

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.

"It's the fact that we influence growers and farmers to create stability around their herds, which means they are in a position to employ and to integrate their workforces."

The founding board, chaired by David Parsons, was replaced last month with a board comprising Mr Baker, Foodland chief executive Franklin Dos Santos, former Master Butchers Co-operative chief executive Warren McLean, beef producer Trevor Paech and former chair of the State Lamb Committee Ben Ryan.

Mr Baker said the composition of the new board was "quite specific" in that it represented industry leaders throughout the entire supply chain – from the farm to the supermarket checkout. He said



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the securing of contracts with Foodland in recent months, guaranteeing access to consumers, and the signing on to the Co-operative of more than 100 businesses, were indicative that the abattoir's future was bright – especially if more businesses came on board.

"What we're doing here is for the community," Mr Baker said.

"There was a huge amount of disbelief

that this would actually happen. "This is actually happening."

Prior to the March State Election, the former State Government promised \$1.5m towards a \$3.5m bill to upgrade facilities at the abattoir and, despite uncertainty over whether the new Labor Government would commit that funding, Mr Baker said it had come through.

"It was a real concern of ours," 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 30% capacity before rapidly increasing before the end of the year.