

EXCLUSIVE OFFER TO MBL MEMBERS

Game-changing app for labels and click & collect

A new app designed for butchers has been created in Adelaide to streamline compliance to complex and time-consuming food labelling regulations.

A major bonus, championed by MBL, allows individual butcher shops to create their own click & collect service on the app at no extra cost.

The co-operative has teamed with Food Safe Australia co-founders Belinda Hanson-Kenny and Simon Horwood to launch the game-changing app, which is exclusively offered to MBL Members at the subsidised rate of \$30 monthly.

“The app is a major development with significant benefits to

butchers for both label compliance and click & collect,” says MBL General Manager of Sales and Marketing, Bexley Carman.

“It will save butchers a great deal of time in creating labels with accurate ingredient lists, nutrition panels, declarable allergens and percentage of Australian content. It streamlines compliance.”

The app accesses and applies information collated by Food Safe Australia on 750 single ingredient raw materials. MBL has loaded details of a similar number of our food products.

Belinda says, “Everyone hates making food labels. It can be overly

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Belinda Hanson-Kenny and Simon Horwood... creators of a time-saving label app with click & collect capabilities for butchers.

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MBL supports Tatiara community

In a show of support for the local community, MBL is a gold sponsor of the South Australian Masters Games in the Tatiara region of the South-East.

About 1,000 mature-aged competitors will take part on April 7-11, giving the region a great opportunity to showcase itself and receive a significant economic boost.

The region was to host the games in 2020, with MBL as a gold sponsor, but the event was cancelled due to Covid-19.

A number of the sports will be held in Keith, home of an MBL proteins plant which is mainly staffed by Tatiara locals.

"We see the Masters Games as a great

A staff recruitment drive has put extra boots on the floor of MBL warehouses to clear a merchandise delivery backlog caused by Covid-19 issues.

MBL, like businesses everywhere, has been hit with staff absenteeism caused by our people being forced into covid and close contact isolation.

MBL NEWS

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opportunity for MBL to support the Tatiara region," says MBL CEO Jamie Higgins.

"We have a responsibility as an employer in the region to be involved and support the community."

Since purchasing the plant in 2010, MBL has made a point of being a "good citizen" by supporting the local community and local businesses where possible.

This has included MBL donating \$10,000 to the Keith CFS after the local brigade bravely saved our proteins plant from destruction in a fierce bushfire in 2018.

Tatiara District Council won the bid to host the Masters Games, with the bulk of the



TATIARA
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MASTERS GAMES

sports to be held in Keith and Bordertown.

Sports will include swimming, athletics, cricket, basketball, lawn bowls, volleyball and tennis.

COVID-19 KEEPS BITING MBL

This, in turn, led to merchandise delivery delays for MBL Members and customers, despite our remaining staff working overtime to minimise disruption.

"We've been burning the midnight oil. Our people have been fantastic, working over and above," says MBL General Manager Sales and Marketing, Bexley Carman.

"People were filling in at jobs they were unfamiliar with, just to keep the wheels turning.

"We were two weeks behind in assembling orders so we hired a whole bunch of people to smash it. We've now cleared all we can."

However, MBL continues to be

impacted by global supply chain issues and rising costs that have spanned the two years of Covid-19.

"Everyone's been saying they've never seen anything like it and just when you think it can't get any worse, it does," Bexley says.

"We are still being hit hard by freight cost increases of up to 500%.

"The number of ships coming to Australia has greatly decreased, freight prices have increased and we have no control about when our overseas merchandise orders will arrive.

"For example, a specific order for Drakes has been sitting on a

wharf in Singapore since mid-January. We can only hope it may arrive here in April.

"On top of all this, our production room has been hit with the cost of ingredients rising by up to 40%. This will cause inflation all over the place."

The war in Ukraine has added to the overall supply problem, making it impossible to source some products from Russia.

"Russia has stopped supplying ingredients, including plastics resin used to make vacuum bags, in retaliation to sanctions from many countries over the war," Bexley says.

MBL asks Members and customers to continue to be understanding and patient.

Bexley says, "We have no control over global influences. Supply delays and shortages are continuing.

"We are doing our best to cope with what we are being dealt and we'll keep pedalling very hard to meet Members' expectations."



NEW RUBS RUSHED

Bush tucker themes enthuse butchers

Nobody could be happier than blending whiz Darryl Vaitkus at the instant popularity of MBL's new bush tucker-inspired rubs and sprinkles.

Darryl's clever use of all-natural Aussie flavours such as mango, lemon myrtle and saltbush are central to the exciting range of rubs under our Butcher's Banquet label.

Launched in February exclusively for butchers, the rubs have proved instant hits, with Aussie Mango & Desert Lime, in particular, making a huge impression.

Hundreds of rubs are in the market but, as far as Darryl can ascertain, his is the only one made with mango powder, as opposed to mango flavouring.

Our other two new Gold Range rubs - Lemon Myrtle & Mountain Pepper and Saltbush & Aniseed - are also in strong demand from butchers.

"This launch has drawn the best response to any launch MBL's ever had. It has been fantastic," says MBL General Manager of Sales & Marketing, Bexley Carman.

"Within a few weeks of launching, 700 cartons of the new rubs had been ordered. We initially struggled with demand but production has caught up."

The Gold Range rubs were developed and are being produced at MBL in response to butchers' requests for exclusive rubs to use themselves and to sell in jars.

Jars of three Traditional Range rubs - Master Butchers Lamb Rub, Exotic Grill Rub, and Greek Yiros Rub - were launched with the Gold Range and are selling well.

The whole MBL research and development team contributed to developing the rubs, with Darryl putting his best foot forward.

"Darryl's a star. He has just been fantastic with his creativity and persistence in creating the rubs from scratch," Bexley says.

"It was a long process but Darryl was more than up for the challenge, with help from the MBL team."



Darryl Vaitkus with the range of rubs and sprinkles developed in the MBL test kitchen.

Darryl says the range grew from MBL's original intention to develop a few top-quality, distinctive Australian rubs.

"Bexley wanted all-natural Australian ingredients where possible for Australian rubs for Australian butchers and we went from there," he says.

"We had mango powder and I started looking for more Australian ingredients, finding a supplier with fantastic ones like lemon myrtle, aniseed myrtle and saltbush.

"I like warmer profiles and my original idea was to make a mango rub with sweet chilli and lime, but after a lot of testing and tweaking, we dropped the sweet chilli to settle on Aussie Mango & Desert Lime.

"MBL's lemon pepper has always been a very popular ingredient so it was exciting

to source lemon myrtle. It's amazing, with a strong lemony zest.

"I liked lemon myrtle so much that I used too much. An early version worked with pork but we needed to tone it down so it also worked across the other proteins."

Lemon myrtle formed the basis of the Lemon Myrtle & Mountain Pepper rub while for the third Gold Range rub, saltbush married with aniseed myrtle, which is milder than the liquorice connotations.

"We tested six or seven varieties of each rub, we did repeated group taste tests, and we kept tweaking them," Darryl says.

"After about nine months, we settled on the range and I'm really happy with the outcome, pleased at helping produce premium-quality Australian products."

A new series of profiles on MBL staff begins on page 12



Seeing the potential... Belinda Hanson-Kenny demonstrates the app to Lobethal butcher Ash Clarke, of Onkaparinga Meats.

From page 1

complicated. Now you can simply load your ingredients and recipes for the app to do the legwork for you.

“Creating a full label from scratch takes well under an hour with our app compared to three to five hours per label manually, allowing operators to get back to running their businesses.”

Bexley says, “When Belinda and Simon approached us with their app, we asked if they could add capability for butchers to create click & collect with their own logos, products and prices.

“It’s brilliant that they have been able to help butchers who haven’t known how to go about creating a click & collect service or haven’t been able to afford it.”

The click & collection component is a free bonus to the app, negotiated by MBL with Food Safe Australia.

The app is being offered to the co-operative’s Members at the subsidised monthly fee of \$30, down from the regular \$49, to be linked to Members’ monthly accounts. Multi-site operators are charged an extra \$10 monthly per site.

Food Safe Australia sought MBL, with over 500 Members, as its first customer. MBL, as a co-operative for the benefit of Members, saw involvement as a natural fit.

“This has very much become a joint

Game-changing app for labels and click & collect



**SCAN TO BOOK A
FREE DEMO**

venture between MBL and us. Adjustments have been made to the app on the advice of MBL and butchers,” Belinda says.

“It was initially an app for food labels only but we diversified (including adding click & collect) after MBL became involved.”

Simon says, “We’ve built the app for butchers as a priority. We’re focusing on working with MBL and its sales team for the next 12 months.”

Belinda has been busy demonstrating the app to butchers, working her way through a list of 40 with more being added as word spreads through the MBL reps.

The QR code on this page can be used to book a demonstration with Belinda.

She says the response so far had been very positive as many butchers realise their labelling standards could be better. “They have been looking for help,” she says.

“Our app makes accurate, compliant labelling easier and faster. It’s the software we’ve all needed for years.”

The manual creation of accurate labels can be a minefield for butchers.

For example, an operator may list the same nutritional detail for chicken, beef or pork products sharing the same marinade.

“But the nutritional detail changes depending on what protein is added. The new app can solve this problem,” Bexley says.

Belinda says it can be easy to overlook the declaration of some ingredients when manually creating a label, sometimes with consumer health consequences.

“If, for example, allergens aren’t declared, you can be held responsible for the health of consumers. Allergens are becoming more important. Half of all national food recalls are now about allergens,” she says.

“Our app makes accurate labelling easier and faster.”



‘We’ve built the app for butchers as a priority. We’re focusing on working with MBL’ - Simon Horwood

➤ Belinda, a food scientist and qualified smallgoods maker who runs her own business, Food Labelling & Safety Pty Ltd, says she recognised the need for easier compliance two years ago.

She raised the idea with Simon, of Adelaide Hills Foods. "I've been doing Quality Assurance for Simon's family company for 10 years," she says.

"Simon is an IT consultant and we joined forces to create a labelling app. Simon does the IT side while I look after the content and compliance side."

After much work, the pair settled on a web app called @eatsafeau for the building of products and labels, and an online store called Marketplace with click & collect.

Selling points

Sharing products

Every business on our system gets access to the @eatsafeaus app - show nutrition information, declarable allergens and sell points to your customers, live in-store or online.

Building nutrition panels

Our system puts together the legally-required nutrition panels, declarable allergens and ingredient declarations required by FSANZ.

Training staff

We've hand-built six food safety courses for your staff to complete. Proudly display

Products Portal

Label Generator

Membership Benefits

Online Marketplace

Food Safe Australia
MAKING AUSTRALIAN FOOD SAFE

Wheat Flour, Eggs, Sugar, Butter (Cream (Milk)), Milk, Lemon Juice, Baking Powder (Raising Agent (450, 500)), Wheaten Starch, Vanilla Flavour.

Contains Gluten (Wheat), Milk, Egg, Soy.

% Australian Calculation

Made in Australia from at least 88% Australian ingredients

Nutrition Information

Net Size 250g NET		
Nutrition information		
Serving size per pack - 10		
Serving size - 10g		
	Avg. Qty. Per Serving	Avg. Qty. Per 100g
Energy	1000kJ	2000kJ
Protein	3.7g	7.4g
Fat - total	13.1g	26.2g
- saturated	6.2g	12.4g
Carbohydrates	31.1g	62.2g
- Sugars	25.2g	50.4g
Sodium	150mg	300mg

to your customers that you take food safety seriously.

Keeping up to date

We're up to date so you don't have to be.

We have a weekly newsletter so you can keep in touch with happenings in the food industry.

For more information, visit www.foodsafeaustralia.com.au

MBL acts on Jason's click & collect plea

Murray Bridge butcher Jason Schubert planted the seed for MBL encouraging the development of a click & collect app.

He raised the subject with MBL General Manager of Sales and



Jason Schubert

Marketing, Bexley Carman, at MBL's social media workshop at a Bowden hotel last August.

Jason, one of 40 people attending to learn more about using social media as a marketing tool, asked Bexley if MBL could help butchers set up click & collect software.

Bexley says, "Jason had a powerful case for MBL, as a co-operative, helping butchers introduce click & collect, which keeps growing across all retail.

"Many butchers are simply too busy or not tech-savvy enough to look into click & collect, which can also be too expensive for single shops to pay to have set up."

At the time, Bexley was talking with Safe Food Australia about a food labelling app. He went into bat for click & collect at the next meeting.

The long and the short of it was that a click & collection function was developed as a bonus addition to the labelling app at no extra cost to butchers.

It allows individual shops to add click & collect to their websites and social media platforms with their own logo, products and prices.

"As a co-operative, we listen to our Members and consider implementing their suggestions where possible," Bexley says.

"In this case, we were pleased to be able to act on Jason Schubert's suggestion for click & collect to the benefit of the wider Membership."

Jason, who has run the meatbar@marketplace shop for over 10 years, says he's looking forward to learning about the app.

"In the mall here, we're seeing click & collect growing all the time. It's massive for the supermarket, and it's big for the fruit and vege shop," he says.

"We watch as trolley after trolley passes us loaded with click & collect products. It has grown so big that we must get into it."

It's Sausage King time again, with regional competitions culminating in the State presentation night in November (full story page 9).

Here, we look at how success in last year's competitions has translated to significant sales increases for a country butcher shop.



GOLDEN RUN

Rob's soaring sales further boosted by awards success

Ongoing benefits from winning four State trophies in last year's AMIC competitions continue to power a stellar growth period for Rob Waters and his crew at Kadina.

Rob has overseen sales growth of 25% over the past 18 months at Desmond's Meat Service, highlighted by last Christmas's trade rising by 35% over Christmas 2020.

As with butchers everywhere, he largely attributes growth to more home cooking during the first two Covid years, with many new customers discovering their local butcher shop's superior quality, range and expert advice.

However, Rob says his already-strong sales have also been mightily boosted by success in AMIC's 2021 competitions, beginning with the Mid North regional competitions in May and continuing with the State finals in late October.

In all, the popular shop collected 13 awards, from small plaques to big trophies, for proud display in-shop and promotion through Facebook and local newspaper advertising.

"The awards have been very good for us. There has been a lot of local interest and a very strong response to our advertising," says Rob, 48, a nephew of the shop's founder Des Waters.

"We had Sausage King signage printed for the windows, drawing in a lot of passing people to try our winning products.

"We still have the four State trophies displayed on the counter. They are a real talking point, with regulars taking pride in the success of 'their' shop.

"Our sales have been up by 25% for the last two years and last Christmas trade was up

by 35%. Covid helped but the awards added extra interest and sales.

"We're definitely entering the awards again this year – the Mid North competition is at the end of May."

After winning five gold medals in the 2021 Mid North competition, Rob and his team advanced to the State finals to be awarded four smallgoods trophies, headed by gold for their Cheese & Jalapeno Kransky in the Cooked Sausage in a Casing category.

They won the State silver trophy for their Garlic Mettwurst and bronze trophies for their Wood Smoked Middle Bacon Rashers and their Bung Fritz.

Their Pork Sausage won the Mid North Sausage King title in Traditional Australian Pork but was unplaced in the State final. They also took four

➤ minor placings, for burgers and bacon, in the regional competition.

"We're the only Copper Coast butcher shop making our own smallgoods. There's good profit in them and they are something we can call our own," Rob says.

"Smallgoods have always been my passion. A lot of the recipes are my own, so it's great to have won awards.

"That said, it has been a complete team effort. Everybody here plays a part in what we do, from boning to manufacturing to cooking.

"Customers appreciate the fact that we make smallgoods in-store with regional products, and our success has added to our reputation."

All the shop's pork comes from Ant-Hill Piggery, a family operation at Long Plains, 85km from Kadina. The female pigs are slaughtered at Port Wakefield.

The piggery is jointly owned by Russell Harford, who purchased Desmond's Meat Service in 2020 from retiring Des Waters.

Russell retained the shop's name in deference to Des, who turned it into a cherished local "institution" over 35 years.

Rob was appointed manager, knowing the shop inside and out after having worked there for 15 of his 30 years in the meat game.

The corner shop first opened in 1861. Local historians believe it is the oldest continuously trading butcher shop in SA and possibly the oldest in Australia.

(Sydney's high-end Victor Churchill butchery, often considered Australia's oldest continuing butcher shop, was established 15 years later in 1876).



The Kadina crew of (from left) Jordan Elliott, Rob Waters, Amelia Phillips, Russell Harford and Brendon Harding celebrate their success at the Mid-North competition.

Russell says, "The history adds to the shop. It feels good to know it has always been a butcher shop.

"I make my own pork products at home (using products from MBL) and I've always been interested in owning a butcher shop. When this shop came up for sale, it was now or never.

"It's a quality shop with a good crew led by Rob who has been there for years and knows everybody.

"He's passionate about trying new things in developing products and they usually turn out very well, like the winning Cheese & Jalapeno Kransky's"

The basic recipe was given to Rob by an elderly German customer who asked him to make them for him.

"They were pretty good. I've since refined the recipe to make them better still and they are popular," Rob says.

"Years before, during my apprenticeship, an old German butcher also gave me some smallgoods recipes which I still use today.

"However, I really enjoy creating my own products from scratch the best."



The winning Cheese & Jalapeno Kransky's.

Since taking over the shop, Rob has worked to increase customer service and broaden the product range, including adding pre-packed SA seafood which sells well.

"This shop has long had very loyal customers who we see every week. I've known them for years," he says.

"We've retained established customers and we're growing the business by developing our own loyal customers with an expanded range, particularly smallgoods.

"Facebook has been very useful to spread the word and advertise our specials. One week, we missed posting on Facebook and it made a huge difference.

"The icing on the cake has been our awards success which has recognised our quality and created a lot of local pride."



Rob Waters... overseeing sustained sales growth in an historic shop dating to 1861.

Brandon's nods to the past

A strong sense of history greets customers to Brandon Pitt's Mt Gambier shop which, in many ways, has changed little since it was built in the 1950s.

Brandon, 24, is a young butcher with old tastes, seeing merit in highlighting the shop's history, from displaying old butchery equipment to enlarging some great shop photos of 1958.

Out back, he proudly uses a "museum piece" Meatmaster bandsaw that's older than anyone can remember and keeps working with help from MBL Machinery.

"It has been here forever – for at least 40 years that I know of after talking to the previous two owners," says Brandon, who purchased two-man Grantville Court Butchers, in a small block of shops, in 2019.

"It's a pretty simple machine that still works well. It just doesn't stop. They still make blades that fit it. MBL gets them for me."

Brandon has begun displaying old equipment, including slicers, choppers and knives, on shelves along the walls, generating good interest from customers.

"Mum and Dad love antique shopping and they bought me a few old things for the shop," he says.

"The various items became really good conversation pieces



Brandon Pitts... his "antique" Meatmaster bandsaw's still going strong, thanks to MBL Machinery.

for a lot of customers.

"Older customers, especially, like to talk about them and some have bought in items to add to the collection. It has just snowballed."

Brandon hit paydirt when a customer presented him with a small box, found in a deceased estate, containing a number of old photographic negatives of a butcher shop.

It turns out the black-and-white photos were taken at Brandon's shop in 1958 when it was known

as Beard's Meat Emporium.

"They were small negatives which we were able to get turned to postcard-size photos. They are great. I plan to see if they can be blown up bigger to display in the shop," he says.

Brandon purchased the small shop in June 2019 and has spent all his working life there, starting as a clean-up boy when he was 15.

"I grew up just around the corner. Mum and Dad used to send me here to buy meat. The

butcher was Will Ore and I got a job after school," he says.

"Shane Black took over the shop and I did my three-year apprenticeship with him. He was a good butcher to learn from.

"Three years ago, Shane decided to sell the business. I'd been here for six years in all and I knew the customers. It was a good business, and I bought it.

"It was the best decision I've ever made. It's going really well and I hope it will set me up in life."



Back to 1958... these great old photos, from negatives found in a deceased estate, were taken in what is now Brandon's shop.



MBL, Sarah to sparkle at major trade show

MBL is escalating our presence at South Australia's only dedicated food and beverage trade show by spotlighting the offerings of our Packaging, Custom Blending and Machinery divisions.

The South Australian Food, Bev & Tech Trade Show will be held on Tuesday, May 17, and Wednesday, May 18, in the Goyder Pavilion at Adelaide Showground, Wayville.

"We'll be promoting, in one all-round stand, products and services from across all three of our divisions," says MBL General Manager of Sales and Marketing, Bexley Carman.

"There will be plenty on show to interest Members and existing customers.

"We had a good response last year and we're confident this year's show will be even more successful in attracting new customers."

The show, jointly hosted by Food SA and GaP Solutions, is billed as a "one-stop place" for retail, food service, catering, bakery and butchery sectors.

About 90 exhibitors will showcase their assorted products, including technologies and equipment, to more than 1,500 visitors.

Last year, some 50 exhibitors credited the show with generating extra business totalling more than \$2.4 million.

With MBL support, AMIC will present two masterclasses on centre stage to showcase the skills and knowledge of independent butchers.

AMIC State Manager Chris Kelly is planning two events for day one - a sausage-making masterclass, and a People's Choice competition featuring the winning sausages from the six categories of last year's SA Sausage King final.

"People can sample the sausages and register their votes, which will be added up at the end of the day to give a true consumer verdict," Chris says.

On day two, a "protein-cutting" masterclass

will be conducted by AMIC's Apprentice of the Year for 2021, Sarah Hopgood, of Whyalla.

Details have not been settled, but Sarah will likely bone out a whole rump and make products including fillet mignons, a pocket roast, marinated steak, beef yiros, stir-fry strips, burgers and schnitzels.

"It's amazing what you can make out of one piece of meat," she says.

"It's a great chance to promote butchers and I'm looking forward to it."

● Bexley Carman and Shane Harrison manned an MBL stand at Food Service Australia in Melbourne in late February, showcasing our ingredients and custom blending capabilities.

"We had a good response, giving us significant new business to follow up," Bexley says.



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FOOD BEV & TECH TRADE SHOW



Sarah Hopgood, pictured at work in Whyalla, will display her skills at the trade show.

HOME COMPOSTABLE hero!

MBL's Home Compostable Hero promotion is open to Members and customers who buy any two products from our Home Compostable packaging range.

They will go into the draw to win a weekend away in an Airbnb Eco Getaway of their choice to the value of \$600.

And each month until June, we will select a Hero who will be featured in MBL News and receive point-of-sale marketing displays and social media support.

MARCH HERO: Wimmera Meat Market

Home compostable eco-cane trays from MBL are popular in the rural city of Horsham, Victoria, but people there must be more creative in how they dispose of them.

While people elsewhere commonly place the cane trays in home organics (garden clippings) bins, Horsham's council does not operate an organics collection service.

"We have only two bins, for general household rubbish and recycling. We need to do something about it," says the owner of Wimmera Meat Market, Dominic van Dyk.

However, Dominic says MBL's eco-cane trays are a hit in his self-serve store, with customers placing them in their garden compost piles and worm farms.

"At my home, I put the trays in with my compost and they break down to make good mulch," he says.

Dominic uses four sizes of eco-cane trays for a wide range of products from chops to pressed meat.

The store, in the hub of the Wimmera wheat and sheep region, was one of Australia's first self-serve, supermarket-style butchereries.

It was opened by Dominic's father Johannus in 1974.

"Today's customers want eco-friendly products and they were happy to see the cane trays in my store," Dominic says.



"Green packaging has become an expectation. It costs more but that's just the nature of the beast. We have to do this.

"Plastics are floating around everywhere and we need to do something about it for the next generation."

APRIL HERO: Windsor Meats, Malvern



The past 18 months have seen a seamless transition to home compostable eco-cane trays for Windsor Meats co-owner Sam Burt.

At Sam's insistence, the popular Malvern shop was one of SA's first butcher shops to introduce the eco-cane trays in early October 2020.

"This is not something we decided to do on the spur of the moment. I'd been thinking about it for several years on environmental grounds but I needed to make sure any new trays would be good quality to do the job," he says.

"I didn't want to change just for the sake of it so I waited until a good quality compostable tray became available from MBL and I haven't been disappointed.

"The trays have been perfect. We've had no

trouble switching over to them. Customers appreciate them."

Of the three sizes of eco-cane trays used at Windsor Meats, the 8 x 5s are mostly used.

"We go through three cartons (a total of 1,500 trays) of the 8 x 5s each month," Sam says.

"The next green packaging item we'll use from MBL will be cling-wrap. It's on the way as we move our business completely away from all single-use plastics.

"Ultimately, switching to green packaging is the right thing to do for the environment and the more people who get on board, the better.

"As individuals, we generate plastic and if we can do a little bit to change, it all adds up."

Ikon Pack visionary passes

A leading figure in the founding of the MBL-affiliated Ikon Pack buying group, Allan Raper, has died in Brisbane, aged 78.

“We all benefit from Ikon Pack which wouldn’t be the same today without Allan’s vision and drive in the early years,” says MBL General Manager Sales and Marketing, Bexley Carman.

Bexley also played an important role in the establishment of Ikon Pack in 2014 and its subsequent growth.

For many years, Allan headed Brisbane’s family-owned Vadals which, like MBL, is a major supplier of merchandise and manufacturer of ingredients for the food industry.

His strong support for Ikon Pack has been continued by his son David, who took over as the head

of Vadals several years ago.

Bexley says, “Allan used to jokingly introduce himself as Vadals’ Unproductive Director. Although he hadn’t been involved on a daily basis for many years, his opinion across Vadals and the Ikon Pack group remained in high regard.”

Ikon Pack consists of six organisations - one in each mainland State and one in New Zealand - which are major food industry suppliers.

MBL in SA is the only Co-op in the group which includes Vadals (Queensland), Complete Butchers Supplies (Victoria), Neild & Co (NSW), MBL (WA) and Dunninghams (NZ).

The six form an association under the Ikon Pack brand, creating a recognisable image for a range of products throughout Australasia.



AMIC’s annual MBL-sponsored competitions, led by Sausage King, have gone digital.

This year’s entries must be submitted online in a bid to streamline a cumbersome entry process, and all judging will be recorded on tablets.

“Going digital will eliminate a lot of administrative work, particularly for entries,” says AMIC State Manager Chris Kelly.

“The new system will be much more efficient, less time consuming and more cost-effective.”

The Sausage King and smallgoods competitions have begun, with the Riverland and South-East contests held in Mt Gambier on March 26.

The Mid North competitions will be on April 9, followed by the West Coast on June 25 and Metro on August 13.

The State awards presentation dinner will be on November 5.

Chris says it’s “full steam ahead” after last year’s entry numbers leapt by 80% to total 548 across the Sausage King and smallgoods competitions.

“There’s again strong interest among butchers as we work towards picking up from last year’s fantastic entry numbers,” he says.

The format which was successfully introduced last year will continue this year.

Last year, butchers relished the reinstatement of competitions being held back in the regions after previously having to send entries to Adelaide for judging.

Competitions will again be held outdoors on Saturdays. In the evening, the regional winners and place getters will be recognised at a presentation and member network meeting.

“These events were well received, attracting 40 to 60 people in each location and providing butchers with a chance to network,” Chris says.

TFI looks to plant proteins

Australia’s biggest red meat processor, Thomas Foods International, is diversifying into plant food.

TFI has joined forces with Australian Plant Proteins and Australian Milling Group to build three plant proteins plants in SA.

The joint venture involves investment of \$378 million and is backed by federal and state government grants totalling \$178 million. The plan is to generate \$4 billion in exports by 2032.

Managing Director Darren Thomas says the time is right for TFI expand into plant proteins while keeping red meat processing at its core.

“The market is expanding rapidly and we see great opportunity to leverage our expertise,” he says.

PROBIZ

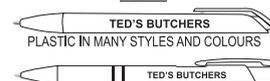
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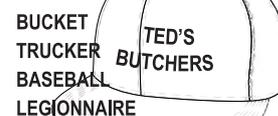
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There hardly seems enough hours in the week for Mackenzie Beames, MBL's bubbly Sales and Marketing Administrator.

Mackenzie, 22, has impressed with her drive, creativity and customer service skills since being promoted to her three-days-a-week role last year.

Her duties include co-ordinating MBL's social media and email marketing activities, planning promotions, taking phone orders and providing assorted information to Members and customers.

She's just as busy away from MBL, simultaneously working her way through Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) courses at UniSA until 2025.

As if this doesn't keep her busy enough, Mackenzie's also completing a Diploma of French course and is a volunteer with the SA Ambulance Service's Meadows regional response team in the Adelaide Hills.

"I've a full book and keep adding things. When people ask what I do, I start rattling off a few things and just keep going," she says.

"I'm able to balance work and study, and my ambulance volunteering goes around everything else. I still have time to go out with friends.

"Much of what I'm studying helps me at MBL, such as putting marketing strategies into place."

Mackenzie, who hails from Keith in the South-East where her father Trevor was a policeman, has long had a thirst to learn and accumulate skills.

Her first part-time job, as a schoolgirl of 14, was on the checkout of the Keith IGA supermarket where she first began learning about customer service.

After finishing Year 12, she wanted to have a gap year while she decided what to study at university.

Never one to be idle, Mackenzie worked at a cafe and the IGA supermarket for a year before taking a job, initially as a server, at Keith Meat Shoppe where she further honed her customer service skills and learnt about butchery.

"It was a fun environment working with Mark Bunnett and Nick Sando. I worked there for three years, so my one gap year turned into four years," she says.

"The shop supplied all the meat for the local IGA supermarket as well as sporting clubs. I packed trays, doing all the chicken, and I did some training, getting a Certificate III in Meat Processing."

"Meet the Team"

Profiles on MBL staff members



Once Mackenzie chose her university subjects, her thoughts turned to how she would support herself while studying in Adelaide. MBL Sales Manager Dale Rowe had the solution during a regular visit to the Keith butchery.

"Nick was half-joking when he told Dale he should get me a part-time job at MBL," Mackenzie says.

"Dale made some inquiries and I got a phone call a week or so later to say I had a job interview at MBL."

Mackenzie began working three days a week in the Athol Park showroom almost two years ago, impressing with her enthusiasm, customer service nous and ability to quickly learn new skills.

She was promoted to her current sales and marketing role midway through last year.

"I enjoy working at MBL. Social media and email marketing is my thing, along with helping the reps put marketing strategies into place," she says.

Her latest marketing task involved producing butcher shop promotional material for MBL's new range of six Butcher's Banquet rubs and seasonings.

Mackenzie also plays a valued role in

suggesting story ideas and sourcing assorted material for MBL News.

She posts a digital copy of each magazine on the MBL website, and arranges for abridged stories and photos to be posted on MBL's Facebook page.

Q & A

Do you have a special interest or hobby? Outside of work and university, I volunteer for the SA Ambulance Service at Meadows.

What would you do with a spare \$50,000? I'd be heading back to Europe! I would love to visit every country over there.

If you were a car, what would you be? I'd like to think I'd be some sort of Mercedes.

What food can't you live without? Pork chops - from Keith Meat Shoppe, of course. I get Dad to bring a couple up to Adelaide whenever he visits.

If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would it be? Sam Fender, an Indie Rock singer from the UK.

What's the best thing about working at MBL? The people I get to work with. They create a fun environment; it's like being back in a butcher shop.