

**Strathalbyn
abattoir reopening
delayed (again)**



By Sara Gilligan

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earmarked August reopening date to January this year; however, the facility's gates remain closed.

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"There has been delay after delay after delay in the deed," Fleurieu Community Co-operative (FCC) Director Grant Baker told *The Southern Argus*.

"Effectively we were told in September by the State Government that we should have the deed resolved, and based on that, we then did the forward calculation, but that was not the case.

"We only received the signed deed in mid-December and then with the signed deed you go onto a secondary process where you do the application for the drawdowns.

"There is a whole string of conditions and precedents that needed to be met which we thought we had... but we are now hoping the first drawdown of the deed will happen in the next week or two."

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

A \$3.5 million restoration of the site has since stalled due to new State Government expectations and terms and conditions on the grant funding.

Mr Baker said once the funding is finally released, around nine weeks are required to complete the site's upgrades.

He is now hopeful for an April reopening.

"We've been forced to scale back the work but it is rearing to go and everything has been ordered and all the equipment is on the way," he said.

"More than 60 per cent is done.

"The funding is secure, the grants are signed and approved, it is simply the requirements to follow the bouncing ball with a bunch of bureaucrats.

Fleurieu Community Co-operative General Manager Grant List says a completed Strathalbyn abattoir will make the "Fleurieu proud" despite further delays to the facility's reopening. Photo: Sara Gilligan



The Southern Argus 27/10/22.

"We have already started to identify staff, and have got members who are pushing us to open.

"There are a lot of people this program is impacting, not just the employees but the growers, retailers and people looking for sustainable options in what they put into their body.

"It will be worth the wait because at the end of the day this is what the community needs."

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Clare Scriven told *The Argus* the State Government still supported the project.

"The State Government has previously worked with the Fleurieu Community Cooperative to assist them in overcoming some of the challenges that were

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— Grant Baker

presented when the grant was approved by the former government," she said.

"The funding deed was executed on December 2, with four conditions which have not all been met to date.

"The State Government has been working very closely with representatives from the Fleurieu Community Cooperative in regards to the information that is still outstanding.

"We look forward to these arrangements being finalised and the project coming to fruition."

However, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick slammed the Labor State Government for the ongoing interference with the project's timeline.

"There is a very real risk that this

project could fall over," he said.

"I think it is disgraceful the way the State Government is treating those behind this major regional facility.

"I'm just not sure what their mindset is in making it harder and putting new hoops to jump through for this (FCC) which is doing all it can to get this facility open..."

"They need to get on with it and need to make it work."

Mr Pederick planned to call a meeting with Minister Scriven and Treasurer Stephen Mullighan to discuss the project's hold-up.

Meanwhile, Mr Baker said the abattoir would open at 30 per cent capacity.

"We just want to get going, and will be opening at 30 per cent capacity which is what it has to be because you are training a brand-new team on a brand-new plant," he said.

"It would be reckless and dangerous to try and start at full capacity.

"I think by month two we will be sitting at 70 per cent and by month three at full capacity.

"We will 100 per cent get this up. We just need the grant done.

"But this project will be completed."