

# Delayed abattoir opening with funding under a cloud

JOSEPH MOORE

The Fleurieu Community Co-operative (FCC) says the Strathalbyn Abattoir will re-open early next year after its September opening was delayed.

FCC general manager Grant List, who is overseeing upgrades and construction work at the site, said there were “several factors” that caused the delays.

He said a national steel supply shortage and wetter-than-expected weather were major factors for the abattoir’s canned September opening.

“Trade complications that came out of Covid-19 have been delaying the supply of materials – everyone knows trying to get steel is very, very difficult at the moment,” he said.

“And then imagine taking the roof off of a meat plant in the middle of all that bad weather we’ve had?”

Mr List said there was also a hold up in the delivery of a \$1.5m grant promised to the FCC by the former Liberal State Government in February and, while the new Labor Government promised to honor that commitment, the FCC only received the deed for the funding in the past few weeks.

The abattoir closed in 2020 and plans were made to reopen the facility after more than a year of collaboration between Regional Development Australia (RDA) and the FCC.

Earlier this year, the RDA handed the project in its entirety over to the FCC, which was founded following investigations by consulting firm PKF Accelerate.

PKF Accelerate managing director, Grant Baker, told *The Courier* in July that the abattoir was on track to open in September.

But as of November, the abattoir has not yet re-opened.

The Member for Hammond, Adrian Pederick, said he’d “love to know” what the Government was up to and that its failure to deliver grant funding in a timelier manner was undermining regional producers.

“They have held up the potential

## Strathalbyn Abattoir on track to re-open, creating new jobs

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The Strathalbyn Abattoir is set to reopen in September with more jobs on offer by the end of the year than it provided prior to its closure two years ago.

The abattoir closed in 2020 following an economic downturn which left the business no longer viable, but plans were made to reopen the facility following more than a year of collaboration between Regional Development Australia (RDA) and the Fleurieu Community Co-operative.

The RDA has since handed the project over in its entirety to the Fleurieu Community Co-operative, which was founded following investigations by consulting firm PKF Accelerate.

### Influence growers

Despite the loss of three full time jobs and 11 casual jobs when the abattoir closed in 2020, PKF Accelerate managing director Grant Baker said direct employment at the abattoir would reach “around 20 people” by November after it increased its operational capacity.

“It’s not just the direct employees,” he said.

“The fact that we influence growers to create stability around them, which means they are in a position to integrate their



The Strathalbyn Abattoir is set to reopen in September, with direct employment opportunities for about 20 people by November – more than before it closed in 2020.

*How The Courier reported the planned re-opening of the Strathalbyn Abattoir in July this year.*

and the ability for producers, not just throughout the Fleurieu but KI and surrounding areas, to utilise this much-needed abattoir facility,” he said.

“It will not just service all the producers in the district but it will create more employment in the region.”

But the Regional Development Minister, Clare Scriven, said the funding agreement between the former Liberal Government and the FCC was flawed and needed to be re-negotiated.

“When the restoration project was initially announced under the former Liberal State Government, it was with conditions that presented the co-op with several challenges that were difficult to overcome,” she said.

“These conditions have been reviewed so that the project can progress in a timely manner.”

The deed was recently issued to the FCC and has since been returned to State Treasurer Stephen Mullighan to

sign off on before the \$1.5m funding is provided.

Despite the delays, Mr List said he was “really appreciative” of the Government’s support and that the FCC remained fully committed to completing the \$3.5m restoration project and reopening the abattoir.

“We’re 100% committed to getting this done, it will just be a matter of ‘when’, not ‘if,’” he said.

“Clare Scriven, the Minister of Regional Affairs, has gotten 100% behind it and has committed to ensuring that the program we started with the previous Government will be continued.

“It’s not about politics, it’s about the community.”

The abattoir will be managed by Grant List and will reopen at about 20 jobs, a rapidly increasing