

## Butcher's Banquet inspires fresh ideas for ready meals

MBL will have a November rollout of our innovative Butcher's Banquet package to help butchers lift their ready meals to new levels.

Available exclusively to butchers and created to complement MBL's popular benchtop tray sealer machine, the package includes:

- Premium CPET trays and film for lids,
- Generic sleeves with the new Butcher's Banquet logo to slip over trays of ready meals,
- Separate stickers to name and describe specific meals and flavours, and
- A rotating range of recipes and marinades developed by MBL in conjunction with Newly Weds Foods and Flavour Makers.

General Manager Sales & Marketing Bexley Carman says MBL is excited to offer a full package that makes it easier for butchers to tap into the expanding ready meals market.



*Continued page 2*

*MBL's Bexley Carman displays a prototype of the Butcher's Banquet packaging.*

## THUMBS UP TO MBL

MBL Members have used an independent survey to deliver ringing endorsements of the Co-op's overall standards and performance levels.

A telephone survey of 60 randomly-selected Members found that 80% rated their overall experience of dealing with MBL at eight points out of 10 or higher.

Quizzed on MBL's value for money, 86% of surveyed Members awarded a minimum eight points out of 10, while 88% scored eight points out of 10 or higher for MBL's support during the frantic COVID-19 sales spike.

The survey was conducted by a Melbourne customer research company which says the "outstanding ratings" show that MBL is in "great shape."

Dependable service by MBL's friendly and trustworthy staff was

rated as a key benefit of MBL Membership, ahead of delivery, stock and product range.

MBL's General Manager Sales & Marketing Bexley Carman says, "While the level of support was really impressive, the survey gave extremely valuable insights into where we can improve."

"We've had a hard look at how we do things and how we can improve, and we've already put in place a number of improvements."

"A main area identified for improvement was communication. We were told that we need to better communicate with Members, mainly regarding the availability of stock and the timing of back orders."

"We're aiming for even better scores in a follow-up survey next year."

**Full report, graphics on pages 4 to 6**

**INSIDE: Butcher shop sales still up by an average of 20%**

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are advised that the date for holding the 2020 Annual General Meeting has been fixed at **6.00pm on Monday, November 2, 2020**

Please note that the venue of this year's Annual General Meeting will be at the Master Butchers Co-operative Ltd's office at

**203 - 215 Hanson Rd, Athol Park.**

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## MBL NEWS

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# Butcher's Banquet rollout

From page 1

"With a wave of ready meals in supermarkets, marketing is important and Butcher's Banquet can become good marketing for independent butchers," Bexley says.

"We're introducing the brand and the first batch of six ready meal recipes in November. We'll keep introducing and rotating recipes to keep it fresh."

MBL has taken out a patent on the Butcher's Banquet name which may also be used by the Co-op for future lines.

The Butcher's Banquet rollout represents the third stage of MBL's development of a ready meal solution for butchers.

The key first step was MBL's securement of 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.

Next, MBL secured machines to seal the CPET trays. The manual sealers suit benchtops in small work areas and over 60 have so far been supplied to Members.

Now, the Butcher's Banquet package complements the CPET trays and the sealer by providing a brand, printed sleeves and stickers, and rotating recipes and marinades.

"The whole box and dice is affordable so that all butchers can enter the ready meals market which



will only get bigger as consumers' lives get busier," Bexley says.

"It's possible for a small two-man shop to add another string to its bow by producing ready meals without breaking the bank.

"The sealer is the most expensive part but we have negotiated an extended supply deal with the manufacturer and we are selling them for \$1,200 as we did when we introduced them.

"Before, similar sealers cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000 which deterred many butchers.

"The sealers are one of MBL's most successful initiatives. We're continually hearing good reports about them from Members."

When MBL News went to press, we had seven sealers in the warehouse ready for purchase. We were awaiting delivery of another 30.

Bexley says MBL has been working with Newly Weds Foods and Flavour Makers to produce the best range of meal options for chicken, beef and lamb.

"We're still finalising the range but, as examples, the first batch of six will include Satay Chicken and Italian Meatballs," he says.

"Butchers who have been doing their own ready meals say it's important to keep the menu revolving to maintain the interest of customers.

"If there is enough support from butchers, MBL can do promotions of the Butcher's Banquet brand and list the shops where it's available."



A prototype of the new Butcher's Banquet packaging. Right: MBL's sealer for CPET trays.

# MAP MACHINES READY TO GO

## Gas-flushed packaging's multiple benefits



Seal of approval... Simon West, of Marriott Meats, at the controls of a new MAP machine which he says ticks all the boxes.

After successful trials in Adelaide, MBL has developed a customised MAP machine for butchers wanting longer-life packaging of fresh meat and cooked products, including ready meals.

MBL has fine-tuned the machine, making it more user friendly and adding a safety feature.

The Co-op, always working to secure the best deals for Members, will offer the gas-flushed machine for under \$30,000 which represents excellent value, says MBL's General Manager Sales & Marketing Bexley Carman.

"It's a quality machine. MAP machines of similar capacity are selling for about \$40,000 elsewhere," Bexley says.

"These machines extend the shelf life of fresh and cooked products, such as ready meals, to give butchers more flexibility and the ability to produce new products."

MBL has so far commissioned two of the machines – one for testing at our Athol Park base and another which has been used under commercial conditions at Marriott Meats, Marlestone, for three months.

After passing the Adelaide trials with flying colours, MBL has placed orders for more machines.



The MAP machines caught the eye of MBL machinery expert Chris Mountford during a visit to the manufacturer but he insisted on several modifications.

"I wanted several program changes to simplify use and the inclusion of a safety switch. Also, an air compressor has been added within the machine rather than having it separate," Chris says.

"Next step was to have the machine tested in commercial conditions. Marriott Meats agreed to trial the first one and they have been tickled pink with it.

"We've also been using a second machine for our own testing at MBL and for instructing the reps on how to use it so they can tell butchers about it.

"It has been a lengthy process, starting last year, to now reach the stage where we are set to launch the machines. It's an important development for butchers and other customers."

Marriott Meats General Manager Simon

West says, "We're loving our machine. It's easy to use and it's proving to be a good investment.

"It has gone smoothly, with the only issue right at the start. The gas we were using was discolouring food but this was quickly fixed by Supagas changing the gas mix.

"The machine can easily process 200 trays in an hour, two at a time. So far, we have only used it for fresh products such as steak, mince, sausages and hamburgers.

"We're happy with the results. The use-by times vary between products. For example, it's generally 12 days for steak and five days for mince."

Fresh products are sold both in Marriott's factory shop and to food service customers who are pleased with the new longer-life packaging.

"We've also done MAP packaging of curries, bolognese sauce and shepherds pies for caterers," Simon says.

He says the MAP machine will eventually be used for some products which his company now has to freeze.

"We haven't done ready meals but it's early days and we'll have lots of uses for the machine," he says.



# THUMBS UP TO MBL

## Members give ringing endorsements for our service, support and value for money

Nine out of 10 customers are “more than satisfied” with MBL’s overall service and support, according to an independent survey of 60 randomly-picked Members.

The survey’s core question – *How do you rate your experience of dealing with MBL?* – resulted in 33% of surveyed Members scoring MBL a perfect 10 out of 10.

A further 22% rated MBL nine out of 10, while 25% scored eight, 10% gave seven and 10% said six or less.

According to Melbourne consumer survey firm Saguity, scores of 10 and nine translate to “loyal” customers while scores of eight and seven indicate “satisfied” customers.

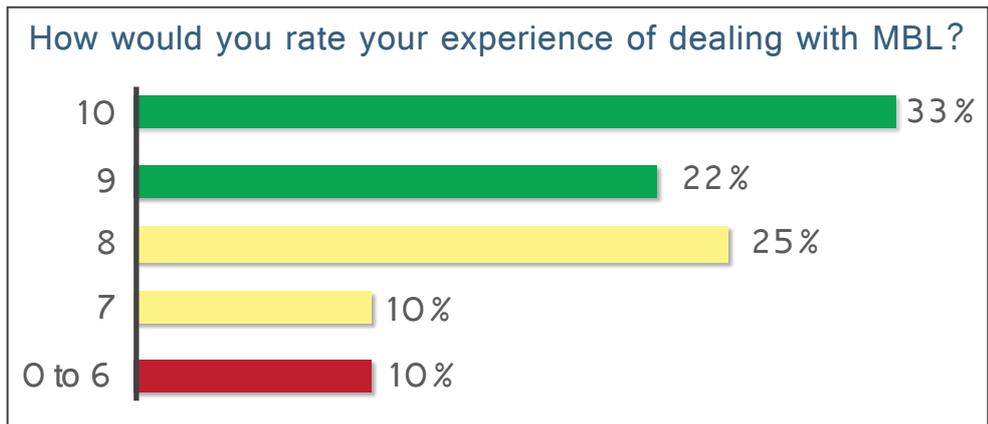
Saguity founder Darrell Hardidge says, “For 90% of surveyed Members to be at least satisfied with MBL is outstanding.

“Most companies need to work to achieve a better satisfaction rating but for MBL, the satisfaction rating is the starting point for further growth.

“MBL’s loyalty score of 55% is very good. It’s one of the highest I have seen this year.

“Looking at this data, MBL is in an extraordinary position, a phenomenal position for growth. MBL’s in great shape and has exciting days ahead.”

In the survey, 86% of Members awarded a minimum eight points out of 10 for value for



money, and 88% scored eight out of 10 or higher for MBL’s support during the frantic COVID-19 sales spike.

Our account managers were also rated highly, with 65% of surveyed Members giving their rep a perfect 10. Collectively, 81% rated the reps eight out of 10 or higher.

Darrell says good service and back up service were seen as important benefits of MBL membership, but the Co-op polled highly overall mainly because MBL’s staff are highly valued by Members.

“The primary reason Members gave high scores was due to the MBL team, with the key insights being the words Helpful, Friendly, Reliable, Trustworthy, Understands Needs, Efficient and Communicative,” he says.

“This says a lot about MBL and its culture. It

shows a strong level of trust.

“The people of MBL are the main benefit to the Members. The human connection and the service side comes out strongly, ahead of delivery, stock and product issues.

“Overall, the survey results reflect on the frontline team, if they feel great about themselves and the work they do. Their attitude, in turn, reflects on higher management so it’s clear that MBL is in great shape.”

Darrell says MBL should be buoyed by Members’ optimism for growing their businesses (see full story page 6).

“Two-thirds (67%) expect their business to grow in the next year, with 54% requiring MBL support for this growth. This points to a very strong year ahead for MBL,” he says.

MBL’s General Manager Sales & Marketing Bexley Carman says he was impressed by Members’ strong support for the Co-op and Darrell’s encouraging

**‘MBL is in an extraordinary position, a phenomenal position for growth’ – Darrell Hardidge**

➤ interpretation of the results.

“It’s the most globally-used customer insight survey and Darrell tells it exactly as it is, having no reason to sugar-coat findings,” Bexley says.

The survey identified communication, mainly around the availability of products, as the key area where MBL needs to improve.

“We were told that we need to communicate better, to better keep Members in the loop, mainly about stock availability,” Bexley says.

“Face-to-face communication with the reps is fine but Members want better information on the progress of their orders.

“Their general message was, ‘If you don’t have a particular product or it’s late, that’s fine but let us know so we can work around it.’

“We’ve responded by putting measures in place for better communication between MBL’s departments, such as the warehouse and the reps, so we can keep Members better informed about their orders.”

Bexley says the issue of stock availability and delivery was particularly important to Members in late June when the telephone survey was conducted.

At the time, butchers were busier than normal after the initial panic buying of COVID-19 and were running low on some merchandise, with imported supplies being delayed from overseas.

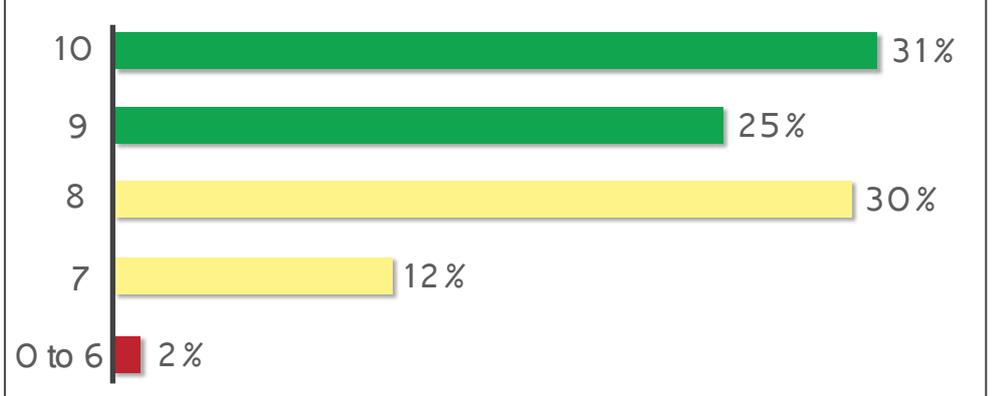
“The survey was done at one of our ugliest times for getting orders out because of delivery issues caused by COVID-19,” Bexley says.

“Our overseas orders, mainly from Asia,

## Key reasons for Members’ ringing endorsements of MBL



## How would you rate MBL in regard to value for money?



were frozen for several months when COVID-19 first struck. A large number of orders were stuck on the same ship in Singapore.

“As conditions started to ease, our orders began arriving here in a rush. We were suddenly hit with 10 or 12 shipping containers arriving weekly, and we were fully stretched.

“It was a huge task unpacking the containers, processing the orders and getting the

products out to Members.

“We were working flat-chat but there were delays and Members wanted to be better informed on what was happening.

“This was probably not the best time to ask people what they thought of us but the survey went ahead because we wanted to know how we did under real pressure.

“Given the timing, I was a little surprised just how highly we rated.” ➤



MBL’s strong ratings in the survey were underpinned by Members’ high regard for our Food Service staff, from office and warehouse workers at our Athol Park headquarters to our frontline people, including the travelling reps. Pictured here at the last AMIC awards night are (from left) David Curtis, Martin Arbon, Bexley Carman, Dale Rowe, Shane Reynolds, Mark Rosewarne and Chris Mountford.

➤ Darrell says, “While MBL rated very highly, I suspect the ratings would have been even higher without the added pressure of COVID-19.

“However, there was positive response to specific COVID-19 questions. MBL was rated eight, nine or 10 out of 10 by 88% of customers, with 70% scoring nine or 10.

“Customers were saying nothing had changed, MBL had stayed solid and consistent. Orders were getting out and MBL was recognised for doing the best it could.”

Bexley says, “For a long time, we’ve wanted an independent assessment of how we are performing as a business.

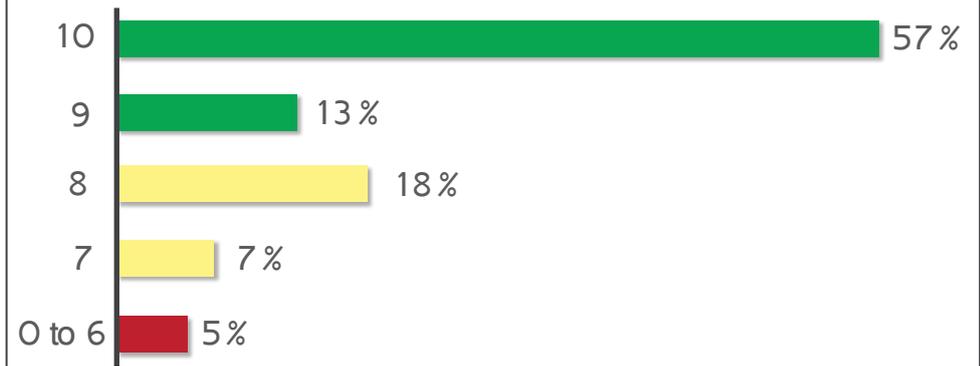
“I saw Darrell speak at an event and I was impressed, particularly with his thoughts on how a business can go about striving for a rating of 10 out of 10.

“I arranged for Darrell’s company to come to MBL last year for two lots of training for all Food Service staff, involving understanding expectations of customers and becoming the best you can.

“We looked at the importance of doing what we can to help customers, to follow up their requests and never shrug them off.

“These sessions were beneficial for us, and

### During the COVID-19 pandemic period, how would you rate MBL out of 10 on continuing to provide a premium experience?



we decided the next step would be for Darrell to conduct an independent survey of exactly what Members thought of us.”

MBL randomly picked 90 Members, as Darrell’s experience was that 30 would be unable to be reached at the time of the survey, leaving the necessary number of 60.

“We’ve listened to our shortcomings identified by Members and we’re working to overcome them,” Bexley says.

Darrell says, “The number one driver of loyalty is how a company responds to customer requests. People don’t forget

when you help them and, in the survey, two out of three Members are happy with MBL’s response to requests.

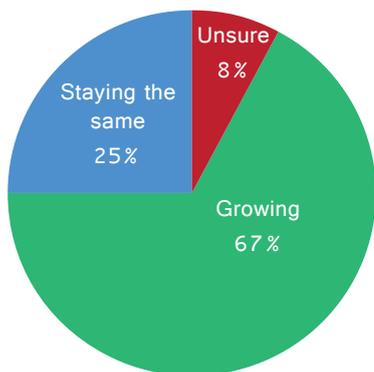
“One bloke said he had been with MBL for 25 years and has never had a complaint. That’s amazing!

“Room for improvement can be found at MBL but the key areas like requests, support and communication are all within the control of everyone in the company.

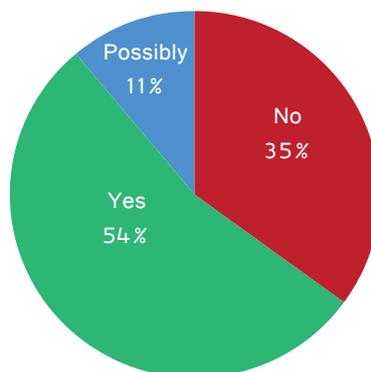
“MBL has a very stable market and is in a powerful position to make a few tweaks to achieve further growth.”

# STRONG PREDICTIONS FOR GROWTH

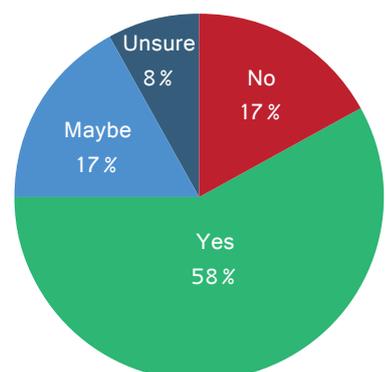
In the next year, do you see your business growing, staying the same or decreasing?



If growing: will additional investment or support from MBL be required?



If Yes: could MBL assist in planning a strategy for this growth?



These three pie graphs represent surveyed Members’ optimism for growth over the next year and the role they’d like MBL to play.

Members were asked if they saw their businesses growing, staying the same or decreasing in the next year. Two-thirds (67%) replied, “Growing.”

While there was no follow-up question on specifically why growth was expected, the response probably reflected a significant rise in butchers’ fortunes in a year dominated by COVID-19.

Butchers enjoyed boom sales during the COVID-19 panic buying stage and above-average sales are continuing, rejuvenating trade after years of marginal growth and giving optimism for the future (see full report page 11).

Of the two-thirds of surveyed Members who stated they expected growth, over half (54%) stated that “additional investment and support” from MBL would be required.

Of these, 58% replied Yes to whether MBL could assist in planning a strategy for this growth.

Survey co-ordinator Darrell Hardidge says MBL could look forward to “a very strong year ahead” of growth.

He says, “These statistics are really powerful, full of great news – they are a golden toolbox (for MBL’s planning).

“Two-thirds of businesses growing, over 50% want to buy from MBL and over 60% want MBL’s advice!

“The market wants to grow and it wants MBL’s support. The potential (for MBL growth) is phenomenal.”

# COFFEE & ~~CAKE~~ *Steak*

Plenty has changed in Mike Day's 32 years as a butcher but he says he never imagined he'd one day find himself brewing and selling takeaway coffee.

He probably hadn't even heard of the word barista when starting out in butchery as a wide-eyed lad of 15 in his home town of Burra.

"I always wanted my own shop but brewing coffee was never part of the equation," says Mike, who has operated Day's Quality Meats at Clare for 24 years.

How times have changed! With Australia becoming an avid and discerning nation of coffee lovers, we happily buy good coffee from almost anywhere.

Mike has jumped on the bandwagon and his coffee sales now average \$750 a week in his five-day butcher shop.

Coffee is usually made by qualified barista and general server Justine Cross but Mike and the other butchers also operate the coffee machine, especially in the early morning for local tradies.

As far as *MBL News* can establish, Mike's shop is only the second butchery in Australia to sell brewed coffee, after one at Dalby in Queensland's Darling Downs.

A key difference is the Dalby



Barista Justine Cross at work inside Day's Quality Meats, Clare.

shop sells coffee through a "hole" in a side wall but in Clare, coffee customers must walk inside where they often buy meat from a butcher while waiting for Justine to make their coffee.

Mike says the quality of the coffee keeps people coming back. "A foodie tried coffee all around the Clare Valley region and rated ours in the top three," he says.

As the photo below shows, signage makes Mike's shop look as much like a cafe as a butch-

ery. Locals were initially confused.

"At the start, people wanting a coffee saw our signs but walked past us as they didn't associate coffee with a butcher shop," Mike says.

"We'd yell out the door, 'Coffee's in here.' People usually still hesitated, often saying, 'But you're a butcher shop!'"

Mike hit upon the idea of selling coffee when he moved his main-street shop one street back to the Woolworths

shopping centre with a large car park.

Coffee was not sold in the centre and Mike's wife Kylie was trained as a barista.

"I thought, 'Why not put in a coffee machine and utilise Kylie's skills?' Things progressed from there," Mike says.

Mike's new shop was ideally located to attract Woolworths shoppers who, once drawn into the butchery for coffee, would be exposed to other products.

Having a car park outside also made it convenient for non-shoppers to buy coffee, as parking is often scarce in the main street.

"Coffee starts at 6.15am and there's constant customers, mainly tradies, coming through to 9am when the supermarket trade gets going," Mike says.

"Woolworths staff come over to grab a coffee at different times, so we get a fairly wide cross section of people."

Kylie set up the brewing machine and the coffee-making process. She later diverted to other areas of the business, with Justine taking over as the main coffee maker.

The business is a family affair. Mike's offshoots are sons Dylan, 25, and Blake, 22, who may eventually take over.



Is it a cafe or a butcher shop? Butcher Mike Day (right) says brewing takeaway coffee has added a new dimension to his business.



Proudly continuing a rich tradition of retail butchery in the Mellor family are (from left) Ben, Darren, Darrell and Kane.

# MEET THE MELLORS

## Three generations work side by side in one shop

Veteran butcher Darrell Mellor, 67 and semi-retired, was cheekily asked by a smiling customer, “So you’re the new apprentice?”

Always up for some old-fashioned banter, Darrell didn’t bat an eyelid as he quickly flicked his thumb towards another serving butcher at Mellor’s Gourmet Meats, Modbury Heights.

“He did his apprenticeship with me and now I’m doing mine with him,” Darrell quipped with a chuckle, leaving the customer scratching his head.

The customer might have stood a better chance of figuring it out had he known that the butcher Darrell referred to was his son Darren, 48, who owns the shop.

Darren did his apprenticeship with Darrell, who now helps out in his son’s shop for two days a week or more if needed.

The pair are more like good knockabout mates than father and son, clearly enjoying each other’s company as a proud tradition of family butchery keeps rolling along.

Darren’s nephew Ben, 29, is also a butcher, working fulltime in the shop for the past six years.

And another of Darren’s nephews, Kane, 18, who is Darrell’s grandson, has worked here part-time for 18 months and will join fulltime when he completes training at Regency TAFE.

Kane says, “I enjoy working here. I want to



With help from family, Darren’s shop has been ticking over nicely for 16 years.

keep learning and one day I’d like my own shop.”

Having three generations working in the same shop is pretty special but hardly surprising considering the Mellor’s history of working together.

When Darrell owned a busy shop at Marden, five butchers answered to the name Mr Mellor. And there was a Mrs Mellor as Darrell’s wife Jan worked there, too.

Family ties keep surfacing in their story which began with Darrell’s apprenticeship.

Darrell left school in 1966, at age 14, for an apprenticeship at a shop at Semaphore which was part of the then well-known Horscroft chain.

Cec Horscroft, a flamboyant butcher from Melbourne, set up shops around Adelaide from 1961 to the mid-1970s. He is regarded as the man who modernised butcher shops in SA.

Horscroft’s first shop was on The Parade at Norwood. It was so

popular, up to 14 butchers served at any one time. It became the template for Horscroft's other shops.

Everything in Horscroft's shops was new and glistened. Most of the equipment was bracketed to the wall for ease of cleaning and the window displays were bright and colourful at a time when most shops had conservative displays.

Young Darrell learnt his trade in this entrepreneurial environment for over 10 years, moving between Horscroft shops at Semaphore, Port Adelaide, Enfield, Unley and Norwood.

"I was a manager for a few years, including at the Norwood shop," Darrell says.

"When this shop was sold to Brent Reddit, I stayed for a few years as manager before I opened my own small shop at Edwardstown.

"It was a one man, one apprenticeship shop. My nephew Ron Mellor did his apprenticeship with me."

Around 1980, Darrell saw the chance for expansion and moved to Marden shopping centre in the north-east. He began in a shop which fronted the car park before opening a new shop inside the centre.

Initially, his offsideers were his butcher sons Darren and Dean, plus his wife Jan whose roles included serving. Ron Mellor and his brother Phil later joined.

"We grew from three butchers to 12 – six full-timers and six casuals," Darrell says.



A classic Horscroft display in the 1960s. Bright displays like this were trademarks of the innovative Horscroft chain of shops where Darrell spent his formative years.

"We had good clientele in a prominent position in a good centre. We did well, and in the mid-90s we opened a seafood shop next to the butcher shop.

"In those days, people had to go into Central Market to buy fresh seafood but the seafood industry was dominated by the big boys and I found it was a very hard industry to get into.

"I tried for four or five years but it was too hard and I ended up closing after losing quite a lot of money.

"We kept the butcher shop operating but overheads were going up and profits were

going down. Seven-day trading was coming and I'd had enough so we sold the shop."

Darrell and Dean became truck drivers but Darren continued as a butcher, running his own shop on Beach Rd at Christies Beach for five years.

"I was in a mall. Woolworths wanted to expand and centre management wanted me to move my shop from inside the mall to the outside," Darren says.

"Not only would I be in an inferior position, but I was expected to pay the full costs of moving, so I wasn't happy.

Continued page 11



Like father, like son... Darren and Darrell share a love of butchering and a sharp sense of humour, always at the ready for some banter.

# Succession planning

Business succession often occurs in an orderly fashion due to people retiring or moving on to other ventures.

However, sometimes the transition can be unplanned, rapid and more costly where a proprietor suffers financial hardship, illness, death or divorce.

Where a business is sold or transferred in a "fire sale" situation, without the benefit of the owner transferring his or her knowledge, the value of the business can be drastically reduced.

## Running a business is complicated

A well-run business is usually well organised and has systems in place to help manage different parts of the business such as:

- Accounting and financial systems for managing income and expenses, creditors and debtors, payroll and taxation;
- Customer and supplier databases;
- Stock management and product ordering;
- Cleaning and health compliance;
- Certification maintenance;
- Employee training; and
- Marketing, including website maintenance and social media campaigns.

Most of these systems take many years to develop and are constantly being fine tuned to accommodate changing market conditions and legislative amendments.

## Planning for business succession

Whether the sale of a business is planned or not, planning for succession will have many benefits which may include:

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- An easier transition whether that be from Vendor to Purchaser or from one generation to the next;
- A better transfer of goodwill; and
- Achieving a higher price.

## Business succession plan outline

Every business succession plan will be different and will vary according to the type of business, the size and complexity of the business and its management structure.

A common feature of all good business succession plans is to start the plan as soon as possible and treat it as an ongoing work in progress.

The plan should seek to systemise as many parts of the business as possible and to document those systems. Other features may include:

- Identifying succession goals and risks;
- Looking at the business to determine its fitness for succession;
- Recognition and management of barriers

such as the time necessary to prepare a plan and legislative restrictions;

- Identify potential heirs and/or purchasers;
- An ownership structure that allows for the introduction of new partners and the transfer of business assets to the next generation or a purchaser;
- The owners putting in place appropriate Wills, Enduring Powers of Attorney and Advance Care Directives and, where appropriate, appointments of Alternate Directors;
- Consider capital gains tax consequences of a sale or transfer and using superannuation to maximise returns; and
- The production, in question and answer style, of a document specific to the business to complement the various documented systems of the business.

## Conclusion

The sooner you start planning for business succession, the better. Arguably, you should start planning to leave the business as soon as you start the business.

It takes time to work out what will need to be done and to implement those changes to ensure a successful transfer when the time comes.

Often, some of the factors that ensure a successful business will also help with business succession.

A good business succession plan will likely make the business more successful and valuable both before and after transfer.

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The good times continue at South Australian butcher shops, with average sales still up by an average of 20% over this time last year.

Butchers are retaining new customers who turned to them when supermarket meat supplies dwindled during the initial COVID-19 panic buying weeks in March and April.

Average butcher shop sales have dipped a little since those unprecedented weeks but sales remain high, rejuvenating the trade after years of marginal growth.

MBL merchandise sales, a solid barometer for butchery trade, continue to be a good 20% higher than monthly sales of last year.

"Sales remain really strong. There has been no overall slowdown," says MBL's General Manager Sales & Marketing Bexley Carman.

AMIC's SA rep Chris Kelly says, "Sales are still up by an average of 20%. Trade was a bit quieter for most butchers in the middle of winter but despite this, sales remain up by well above average.

"The October long weekend and the start of daylight savings signal the barbecue season and then it's the busy times leading to Christmas.

"Regional butchers are also hoping for a busier trade as more South Australians holiday in their own State due to COVID restrictions."

At Windsor Meats, Malvern, co-owner Sam Burt says more locals staying "at home" this winter were a factor in his sales being up by 15% to 20% over last year.

"People in this area do a lot of travelling but they haven't been able to because of travel restrictions," Sam says.

# SALES STILL UP BY AN AVERAGE 20%

"A lot of people are telling us, 'I'm normally in the snowfields now' or 'I'm supposed to be in Italy.'"

"There seems to have been more people in Adelaide than other years so there are more mouths to feed."

Chairman of AMIC SA's Retail Council Trevor Hill says trade at Bruce's Meat Mitcham remains strong. His Father's Day sales were 25% up on last year.

"Across the board, butchers are holding earlier sales growth but JobKeeper will be wound back so unemployment hasn't fully hit yet," Trevor says.

"What would Christmas look like with 15%

unemployment? It's unknown. We're heading for uncharted waters."

While SA butchers have been faring well, MBL's butcher Members in western Victoria have been stung by the loss of wholesale trade due to harsh COVID-19 restrictions.

"Shop trade is OK in Victoria but the closure of Victorian pubs and clubs has hurt many butchers," says MBL rep Martin Arbon, who has been restricted to taking phone orders for months due the border closure.

"Butchers in places like Mildura and Horsham were absolutely flying earlier in the year. They were going nuts during the panic buying, but there's no cream on the top now."



Sam Burt's sales at Windsor Meats remain 15% to 20% higher than this time last year.

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## Three generations of Mellors

"I then found that this shop (at Modbury Heights) was vacant. It was similar to the one at Christies in that it was at the entrance of a small centre with Woolworths.

"I'd had a long drive to and from Christies for years but this new shop was near my home and it was a no-brainer to move."

Darrell says, "I helped Darren move in here and it all fell into place nicely. His equipment from Christies fitted in well – the fridges, railings and everything else."

Darren says, "At the start, it was

just Mum and I here. Mum was no stranger to a butcher shop and she was a huge help while I got established."

Darrell says, "Darren has managed to run a very successful business here from the start. He's a very good operator and I'm very proud of him."

Darren has run his Modbury Heights shop for 16 years. It ticks along nicely, with abundant parking across from a large high school resulting in brisk afternoon trade from parents

picking up their youngsters.

"We're open from 7am to 7pm weekdays but 3pm to 7pm is by far the busiest, with trade more than double that of the rest of the day," Darren says.

"Apart from after-school trade, people generally are shopping later these days. They shop later and they eat later, and they shop two or three times a week."

Darrell says the changes to retail butchery have been

immense since he began 53 years ago.

"There's a lot more things ready for the pan now. Today's butchers need to cook and give good advice," he says.

"Years ago, we just cut meat and gave only very basic advice – we'd just say 20 minutes per pound (about half a kilogram) in the oven for everything.

"It's great I can still work with Darren. I enjoy it – and my wife gets me out of the house!"



# For Lease

51-53 Diagonal Road, Pooraka SA

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