

## ALL GREEN BY 2023

### MBL's eco-friendly strategy spurred by strong support

MBL is working to cover our entire current range of plastic products with eco-friendly options by June 2023, after strong support for our Phase 1 rollout.

Sales data shows our green strategy is bearing early fruit, setting a solid platform for our steady rollout of home compostable or recyclable products.

Our green products, led by home compostable trays and bags, diverted almost two million pieces of plastic from landfill in the initial 10-month period to January this year.

The positive outcome, despite supply interruptions caused by COVID-19, has encouraged MBL to press ahead with our green strategy.

Our target is diverting 15 million pieces of plastic by January next year as our green rollout gains momentum, leading to a full range of green products by June 2023.

CEO Jamie Higgins says, "We are not only a market leader, but more importantly MBL is a community leader."

"As a Co-operative representing the voice of our Members, we have a responsibility to shape the market and bring innovation to this category to ensure a sustainable future."

The rollout of home compostable products began with the release of MBL's Ikon Pack Green trays, vacuum bags and produce bags, much to the delight of butchers and their customers.

*Continued page 4*



Some centuries-old smallgoods traditions have died out in Germany but Barossa legend Graham Linke, as sharp as a tack at 82, has been passionately applying them for 66 years. His amazing story is across pages 6, 7 and 11.

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# BLENDING PROWESS ON SHOW

MBL's custom blending prowess has been exposed to a diverse range of potential new customers at the inaugural South Australia Food Beverage Tech Trade Show at Adelaide Showground.

The Co-op occupied a booth to promote our expanding blending capacity to food and beverage producers over two days in March.

We also took the opportunity to showcase our latest food packaging solutions, including home-compostable green packaging.

MBL is a new member of Food SA which jointly hosted the trade show with GaP Solutions. There were 80 exhibitors.

"The show helped us connect with big and small food manufacturers," says MBL General Manager Sales & Marketing, Bexley Carman.



Bexley Carman (left) and Shane Harrison at MBL's custom blending booth at the trade show.

"On the first morning, for example, our visitors included John-Paul Drake of Drakes Supermarkets and Renmark butcher Brett Gebhardt.

"While it was a chance to see existing customers, we were able to give potential new customers information on our custom blending capacity.

"Our blending division excels in research and development, innovative ingredient formulating and blending technology."

MBL has ramped up production at our modern blending facility at Athol Park to provide custom ingredients for meat, small-goods, seafood, bakery, dairy and confectionery products.

Our blending operations were boosted last April by our acquisition of food ingredients manufacturer Medani Foods from founder Shane Harrison, who has added his expertise to the MBL team.

The takeover added new products to MBL's already strong ingredients portfolio and opened fresh markets in the growing national food and beverage sectors.

## MBL NEWS

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## Adelaide still pencilled in for AMIC's national finals

As AMIC's regional competitions begin, hopes remain high that SA will host the national finals in February.

Adelaide was scheduled to host the event in February this year before all AMIC competitions for 2020 were cancelled due to COVID-19.

National finals are traditionally rotated between the States, held in the February after the previous year's regional and State finals.

"The national event is scheduled to be held in SA in February. I can't give any more details as venues have not been

finalised," AMIC's SA rep Chris Kelly said as MBL News was going to Press.

Venues in Adelaide have been solidly booked for this year after COVID-19 cancellations caused havoc for the events sector last year.

Should an Adelaide venue not be secured, organisers may look to an SA regional location, as was the case when Terrigal, on the NSW Central Coast, hosted in February 2020.

Adelaide last hosted the national event in 2015, attracting about 120 interstate visitors to the Adelaide Hilton.



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# MBL apprentice scheme: first batch set for training

A dozen budding butchers are sharpening the knives ahead of the looming start of MBL-supported apprentice training at TAFE SA, Regency Park.

The course starts in the first week of May and enrolment is open until April 23 for the first on-campus intake.

Under the MBL assistance scheme, the Co-operative will contribute to the start-up costs, after subsidies, and cover the wages, usually borne by employers, for the days the apprentice is at TAFE SA.

MBL CEO Jamie Higgins instigated MBL's involvement as yet another benefit of Membership of the Co-operative.

"We're assisting our Members in the short term while helping the development of the next generation of butchers to continue the industry," Jamie says.

TAFE Meat Studies lecturers Graeme Elliott and Shayne O'Dea say nine of the first 12 students work in butcher shops scattered across Adelaide and the other three are school-based.

"Word is certainly out there of MBL's support and the response has been good, but we can add more young people to the group before April 23," Graeme says.

With good apprentices in short supply as part of a general skills shortage, three retailers have each enrolled several people in 2021's first on-campus course.

The Bruce's Meat group has three students enrolled while Trafford Meat and Smallgoods at Campbelltown and Hahndorf Gourmet at Royal Park each have two.

The one female in the group is Nicole Dockerill, of Bruce's Meat St Agnes (*see separate story this page*).

TAFE is also offering off-campus training with a lecturer visiting shops, including some in the regions. Graeme will this year train in shops at Mt Gambier, Port Augusta and Whyalla.

MBL's financial support scheme, to alleviate apprenticeship costs for our Members, is

*Continued page 12*



## Now Nicole's cooking

Mature-age apprentice Nicole Dockerill (pictured) says she is beginning her apprenticeship course at TAFE SA with extra interest in the cooking side.

"I enjoy the overall work as butcher. The meat industry has always fascinated me," says Nicole, 33, who is learning the ropes at Bruce's Meat St Agnes.

"Cooking has become a big part of the trade and it's good that it's part of the TAFE course. I've enjoyed cooking since I was young and my partner's a chef, so I'm keen to increase my cooking skills at TAFE."

Nicole, who has children aged 13 and three, is making a belated career move into butchery after experiencing the industry when she lived in Perth.

She worked as a butchers' assistant at supermarket chain Foodworks before

working in meat wholesaling for several years.

"Then my kids came first for a long time. Now is the time for me to make a career," Nicole says.

"I did a pre-apprenticeship course at TAFE SA. I was put on work experience placement with Carly McLean (at Bruce's Meat St Agnes) and I loved it here.

"Carly inspired me to go further. She's a real inspiration, having great knowledge and a bubbly personality to go with it.

"I asked Carly if there was a chance I could do an apprenticeship here and things went from there. I'm very grateful."

Nicole's working week involves four days in the shop and one day at TAFE SA. Her wages for her days at TAFE will be reimbursed by MBL.

# ALL GREEN BY 2023

From page 1

MBL data for Phase 1 of the rollout shows our Home Compostable Certified Trays diverted 1.5 million pieces of packaging from breaking into

micro plastics, degrading the environment.

Our green Home Compostable Certified Produce Bags are replacing plastic bags, and our green Home Compostable



Luke Leyson says the green trays have been a “hot topic”.

Certified Vacuum Bags, which were first to market with full Australian standard AS-5810 home compostable certification, have already diverted over 150,000 bags from landfill.

Our targets for Phase 2, to be achieved by January next year, are:

**Home Compostable Certified Trays:** Replacing nearly 10 million pieces of packaging that would have broken down into micro plastic.

**Home Compostable Certified Produce Bags:** Replacing standard plastic bags, destined for landfill, with certified home compostable packaging.

**Home Compostable Certified Vacuum bags:** Replacing standard vacuum bags with home compostable bags and pouches.

MBL currently has robust alternatives for the majority of our current range of plastic products, says General Manager Sales & Marketing, Bexley Carman.

“We are working hard to ensure we cover the entire range with environmentally-friendly options by June 2023,” he says.

“Sourcing suitable products can be a minefield. Some products can break down but we must test them for quality to ensure

they are functional for purpose.”

All Ikon Pack products sold by MBL have passed rigorous certification tests under the Home Compostable Verification Scheme run by the Australasian Bioplastics Association (ABA).

“Proper certification is important. The approved use of official logos allows consumers to easily identify packaging materials as biodegradable and compostable,” Bexley says.

“Across the food sector now, some products carry words and invented logos to give the impression they are green but it’s often a false impression.”

Products with the logo shown here below have Australian Standard certification.



Home Compostable

AS 5810

With traditional single-use foam and plastic packaging set to be banned in coming years, MBL has been proactive in using what is effective >

## PRAISE GOES VIRAL AT GOODWOOD

The high extent of social media “lighting up” to praise the introduction of Ikon Pack Green Eco-Cane home compostable trays surprised butchers at Goodwood Quality Meats.

“We have a Facebook following of 1,500 yet we had 2,500 responses to the trays, which classes it as going viral. It was a massive reach,” says shop manager Luke Leyson.

“There were so many shares, it was amazing. We knew customers would like home compostable trays but the response was stronger than we expected.

“We now use compostable trays only; foam trays have gone from here.”

Facebook comments about the new trays included, “Wow, that is fantastic!”, “I am super impressed to see the change,” and “Congratulations on a great step forward that benefits us all.”

Luke says the home compostable trays have been a “hot topic” in the shop as well as on social media.

“People are hot on putting things in their green bins. They see organic breakdown as a positive outcome,” he says.

Luke says the introduction of the trays had been in the planning for some time.

“As soon we heard, a year or two ago, that

single-use plastic items and polystyrene containers would be illegal to use in SA, we approached MBL,” Luke says.

“Top of our agenda was acceptable trays. MBL was working on it with Ikon Pack and then COVID-19 delays hit. We kept asking (MBL rep) Shane Reynolds for updates and were pleased when the trays arrived.”

The popular shop plans to switch to more green products as they become available from MBL.

The shop recently switched to using Ikon Pack home compostable produce bags, which have been given the thumbs up by the butchers.



Nigel Hassal... customers say the green trays are "fantastic."

# Nigel's on a winner with trays

Enthusiastic customer response has greeted the introduction of Ikon Pack Green Eco-Cane trays at Unley Meats, says veteran butcher Nigel Hassal.

"The response has been excellent. Customers are really happy with them, saying they are fantastic," says Nigel, 65, who has purchased merchandise exclusively from MBL for decades.

"Switching from foam to home compostable trays is good for business, giving the message that we want to do something for the environment. We are trying to do our bit for future generations.

"I have grandchildren, and I believe that if everyone does a little bit now, it will help in the future.

"People like the idea that putting the trays into their green bins at home makes them part of the solution."

Customer responses on the shop's Facebook page include: 'Love the use of compostable trays', 'Good on you, Nigel!', and 'Well done. Every bit makes a difference!'

Nigel buys three sizes of the sugarcane pulp trays for general use as well as for pre-packed products with high turnover.

"Another benefit of compostable trays is they save space. When you stack them, they are only half as high as foam trays," Nigel says.

Encouraged by customer response to the trays, he plans to convert to other green products as they are rolled out by MBL.

actively a transitional period to become the industry leader in eco-friendly products.

A new role of Key Accounts Manager Packaging was created and has been filled by packaging expert Andy McMahon.

Bexley says, "We're giving butchers a leg-up with converting to green packaging which will become mandatory faster than a lot of people think."

SA is leading Australia with green legislation, already banning single-use plastic items such as straws and cutlery.

Polystyrene containers will be banned from next March, with further measures set to follow.

In 2018, the Federal and State governments agreed that all Australian packaging should be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

The political push is being encouraged by shoppers who

have rising expectations of how their food is packaged and the effect on the environment.

"The major supermarkets have green plans in place and smaller food retailers are expected to follow suit in varying degrees," Bexley says.

Green products cost more but prices are expected to come down as sales increase and

manufacturing costs decrease with the higher volume.

Butchers who have switched to green products report enthusiastic support from customers.

They say customers love being able to break down the products in their home green bins, giving them a physical role in helping the environment.



Unley Meats uses three sizes of sugarcane pulp trays for high-turnover pre-packs including barbecue sausages, chicken sausages, chevapchichis, apricot and walnut chicken rolls, and whole chickens.

# THE CUSTODIAN



## Graham, 82, has been keeping old German traditions alive in the Barossa for 66 years

Early one morning as Graham Linke was prepping his iconic Nuriootpa shop, a stretch limo arrived and out jumped an excited tourist who banged on the locked door.

He was clutching a large photographic book of the Barossa and its people, opened to a full-page photo of Graham in one of his famous smokehouses.

“He passed me the book and asked me to sign it. He was excited, jumping for joy. He was in a hurry, getting straight back in the limo and heading off to the airport,” Graham says.

“I couldn’t believe it. I didn’t think I was that important! You’d think I was a movie star!”

He may not be a movie star but Graham’s certainly a foodie star, still as sharp as a tack at age 82 after 66 years as a third-generation butcher at Linke’s Central Meat Store, which has been serving the Barossa for 93 years.

He’s the custodian of Germanic

smallgoods traditions with a range including mettwursts, leberwurst, kassler rib, ricewurst, lachsschinken and jaegerbraten, as well as hams and bacon.

He uses traditional family recipes dating back to the 19th century, handed down from ancestors who left Silesia and landed in South Australia in 1838 to build a new life.

Although never one to blow his own trumpet, Graham has long been promoted as a treasure on the Barossa’s food and wine

tourism trail, attracting foodies from around Australia and across the world.

He has always welcomed visitors because they are good for business and he enjoys meeting people.

Curiously, among the visitors have been German foodies eager to witness smallgoods traditions that have been overtaken by labour-saving technology in Germany.

“Many Germans say we are making products here in the

traditional way that has largely died out back home,” Graham says.

“My sister went to Germany, saying the smallgoods industry didn’t look as good as it should. Young ones don’t want to take it on.”

Alas, a similar scenario is being played out for Graham, with nobody showing interest in learning how to operate his two old smokehouses with a view to taking over when he finally retires.

This saddens Graham. However, he can understand reluctance to commit to a hugely-demanding schedule.

The smokehouses, at the shop’s rear across from his house, run non-stop for six or sometimes seven days a week, with Graham overseeing during the day and evening up to midnight before stoking them at 6am.

“You have to keep watching them. It ties you to the place, making it import- ➤



ant to live on the premises. It's hard work but it's rewarding," he says.

"I haven't had a holiday for over 40 years. I haven't been away since I took over the business, except for three months to have a hip replacement."

These days, with traditional mallee in short supply, the smokehouses are most often run on redgum sawdust but the end result is as mouth-watering as ever.

"I can sometimes get mallee from some local fellows who cut it. I like mallee - I take it every time I get the chance," Graham says.

Graham's grandfather, George Linke, began a family tradition of butchering at Freeling in 1920. He was joined two years later by Graham's father, Edgar.

Then, in 1928, the family moved to Nuriootpa and started business in the backstreets before Edgar bought the existing main-street store in 1938.

Graham's father, mother, brother, uncle and aunt were all butchers, and all worked at the Nuriootpa shop at some stage.

"Butchering was a family thing. I worked with Dad at night and it was a natural progression to leave school at 15 and become a butcher," says Graham, who took over the store in 1978.

While Graham is a stickler for tradition, he has made adjustments to the business, starting with tweaking the smokehouses to make them more efficient.

Noting how tourists often said they wished they could buy his smallgoods "all the time," he instigated home deliveries to Adelaide, across SA and interstate.

In those days before widespread courier services, Graham would personally bundle phone orders and send them in the post – and he's still doing it.

"I send smallgoods all over Australia, often to places I've



*In the days when meat was cut to order, shops were a world away from today's seductive counter displays and inspired decor. This Linke's blast from the past is thought to be in the 1940s.*

never heard of. It has been a big geography lesson," he says.

Graham spread into wholesale, and in 1997 Linke's became one of SA's first smallgoods manufacturers to achieve full quality assurance status.

A loyal local customer base is strongly supported by people from Adelaide and interstate, mainly Victorians, who include

buying smallgoods as part of their visits to the Barossa.

"We have Adelaide customers who drive up fairly regularly to stock up and make a day of it in the Barossa," Graham says.

"Some have been with us for a long time, saying, 'We're up for the day again.' It's always nice - they like what we are doing, giving us a kick along.

"Quite a few come up for Christmas hams every year. While picking up the hams, they immediately place their orders for next Christmas.

"A lot of South Australians who now live in Victoria and NSW drop by for smallgoods on their way to and from visiting their families in SA. Some days, 20 or

*Continued page 11*



*Graham and his old shop, with hanging smallgoods, have been attracting tourists for years.*

**AMIC competitions, led by Sausage King, are back after being cancelled last year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Here, Sausage King star Jason Mathie tells why he's motivated for another shot at glory and explains the multiple benefits of entering competitions.**

Despite winning three successive national titles to enter Sausage King's Hall of Fame in 2014, Jason Mathie is hungry for one elusive final honour.

"I've been in national finals in every State except SA. The nationals are rotated around Australia but I never got to compete in Adelaide," says Jason, 46, whose Clare shop is lined with trophies.

"It's Adelaide's turn to next host the nationals, so I'm back entering again after taking a break for a few years.

"To me, winning a national title in your home State in front of family and friends is the Rolls Royce of wins. I want to have a final crack and then that will be it for me - no more competitions."

Jason firstly needs a win in his local regional finals to qualify for the SA finals. State winners then advance to the national final in February next year.

SA's four regional competitions began with the Riverland and South East zone in Renmark on March 20 and will continue with competitions for the West Coast (April 17), Mid North (May 29) and Metro (August 27).

The State winners will be announced at the annual AMIC awards night on November 6.

There are six sausage and two burger categories, plus 11 smallgoods sections. There are awards for the Apprentice, Local Butcher and Wholesaler of the year.

# JASON'S BACK

## The 'Rolls Royce' of Sausage King wins beckons in Adelaide

AMIC's SA rep Chris Kelly says butchers' interest in entering has been strong after the disappointment of the competitions being cancelled last year.

"Butchers are seeing the benefits of entering, including raising their local profile, inspiring customer confidence and increasing sales," Chris says.

"The competitions are also a great chance for networking. This year, regional competitions are on Saturdays and in the evening, we'll recognise the winners and place-getters at presentation and member networking meetings."

Jason will this year enter up to five new

flavoured sausages which he has developed with his four-man team but he's tight lipped about divulging details.

"We want to test the new flavours in competition and get feedback. I can tell you I won't be entering Saltbush Hogget," he says.

Jason shot to Sausage King fame on the strength of his Saltbush Hogget sausages, winning national crowns with them in 2011, 2012 and 2013 to give him automatic Hall of Fame entry in 2014.

Only two other South Australians have achieved Hall of Fame status – Standom Smallgoods founder, the [▶](#)



*This signage was first put up in 2011 but Jason Mathie proudly maintains it, drawing sausage lovers into his Clare shop.*



# 'Our Saltbush Hogget was never beaten in any comp'

- Jason Mathie

late Stan Ciechanowicz, in 2010, and Barossa Fine Foods founder, Franz Knoll, in 2017.

Jason says, "Our Saltbush Hogget was never beaten in any comp – regional, State or national.

"In our heyday, no spices or flavourings were permitted. Sausages had to be 100% beef, lamb or pork, depending on the category. Now, spices and flavourings are allowed.

"While people still love our Saltbush Hogget, it can't really compete against flavoured sausages. A number of judges have told me it just won't win.

"It's a bit sad but the rules have changed and we have progressed also. We make a range of sausages which we rotate, having 12 on sale at any one time.

"Saltbush Hogget remains one of our biggest sellers, with visitors to Clare still coming in and simply asking for 'those winning sausages.'

"We sell them at \$22.90kg. They're great to get people in the door, giving us the opportunity to sell other things. People reason that if you make good sausages, your other things are good, too."

Jason's last competition success with

saltbush hogget was in 2016, using carrot and seasonings to win an AMIC national Best Burger title in Brisbane.

Tuesday remains sausage making day in the Clare shop, with Jason and long-serving butchers Mick Young and Jimmy Greet joined by first-year apprentices Hunter Smith and Luke Sandy.

"Hunter and Luke hadn't experienced creating sausages for competitions and I've got them involved now because it's important for their development. They can only benefit," Jason says.

Jason is enthusiastic in recommending that other butchers enter Sausage King.

"The benefits are incredible. It is so good for business. Our business changed overnight, getting our name out there. It was incredible," he says.

"I was green with the media and all the attention but I grabbed it with both hands and we haven't looked back.

"Sausage King has also been good for Clare. Locals are proud of us, and other businesses benefit from people visiting Clare to buy our sausages.

"Our first national win was in 2011 and the interest still carries on 10 years later – it's on-going, it never stops.

"The competition doesn't cost much to enter as an exercise in getting your name out there and you don't necessarily have to win to get good benefits.

"If you get a place in the regionals, you can still use Sausage King to promote your shop and the quality of your local products."



For over two decades, MBL has been a strong supporter of Sausage King and other AMIC competitions.

As well as being a one-stop shop for ingredients and machinery, MBL has always been a core sponsor and our staff have acted as judges.

"As a long-term sponsor, MBL's support has been constant over the years and is highly appreciated," says AMIC's Chris Kelly.

Paul Sandercock, now an MBL Director, introduced the first Sausage King event to SA in 1999 during his 17 years with AMIC. He says MBL's support has been vital.

"MBL was involved right from the start, with people like Bernie Steinhoff and John Phillips acting as judges for years, and support continues to this day," Paul says.

"MBL needs to be part of it because we are part of the wider industry and the AMIC competitions are important for the industry on multiple levels."

Paul says the competitions encourage networking, increase butcher shop profiles and improve product quality and variety.

"Since the first competition in 1999, the quality and variety has improved dramatically and we are seeing better products in butcher shops," he says.



# Workplace health, safety

Most business owners and managers understand the importance of ensuring employees and others feel safe and well cared for in the workplace.

Unfortunately, however, workplace deaths and serious injuries continue to regularly appear in news reports.

There are many other workplace health and safety issues such as minor injuries, hearing loss, chemical injuries, bullying and sexual harassment.

## Safework SA

In South Australia, the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 sets out the framework for the health, safety and welfare of workers.

The Act establishes Safework SA as the State's workplace health and safety regulator, investigating workplace accidents and enforcing workplace safety laws.

Safework SA also provides education and advice on work, health and safety, and provides the framework for licensing and registration for workers and plant.

The regulator has the power to enter businesses, obtain search warrants and seize documents and other evidence. Safework inspectors can issue infringement notices along with improvement and prohibition orders.

## Primary obligation

Under the provisions of the Act, a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking

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(PCBU) has the primary obligation to ensure the health, safety and well-being of workers, contractors, clients and visitors.

The PCBU must provide a safe work environment which includes:

- Safe work practices set out in policies and procedures;
- An environment free of discrimination, harassment and bullying; and
- Safe plant and equipment.

A PCBU should also ensure all employees, contractors and visitors to a business receive an induction which should include:

- Instruction and training to ensure they can safely carry out their assigned tasks;
- Appropriate safety equipment and instruction on how to use equipment; and
- Introducing the worker to safety policies and procedures.

## Managers and others

Under the Act, others also have responsibili-

ty for the safety of employees, contractors and visitors to a business.

These include anyone with management or control of a workplace, manufacturers of plant and equipment, and others within a workplace.

It is a criminal offence to breach work health and safety duties. Maximum financial penalties are significant.

A court can order a term of imprisonment of up to five years for individuals where the offence is considered reckless.

## Codes of Practice

There are Codes of Practice which provide guidance for measures to be taken by employers to improve health and safety and to prevent workplace injuries.

There are Codes for a number of different areas and include:

- First aid in the workplace;
- Hazardous manual tasks;
- How to manage work health and safety risks;
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing electrical risks;
- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss;
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals;
- Managing the risks of plant;
- Managing the work environment and facilities; and
- Work health and safety consultation, co-operation and co-ordination.

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# THE CUSTODIAN

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30 people from interstate come in.

“People often come in and say something like, ‘You’re still here! We were here 20 years ago.’ Some expect me to remember them!”

Graham says COVID-19 made 2020 the toughest time of his working life as the Barossa endured its own regional lockdown as well as two State lockdowns.

“It was a tough year. I’ve seen a few things in my time but nothing like that,” he says.

“At the start, everyone bought big – it was like Christmas for days. It was huge.

“Then (during lockdown) it was the quietest I’ve ever seen the place. There was not a car or a person in the street. There was no noise, no nothing. It was like a ghost town.

“Even when we were able to open the shop, we lost all our wholesale trade, including sales to wineries for platters.

“Only six people were allowed in at one time. The footpath was clogged for days. But the customers were terrific, coming in one door and going out the other.”



Graham Linke in an open work area behind the counter.

Three butchers work in the shop but Graham is searching for another after the retirements of two highly-valued butchers who worked with him for a total of 57 years.

Stephen Minge served for 38

years in two stints and Murray Klinger for 19 years. They retired within 12 months of each other.

As a result, Graham is working anywhere between 10 and 18 hours daily. “It’s just as well I

live on the place,” he says.

He pays tribute to his wife, saying: “Lola has done a tremendous job looking after the book-keeping side right from the start in 1978.

“Before that, she did book-keeping work elsewhere so she had experience and, in the early days, she also served in the shop and did some deliveries.

“She’s never been on a computer; she does it the way she’s always known.

“There’s more and more paperwork wanted now. Lola’s doing something every day. We are true partners in this business – I could not manage without her.”

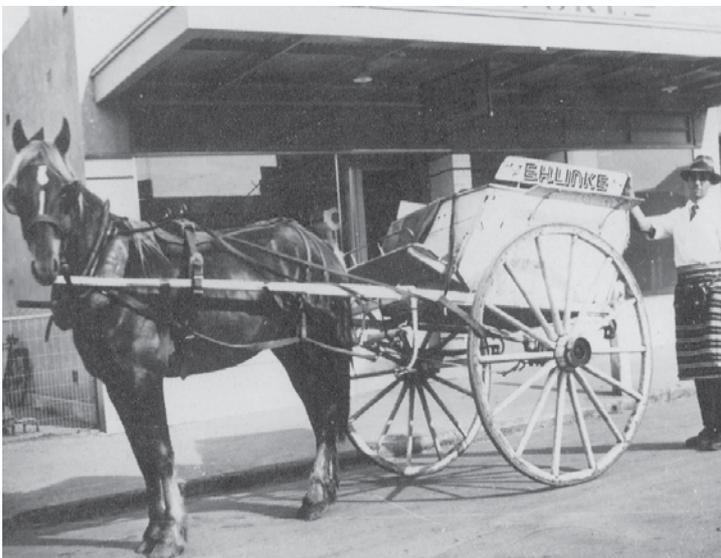
The business will leave family hands after nine decades on Graham’s retirement but he says he has no plans to hang up the knives just yet.

“Time just goes by and suddenly I’ve been here for a long time. I’ve so far had 66 years in the game – it’s a fair stretch, I suppose,” he says.

“People often ask me when I’ll retire. I tell them I keep going because I love the job, and I love meeting a lot of nice people – I enjoy conversations.

“I’ve been lucky with my health, which obviously affects what you do, and my present intention is to keep going.

“Who knows what will happen.”



Graham’s father Edgar began with horsepower in the 1930s before advancing to motorised delivery in the 1940s.

# MBL apprentice scheme begins

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intended for on-campus training.

We are keen for apprentices to attend TAFE for a day a week to ensure they are exposed to the full range of butchery skills, including the breaking of bodies.

As well, TAFE attendees are exposed to different butchery strategies and get to meet other young butchers for the chance to develop long-term networking.

Apprentices will complete Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher) with their comprehensive training including making smallgoods and sausages.

Shayne O’Dea says the Regency campus’s purpose-built training centre includes a butchery and meat processing facility, and students get to work alongside industry experts including recognised chefs.

“There’s a simulated environment where we’re really teaching the trade, not just

enterprise skills,” Shayne says.

MBL is offering to contribute to the standard set-up costs, of up to \$930, of starting Certificate III at TAFE SA.

As well, MBL will cover the wages for the time that the apprentice attends training sessions at TAFE. This usually involves 16 days a year, one day a week between the start of May and the end of September.

Wages reimbursement by MBL will be upon proof of TAFE attendance, and will apply for the full three years of the course.

Our twin offers are designed to complement a generous series of Federal and State government subsidies and payments.

MBL’s scheme has the backing of AMIC SA. “We’re keen to support what MBL is doing,” says Chairman of AMIC SA’s Retail Council, Trevor Hill.

Trevor says training at his Bruce’s Meat group is usually in-store but MBL’s scheme

had prompted this year’s switch to on-campus training for Nicole Dockerill, Lewis Deller-Evans and Xavier Schwarzer.

“It’s one of limited opportunities apprentices get to meet apprentices from other shops,” Trevor says.

Butcher Matthew Cursaro, of Trafford Meat and Smallgoods, describes the MBL scheme as an appreciated bonus for butchers.

“Finding the time and money to train apprentices is a challenge and any support is appreciated. MBL’s offer is great,” he says.

Matthew’s apprentices Giovanni Rocca and Andrew D’Amato are in the first on-campus intake. He predicts bright futures for them.

“I’ve been impressed by their interest in the industry and willingness to learn. They share a genuine interest in the paddock to plate concept,” he says.

For more information, email MBL at [ApprenticeButcher@mblsa.com.au](mailto:ApprenticeButcher@mblsa.com.au)

## Always be committed, says Jason

As a TAFE graduate who now owns his own shop, Jason Dick says butchery is a demanding career that rewards hard work.

His advice for today’s apprentices is to be committed to realising their goals, otherwise butchery can lapse into becoming “just another job.”

“It’s an intense, high-labour job that requires as much mental effort as physical effort,” says Jason, 40, who owns two-man Bower Road Meat Store at Ethelton.

“It can be testing but it can be rewarding. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it.”

Jason began in butchery with a short pre-vocational course at TAFE SA in 1998. As part of the course, he did work experience at the Bower Road store which



Jason, shown at his quaint Ethelton shop, says butchering can be demanding and rewarding.

was then owned by second-generation butcher Brian White.

“I completed the pre-vocational course and Brian picked me up as an apprentice. I’ve been here ever since, working with Brian for seven years before I bought the business.

“Times are always changing.

These days, so many young people are interested in cooking and becoming chefs.

“Butchery offers opportunity for these people as we do more cooking for ready meals.”

Jason says the thing he enjoys most about being a butcher is the ability to personalise the

products he sells.

“You can make your own sausages, introduce different flavourings and present the meat in different ways. You have to do things to stand out and it’s a fun challenge,” he says.

“There’s so much more to it than just cutting meat.”