demands of today, such as making dinner easier for busy families. Lately, rolled chicken roasts have taken off like wildfire," Jason says.

He sees a bright future, with a core of loyal customers and new ones being continually added.

He enjoys "extremely loyal" reciprocal support from sponsoring, mainly through meat trays, 10 local sports clubs – from surf lifesaving and rugby to bowls and basketball.

"We've had phenomenal reach with Facebook, thanks to my wife Ali. I'm surprised how successful Facebook has been for us," Jason says.

"I'm hoping we'll benefit from people moving into several new housing developments in the area.

"A new project is starting at Fletcher's Slip near Birkenhead Point. There'll be three stages to eventually house 1,300 people.

"And it would also be nice if we could tap into people from the housing development at the old Footy Park at West Lakes."



TREC'S FLYING HIGH

Pilot-turned-butcher revamps shop to trigger fresh growth

Splashing out to enhance the visual appeal of his family-owned butcher shop in a busy mall has reaped immediate rewards for Trec Smith (*pictured above*).

Sales are up, with old customers returning and new ones attracted to the snazzy look of JAG Meatworx at Armada Arndale shopping centre, Kilkenny.

While butchers across the board try to cut costs in tight trading conditions, Trec elected for a significant spend which involved closing the shop for six weeks earlier this year.

The shop was closed for retail sales while renovations on the facade and front counter areas were carried out, but butchers kept working out back to keep the wholesale side ticking over.

The calculated gamble quickly paid dividends for Trec, 41, a former charter pilot who discovered the mysterious Marree Man (see story on opposite page).

"People eat with their eyes and the same principle applies to attracting people to your shop in a mall with busy passing foot traffic," he says.

"Retailing is pretty competitive and you need to put yourself out there."

"The old shop was starting to look a little old with old tiles and fittings so we've refreshed it in a ranch style featuring timber and brick."

"We have had great feedback from the

public and customer numbers have increased.

"Our older customers appreciated the new look and we attracted new ones. The staff

also appreciate what's been done."

Trec made sure that the shop retained a long, well-lit display counter to attract passing shoppers.



Butcher Dean Hayley with educational artwork at the renovated shop.

How Trec discovered the Marree Man

In his former career as a charter pilot, Trec Smith is credited with discovering the huge Outback figure which became known as the Marree Man.

Trec was flying over a remote desert plateau between Marree and Coober Pedy on June 26, 1998, when he spotted the geoglyph of an indigenous man ready to hurl a hunting stick.

Measuring over 4km from head to toe, the figure was so big that it could only be seen from the air.

But when Trec landed at Marree and told people what he'd seen, nobody was particularly



interested – initially at least.

"Judging from the reaction, I thought it must be well known. I was new to the area, so maybe it was a tourist attraction that I

didn't know about," he recalls.

It wasn't until later when an anonymous fax arrived at Marree businesses that puzzled locals began to take a keen

> The addition of a dry aged beef cabinet has proved a hit, offering quality ribeye, bone-in sirloin and T-bones.

"We've had good feedback from customers about the cabinet. Many are intrigued by our whiskey scotch fillet," Trec says.

The shop serves a multicultural area. There is a large number of Vietnamese people including many who work as chicken boners.

There is also a strong European presence led by Greeks and Italians, and more recent arrivals are from Afghanistan.

The business has six butchers in the total of 13 fulltime and casual staff.

It's a family affair. Trec's father Brian manages wholesale sales and oversees administration, and Trec's mother Robyn works part-time, making value added products and helping with administration.

Trec's wife Bianca oversees the counter staff. The family bought JAG Meatworx in 2006 from butchers John Fitzgerald and Greg Wheeler.

Over the years, the family has worked hard to expand their wholesale operation.

Brian Smith says, "Our clients include a range of hotels, restaurants and cafes, plus sporting and community clubs and seven Meals on Wheels sites.

"As an independent operator, we can source the best value products and we notify the chefs of pricing deals.

"Operating a shop enables us to keep in touch with consumer trends and food preferences."

interest in Trec's discovery.

"It turned out nobody knew about it and it snowballed from there. I was a media star for a while, doing lots of interviews including some on live TV," he says.

The Marree Man, probably formed by bulldozer, made news around the world due to its size and the mystery of who created it.

High levels of planning, precision and sheer boldness would have been required. Suspicion fell on American defence personnel from Woomera, but the mystery remains.



Trec says a dry aged beef cabinet has added a new dimension to the shop.



Brian Smith with one of two vans used for deliveries to wholesale customers.

Thomas Foods investment a huge vote of confidence

Thomas Foods International's plans for a massive new abattoir costing "several hundred million dollars" at Murray Bridge is a huge vote of confidence in the South Australian meat industry.

"This is the single largest investment by our company in our 30-year history and it's on a scale not seen in our industry for many years," says CEO Darren Thomas.

"It is a huge investment which I think is unprecedented in the South Australian food industry.

"We plan to build the best, most advanced multi species processing facility in Australia, if not the world.

"We want our facility to be world class in adapting the latest advancements in technology, efficiency, environmental sustainability, animal welfare and workplace safety.

"It's our long-term commitment to our community, staff, customers and livestock suppliers throughout South Australia and Australia."

The new plant will be the "flagship facility" for Thomas Foods's global operations.

It will be built on a greenfield site 10km from the Murray Bridge town centre and will replace the old plant, much of which was devastated by fire on January 3 last year.

A start date has not been announced for the construction of the plant which will be built in stages.

Beef production facilities will be built first, with initial beef production hoped to begin by November next year. There will be capacity to process between 1200 and 1400 head of cattle daily.

Once the beef facilities are completed, construction work for the processing of sheep, lambs and goats will follow.

About 2000 jobs are expected to be created once the plant is fully operational.

The old plant, which continues to partially operate, employed about 1500 people at its peak before the fire.

The rebuild project, which was announced on June 6, has been supported by \$17 million from the SA Government for infrastructure works, including roads, and \$7 million from the Federal Government.

Thomas Foods's planning process has been led by Darren Thomas and Chief Operating Officer David McKay, heading a team of internal and external designers, engineers and planners.

"It's a very exciting milestone for Thomas Foods and our local community of Murray Bridge," David says.

"We have worked closely with a team of

The old plant was destroyed by a huge fire which burned for more than a week. The fire was caused when material was ignited by sparks from a welder working on an offal bin.

Since the blaze, the company has created hundreds of jobs and invested millions into its other facilities at Lobethal in the Adelaide Hills and at Tamworth in NSW.

It has also grown international operations by opening an office in Japan and entering into an equity partnership with Luiten Food in the Netherlands.

Darren says he is enormously proud of staff who have worked tirelessly since the fire to make the rebuild possible.

"The fire was a major disruption to the



An artist's impression of an entrance at the massive new Murray Bridge abattoir.

internationally-renowned engineers to produce a world-class environmentally sustainable design.

"From the fire has come a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a new flagship facility that will service our global operations for many decades to come."

The site for the new plant, on Mannum Rd, is about 8km from the old plant, near the company's existing wastewater treatment ponds.

The final stages of the development will provide for a considerable expansion and greater footprint to that of the old plant.

business and the lives of many of our people, not just in Murray Bridge but right across our operations," he says.

"But we're a positive and resilient family company.

"Rather than lament what was lost, we've focused on emerging bigger and stronger."

Thomas Foods is the largest fully-family owned meat processor in the country, processing sheep, lamb, goats and beef.

It supplies more than 85 countries around the world, with operations in Australia, the US, China, Japan and Europe.

'It is a huge investment which I think is unprecedented in the South Australian food industry' - Darren Thomas

His latest offering is chicken parmigiana which he sells raw or cooked to be cooked or heated at home in CPET trays. He charges \$8.

"We made some to trial with a few customers who were impressed so we introduced them in the store and they were quickly popular," Wilson says.

When MBL News visited Stirling Variety Meats, Chris Pfitzner was selling five ready meals, each for \$10:

- Spaghetti bolognese

READY MEALS READY

- Parmigiana chicken rolls
- Spinach and bacon chicken rolls with lime, chilli and coriander
- Asian chicken stirfry
- Mexican chicken rolls with ham, cheese and jalapenos

"We haven't fully explored our ready meals options and it will be interesting where it all ends

up," Chris says.

Chris began using the new sealer and CPET trays for slow cooked butter chicken, rogan josh and beef ragu.

"We sold a lot more than we expected in the first week so we made the same things for the next week but we didn't sell as many," he says.

"Then we made other things

like chicken stirfry and again, they sold well initially before tapering off.

"So we've learnt that it's probably the same people who keep buying ready meals. We need to rotate what we offer or make new things to keep their interest.

"It's a matter of finding the right products and working out what people will pay for them."



Three generations of Mannum's Male family in an MBL newsletter of 1995. Pictured, from left, are Greg, Joan, Russell, Leo and Brett.

Opportunity knocks at Mannum

A long-respected country butcher shop which has been in family hands for almost 80 years and three generations is looking for a new operator.

Male's Meats at Mannum was closed at the end of June by Greg Male for personal reasons. He had run the store for 14 years after taking over from his father Russell.

"It's the sad end of an era," says Russell, 77, whose superannuation fund owns the building.

However, Russell wants to see the shop continue as a butchery and is offering rental to a suitable butcher at a "reasonable rate."

"Mannum is wide-open for a butcher shop and we have one here that is well known, fully equipped and meets all QA standards,"

says Russell, who ran the business for 28 years.

"We've always placed a big emphasis on smallgoods so we have the full equipment for smallgoods making as well as general butchery.

"Greg has been selling his mettwurst to Queensland and Western Australia as well as regional SA."

Mannum, with a population of about 2600, has two supermarkets but Male's Meats was the only butchery.

It was established in 1940 by Leo Male who handed it over to son Russell in 1977.

For a time, three generations worked there simultaneously – Leo, Russell and his wife

Joan, and their sons Greg and Brett.

In 1995, Russell used his superannuation fund to pay for a combined retail store, production facility and wholesale outlet at a cost of \$600,000.

The then Chief Meat Hygiene Officer Robin Vandegraaff described it as "one of the most advanced and highest quality meat plants in the State."

Russell says, "It set a new benchmark for the meat industry at the time and we were very proud of it."

"It has been well maintained over the years and it meets all the regulations."

For details, contact Russell on 0427 813 886 or 8569 1656.

What began as a burger competition for apprentice butchers is evolving into a popular networking event for senior butchers and industry sponsors.

The Apprentice Butchers of SA's third annual burger night drew more than 40 people from across the industry to the CEG (Career Employment Group) commercial cookery unit in Pirie St in July.

"We're incredibly pleased at how the event is growing," says the apprentice group's founder

Apprentice event grows

and chairman Luke Moody.

"Senior butchers, bosses and sponsors are joining apprentices for what is now an annual industry night which includes an apprentice burger competition."

Sponsors include MBL, with Merchandise Division General Manager Bexley Carman praising the event for bringing

diverse people together.

"MBL supports and sponsors the apprentice group in a number of ways. We need to support and encourage the next generation of butchers," Bexley says.

For the record, Lewis Deller-Evans of Goodwood Quality Meats was named Overall Winner of the burger competi-

tion after earning most points in the Best Raw Appearance and Most Innovative categories.

Best Taste category was shared by Aaron of Athelstone Quality Meats, Luke of Blackwood Country Meat, and Cooper of Indulgent Meats at Port Elliot.

A short video of the event can be seen at the Apprentice Butchers of SA's Facebook site.

Scott shines as a mature-age apprentice



Students at TAFE SA are proving that any age is a good age to become a butcher.

Scott Herriman, 31, is one of more than half a dozen mature-age apprentices who are completing their training at TAFE SA's Regency campus.

He had considered becoming a chef but when he realised his interest in food only went as far as meat, his sights turned to becoming a butcher.

He completed Certificate II in Meat Processing, which includes training in selecting, cutting, trimming, preparing, packing and arranging meat and meat products for supply and sale.

Graduates can be eligible for apprenticeships and Scott was quickly

snapped up by Saints Foodland at Salisbury. He says he hasn't looked back.

"I like that there's a mix of physical work and the chance to use finer skills. I also like the value-adding aspect when I get a chance - making things look appetising and easy to cook, like schnitzels and chicken rolls," he says.

Scott's training continues one day a week at Regency.

TAFE SA delivers Certificate II and Certificate III in Meat Processing, as well as traineeships and apprenticeships. Short courses in Cured & Smoked Products and Sausage Making are also available.

For more information, phone 1800 882 661 or visit www.tafe-sa.edu.au/butchery