



Fleurieu Community Co-operative General Manager Grant List says a completed Strathalbyn abattoir will make the "Fleurieu proud" following months of upgrades, including new floor installation, revamped stock and holding yards, raised roof, new walls and ceilings and other amenities, with the reopening now pushed back to January. Photos: Sara Gilligan

Strathalbyn abattoir reopening delayed by government actions

SHAMBLES

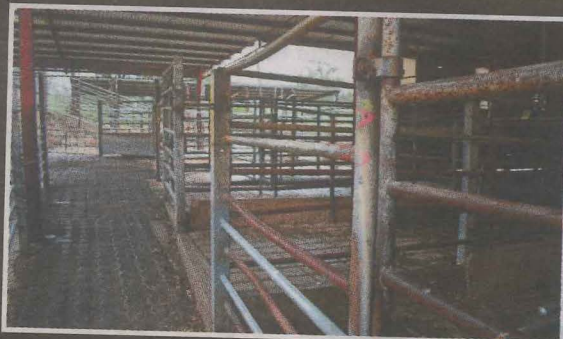
By Sara Gilligan

The State Government has allegedly butchered the reopening timeline for Strathalbyn's revamped abattoir (pictured) after failing to release necessary grant funding to complete the site's reactivation.

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for an August reopening, the Strathalbyn abattoir was granted up to \$1.5 million excluding GST by The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) in February this year, before the change in government.

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However, Fleurieu Community Co-operative (FCC) Director Grant Baker told *The Southern Argus* hesitation by the new State Government to execute the associated deed in the eight months since had stalled works at the site.

"On Monday (just gone) we are finally receiving our deed document from the Treasury," Mr Baker expressed with relief.

"It has taken over 8 months to get to this point... obviously this has put the operation under tremendous pressure, but the point is in the next week we will have a signed deed and work will commence.

"It has been a struggle to manage through. We would have expected to see that fund hit our accounts months and months ago.

"We are now looking at opening in January."

The Strathalbyn abattoir closed in December 2020 when former operators Strath Pastoral ceased trading.

Following an RDA Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island-run survey to help inform a feasibility study into the abattoir's potential reopening, a \$3.5 million restoration of the site is currently under way.

Head-hunted General Manager Grant List said the abattoir would open at about 30 per cent capacity at 60 beef and 500 lambs before the operation ramps up.

He looked forward to seeing the facility completed, making the "Fleurieu proud".

"Once this is up-and-running the community will support it," Mr List assured.

"It's a great facility with loads of potential.

"We are revamping the site to meet Australian standards, so there will be an opportunity to export later down the track.

"I estimate about 15 to 18 jobs will be created to get it going, but 40 jobs once in full operation.

"We are still committed to this project."

In a letter to FCC members on Friday, Mr Baker explained the reasoning behind the reopening's delay, claiming new expectations of the Labor State Government had hindered the operation, including new terms and conditions on the grant funding.

Following numerous conversations with the appropriate minister's office, questions compelling answers and a new requirement to get written guarantees from key suppliers, the co-op finally received word the government would honour the funding agreement.

"Of course, while all of this has been going on, we have at the same time progressed the discussions with Foodland, welcomed more members, and continued in our efforts to raise money from the private sector," Mr Baker said in the letter.

"Recently, however, the latter has become difficult due to the uncertainty caused by the Government's actions, and hence we have - reluctantly - had to pause this activity for the time being."

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick expressed disappointment by the delays.

"The deed needs to be activated, the money needs to be activated and let's get on with it," he urged.

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Before

Local co-op ready to moo-ve forward, eyes January reopening



Fleurieu Community Co-operative General Manager Grant List is looking forward to the revamped Strathalbyn abattoir reopening now scheduled for January. Photos: Sara Gilligan

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"It seems to be tied up in unnecessary bureaucracy and I'm hoping the government and the relevant ministers unravel whatever the hold-up is and let's get this great facility completed so we can start processing animals on the Fleurieu.

"I'm just keen to see it happen.

"Whatever I need to do, to have conversations with the government, I will as I don't believe it needs politicising, it just needs doing."

When questioned by *The Argus*, acting Primary Industries Minister Andrea Michaels said the State Government was assisting the FCC to move forward with the operation.

"Unfortunately, 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 claimed.

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

"The Government, through SA Financing Authority, are working very closely with representatives from the Fleurieu Community Co-operative to



Previously stalled works on Strathalbyn abattoir's \$3.5 million revamp will recommence following the execution of the associated deed.

finalise these arrangements."

Meanwhile, Mr List claimed steel supply issues were also presenting a stumbling block, but was pleased with progress made so far.

"There's still work to do on the kill floor and yard works, and raising the roof structure," he said.

"It's a shame (the plant) shut down, but we can't wait to show the community all of our progress and to deliver a revamped, high-quality facility."



After



A revamped Strathalbyn abattoir, once in full operation, is expected to create around 40 jobs.