



COMMON GROUND

Burra Foods Community Report



McINTOSH CLAN COMBINE FAMILY, FARMING AND FUN

FROM STEWART'S DESK

Resilience is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness”.

While the impact has been considerable, the past six months of continued COVID-19 outbreaks, risks and lockdowns, a global shipping crisis and volatile exchange rates have presented opportunities for us to build greater resilience at Burra. As challenges emerge to continually test us, the resilience we develop in response drives us to deliver on our purpose of partnering to bring the best of Australian dairy to the world.

Self-sufficiency and a manageable workload are key planks in the operational plan for the McIntosh family's successful dairy farming business.

They are comfortable with their current capacity and as such can enjoy what they do without feeling overwhelmed. Their contentment is evident – the McIntosh family, comprising Rod and Jenny and their son Brad and his wife Alana, are a happy clan and they all derive great joy and satisfaction from their enterprise and life on the land at Poowong. The family is a Burra Foods 20-year Service Award recipient, which is an official nod to just some of the values the McIntoshes hold dear, including loyalty and commitment. Commitment to family and farming has resulted in the establishment of a

productive dairy business that is well set up for future generations.

Married in 1975, Rod and Jenny moved to Poowong in 1981. Rod was previously farming in the Strzelecki Hills where the terrain was more undulating.

After moving to Poowong, Rod and Jenny set about transforming her grandfather's soldier settlement scheme property that was once a dairy but had since been carrying beef cattle.

“We had to re-fence the property, put in troughs and upgrade the water infrastructure. We built a herringbone dairy and have planted trees all across the farm,” Rod said.

The improvements, coupled with the purchase of an adjoining property and leasing of additional land, have enabled the McIntoshes to milk 220 cows and create a self-sufficient feed base. *continued page 2*



FROM STEWART'S DESK CONTINUED

As an export-focused business, we have experienced significant challenges in getting stock out of the country and managing extraordinary freight price increases over the past six months. Thankfully, demand has remained strong with long-term customers, and our ability to optimise product mix has enabled new customer growth in existing markets. With volatility in global freight comes opportunity, and we are now realising opportunities to switch fresh or extended shelf-life milk processors in Asia to frozen products, which is proving more flexible and reliable with the shipping challenges. Our focus on building capability over the past year is coming to fruition. Investments in nutritional capability, productivity improvements and quality systems are delivering planned benefits. The quality performance from our factory is at a record high level across all product divisions, a reward for the efforts of all employees involved. The confidence gained through our capability improvements is now enabling exciting product growth opportunities with both existing and new customers. Expanding our sustainability commitment with a wind farm agreement and solar panels, Burra played a role in the

development of the Australian Dairy Sustainable Packaging Roadmap which was publicly announced in October. In an industry-led initiative partnering with the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO), a framework has been developed with the purpose of eliminating or reducing packaging items, increasing the amount of recycled content in packaging and/or improving recyclability by end customers. One of the targets is to have 100% of our packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. Burra will proudly work hard to deliver this.

The energetic and collaborative way in which we are working with our stakeholders across the supply chain is a great reflection on the progress of our refreshed corporate values and behaviours. There was no greater time to test this than when mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements were introduced by the Victorian State Government. Respectful, open, honest and sometimes very difficult conversations amongst our employees and suppliers meant no interruptions to milk collections, milk processing or customer order fulfillment. This is a great reflection on our commitment to partnering and focusing on what is important for all stakeholders.

A wet spring has resulted in our milk collection volumes being below forecast.

Product mix decisions remain extremely important, and we are constantly balancing customer demand, inventory, and capacity to maximise the value from every kilogram of milk solids we collect.

Innovation for the future and taking advantage of opportunities – both domestically and internationally – is our current focus as we relentlessly pursue our growth ambitions. Ongoing enquiries from our core markets is indicative of the speed of recovery from the pandemic, and we are positioning ourselves to take full advantage wherever possible.

Watching our Brand Ambassador, Eleanor Patterson, perform in the high jump finals at the Tokyo Olympics was a highlight for our organisation. The persistence, effort, and focus that Eleanor applied in the final was a reflection of the grit and determination typical of a homegrown Gippslander. We share Eleanor's passion to succeed and couldn't be prouder to support her on her journey in sport and life.



Stewart Carson
Chief Executive Officer
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McINTOSH CLAN COMBINE FAMILY, FARMING AND FUN CONTINUED

"We cut all our own hay and silage – the only bought-in feed is concentrate put in the bail," Brad said. He and Alana have been share-farming for Rod and Jenny for 14 years and now have a 50 per cent share in the business.

"We could milk more cows if we wanted to but we're not pushing the farm. We're happy with where we are at."

Three generations, the newest being Brad and Alana's three boys - Riley, Locklan and Jack - now live on the property where everyone pitches in when and where needed. Brad is full-time, while Alana assists with milking and calf rearing. Rod and Jenny help out with calving and also rearing the calves. Brad's sister and brother live and work off-farm.

Once international travel resumes, Rod and Jenny are looking forward to more overseas



Loving life on the land: the McIntosh family, Jack (left), Alana, Locklan, Brad, Riley, Rod and Jenny.

holidays, but they plan to remain living on the farm they love for as long as possible. Brad is also passionate about the family business, having shown his enthusiasm at an early age when he would stand on a bucket to apply cups to the cows at milking time. Both he and Alana – who also enjoys the dairy farming life – are thankful to Rod and Jenny for the opportunity to be involved in the business and for their guidance and support over the years.

The family have valued their long-standing relationship with Burra, a local business that has grown in parallel with their own.

"When we started selling our milk to Burra there were 30 suppliers – now there are 200," Rod said.

"All our milk goes to Burra and from here it's less than 15 minutes to the factory. It's an arrangement that works very well."



ROBOTICS RESTORE WORK-LIFE BALANCE TO FARMERS

Dairy farming would have to be one of the most labour-intensive occupations in Australia, requiring a diverse range of skills.

Without the right work-life balance, it can be challenging to continue dairying long term and to be in a sound position to pass the baton on to future generations.

Striking that happy work-life balance and setting up the business for the future is where technology has an important role to play.

Burra Foods milk supply partners, Peter and Larissa Joyce, along with their children Bryce, Logan and Reagan, are among a growing number of farmers who have taken the next step in dairying by adopting an Automatic Milking System (AMS).

AMS is a method of hands-free milk harvesting that also provides abundant data. This system allows more time outside the dairy for farmers to devote to other aspects of the business and to personal interests and family life.

The Joyce family, based at Strzelecki, retrofitted two Lely Astronaut A5 robots into their existing herringbone shed, and installed two Grazeways selection boxes (auto draft/direct cow flow) and a Luna cow brush. They have also incorporated some optional extras, including MQC-C somatic cell count monitoring technology

and the PURA system for steam cleaning the liners between cows.

The Joyce family milk 140 cows off 60 hectares. Cows peak at 30 litres, averaging two milkings per day, with rumination at 500 mins/day (ideal), and kilogram of grain concentrate/100 litres of milk is 20.8 (very good efficiency).

Peter said his primary reason to transition to AMS was for lifestyle reasons.

"I didn't want to be waking up at 5am every morning for the next 10-15 years. Now I don't set an alarm – I wake up when I wake up," Peter said.

"Physically, all the years of working hard and playing football were starting to catch up with me. If I didn't upgrade to robots, I may have gone to beef within the next two to five years."

"When I head down to the shed, I wash out and rinse down the yards and external sections of robots. I spend about 30 minutes on the computer each day using the data to help make decisions. If required, I check on the cows drafted into the holding yard to assess whether they are on heat or need attention.

"I have more time to spend outside the dairy managing pasture, and can



Top: Peter and Larissa Joyce with Casey Parker, Farm Management Support, Lely Gippsland.

Above: Peter Joyce is enjoying the benefits of an Automatic Milking System.

concentrate on other things like rearing the calves well."

When asked about preparing the farm for AMS, Peter said it was a straightforward and seamless process.

"No paddock changes were required using a two-way grazing system with the existing laneways, and the cows adapted well due to putting robots in the same herringbone on either side."

The Joyce family said they chose Lely technology for their dairy upgrades because of the company's reputation for innovative quality equipment and the high level of service support from Lely Center Gippsland.



RECOGNISING SERVICE

Congratulations to the following Milk Supply Partners who have received Service Awards:



Doug Cunningham
Marty & Alex Jarvis

Bill, Faye, Brett & Jodi Loughridge
Rod, Jenny, Brad & Alana McIntosh



Paul & Rosa Burdett



Darren & Jodie Verboon
Warren & Kerrie Redmond
Graeme & Debbie Dyke
Maurie Attenborough

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP



The Monash MBA student team outline their project's outcomes during a virtual formal presentation.

The partnership between Burra Foods and Monash University is truly a mutually beneficial one.

Both parties continue to reap the rewards of their proud and long-standing association through the Monash Industry Team Initiative (MITI) and the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs. The MITI program involves Monash University students spending time at Burra Foods as part of their studies, where they are exposed to the dairy industry supply chain, real-life business challenges and regional community life.

Four Monash students are currently immersed in a 12-week program during which they will work on two projects (two students per project) relating to milk sediment and iodine.

According to Burra Foods' Manufacturing Services Manager, Danny Wilson, it is the first time that students have been involved in projects at an on-farm and milk supply level.

"Previous projects have been in the manufacturing and administration/finance areas, so it will be exciting for the students to spend time with our milk supply partners on their farms," Danny said.

"Each year we look forward to the students joining us at Burra Foods – they bring such enthusiasm, creativity and a different approach to the projects they are assigned.

"They are presented with real-life business-related challenges to which they apply their theoretical knowledge and deal with the associated ambiguities, which will no doubt help them with their careers."

Several former MITI students have secured employment at Burra Foods, which supports the MITI program through its partnership with the Gardiner Dairy Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that invests in research, development and extension, people capability and community development, to benefit the Victorian dairy industry and communities. Another six Monash University students, who are in their final year of MBA studies,

have been engaged by Burra Foods in a three-month project to investigate potential new and innovative avenues for product growth.

Burra Foods' General Manager Commercial, Jo Rees, said the MBA student team explored high-value opportunities for specialty milk-based ingredients and the export markets that the company should focus on.

Jo explained the assignment had involved engagement with Burra team members to understand current and future possibilities for new capabilities, and how these align to consumer product trends, to thereby assist customers with their own growth strategies.

"The project provides Burra Foods with a refreshingly new and much broader way of thinking in terms of where we as a business could take our products," Jo said.

"With Burra Foods prioritising business growth, the Monash MBA program is a successful way to utilise external resources to identify opportunities for expansion."

The MBA collaboration has also been beneficial for Monash University and the post-graduates involved, according to Monash Business School Professor of Management and MBA Capstone Project Course Director, Professor Edward Buckingham.

"The Monash MBA students worked for three months on strategies designed to grow the Burra business. They looked at overseas markets, new products and ways to leverage Burra's unique capabilities," Prof Buckingham said.

"Working with the Burra executive team was a splendid opportunity for both Monash and Burra Foods."



WATER MANAGEMENT WINS KEEP FLOWING



Danny Wilson, Burra Foods' Manufacturing Services Manager, inspecting equipment upgrades.

The engineers and operators at Burra Foods have been applying their innovative skills, ingenuity, and enthusiasm to a number of low-cost projects to realise efficiency gains and improve safety with effluent management over the past 12 months.

Recent enhancements include:

- Re-purposing equipment to improve the volume buffering between manufacturing and wastewater treatment – this provides the production team with greater operational flexibility;
- Increasing water treatment capacity and quality control through enhanced acidification – this provides overall process stability, meaning lower operating costs;
- Creating an in-house 'cleaning in place' solution for sludge dewatering which has improved people safety and increased operational 'uptime' and efficiency; and
- Improving process automation skills to extend the chemical recovery plant asset life and its efficiency.

Each initiative entailed a key focus on change management to ensure collaborative and sustained improvement, according to Burra Foods' General Manager – Supply Chain, Murray de Jong.

"The growth of Burra in terms of milk volume and production complexity has put pressure

on our effluent management capacity," Murray said.

"The work that has been undertaken during 2021 has provided a great baseline for further improvements in water management in 2022, when two other major initiatives will come into effect.

"The first involves working closely with South Gippsland Water to increase capacity to manage our treated water, and the second is to undertake a significant upgrade to existing capacity at the Korumburra site.

"South Gippsland Water and Burra already have a close working relationship, with Burra a significant customer of the Korumburra Waste Water Treatment Plant. We are working with South Gippsland Water to expand the volume that can be sent to this plant, which will reduce truck movements from the Korumburra site.

"The upgrade of our site will complement the work with South Gippsland Water and provide an expected increase in treatment capacity in terms of both volume and quality," Murray said.

"This will provide greater flexibility to the production team for the manufacture of our high-value infant nutritional powders. It will also provide greater resilience to cope with the Burra production mix when milk flow increases over spring."

A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY FOR AARON & BURRA



Aaron Christian was born in Malaysia and has family scattered across the globe – but he's right at home working for Burra Foods.

As Business Manager – Nutritionals, Melbourne-based Aaron is utilising his global network and credentials by playing an important role in building and maintaining international markets for Burra's premium products.

With a particular focus on the infant formula market, Aaron is buoyed by the challenge of broadening the company's geographic customer base.

"I'm extremely passionate about our dairy industry in Australia, particularly here in Victoria. To have the opportunity to showcase Burra's products to partners and consumers across the globe is an exciting proposition," Aaron said.

Aaron's move to Burra earlier this year follows an extensive career as a sales executive working within international and domestic supply chains, including key roles at Bega Cheese, Devondale Murray Goulburn, Ballantyne Foods and Cerebos Foods. He was also co-founder of a private business operating within the disability sector.

Away from his professional life, Aaron, who grew up in Melbourne's western suburbs, is a self-described sports nut, both playing and spectating. As a youngster, he became a Collingwood (AFL) fanatic after attending a game at the Magpies' old home ground of Victoria Park where he was mesmerised by the culture and passion.

And he loves music – not just listening and dancing to it, but also producing it.

The tempo and energy at Burra have been very much to Aaron's liking. He is thriving in his new role, surrounded and inspired by people who are genuine, honest and committed.

"Burra is a business born out of Korumburra that's now supplying to customers across the planet. It's a fantastic Gippsland success story, primed to deliver much more in the coming years."



Burra Foods' management and staff were thrilled to learn the company was a winner in the 2021 Gippsland Food and Fibre Awards, which were announced on 19 November 2021.

The company won the award for Food & Drink Manufacturing (medium-large business). According to the award organisers, Burra was recognised for its achievement in manufacturing excellence.

Organised by Food & Fibre Gippsland, a not-for-profit organisation, the awards attracted 111 entries from businesses spread throughout each of the six local government areas across Gippsland.

The awards program is supported by a diverse group of organisations passionate about the continued growth of Gippsland's \$7 billion food and fibre sector.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT PART OF



Poowong Kindergarten students (top left) and Go Girls 'Hike to the Light' walkers (below) have benefited from Burra Foods support.

"It costs \$3,000 to put one woman through the program, so every dollar raised will go a long way towards changing the lives of the program participants," Janine said.

At the time of writing, the Hike to the Light (i.e. lighthouse) had exceeded Janine's fundraising expectations, with more than \$13,000 raised.

In addition to sponsorship, the Burra Foundation gives back to local dairy communities, with milk supply partners nominating a community group, sporting organisation or other cause to be the recipient of \$500 per financial year to assist with fundraising or specific projects.

Poowong Kindergarten has been one of those recipients, utilising the funds for improvements at the kindergarten, including refurbishment of the playground.

The kindergarten's educational leader, Lisa Bodman, said new shade sails, a sandpit cover, paths and landscaping would enhance the playground which is an important space for the 36 children who attend.



"We are very lucky to have such a lovely space for the children to play and learn in, and we try to spend as much time outside as possible," Lisa said.

"A lot of the children who come here are from farms so of course they love being outside."

Thankful for the funds from Burra during what has been a difficult time for fundraising because of the COVID-19 situation, Lisa said the kindergarten's breakfast club also benefited from the financial contribution.

Burra's ongoing support (financial and otherwise) of the Korumburra Bena Football Netball Club (The Giants) is a lifeblood that the club never takes for granted.

Club President, Troy Patterson, is particularly thankful for the supply of treated water from Burra for the past decade that has enabled the oval to be maintained in top condition for the enjoyment of not only the club but the broader community.

Providing sponsorship and financial contributions to support local organisations and community groups is part of the Burra Foods fabric.

The company understands the importance of contributing, especially in regional areas where every form of assistance makes a difference.

Sponsorship by Burra has again been well received in 2021, with the Go Girls Foundation among the beneficiaries.

Founded by Gippsland women Michelle Jobson and Rita Bottomley, the Go Girls Foundation supports and empowers women who may have experienced unemployment, domestic violence, trauma, homelessness,

are migrants or are recovering from breast cancer.

At the end of November, a 'Hike to the Light' involving 20 local women undertaking a 40-kilometre hike on Wilsons Promontory raised funds to enable South Gippsland and Bass Strait women to engage in a five-month work-ready program.

Burra Foods sponsored the walk via a \$2,000 donation and merchandise for each of the participants, including caps, beanies and water bottles.

Go Girls fundraising director, Janine Taylor, said the contribution by Burra would assist in helping local women take more control of their lives by becoming work-ready.



BURRA DNA



Korumburra Bena Football Netball Club president Troy Patterson.

“If we didn’t have that water, the surface would be a disaster,” Troy said. “It’s a credit to Burra Foods, not only for what they provide to us, but also for the company’s broader support for other community groups.”

Korumburra Bena Football Netball Club is looking forward to season 2022, having carried out further facility improvements, appointed highly respected new senior coach, Leigh Cole, and recruited well in advance of pre-season.

“Netball will continue to field seven netball teams representing the club well next year so we’re in a very positive position.”

Other recent beneficiaries of Burra Foundation support are:

- Poowong Consolidated School
- Korumburra Bowling Club
- Leongatha Table Tennis Association
- Welshpool & District Primary School
- Nerrena Cricket Club
- Toora Football & Netball Club
- Hallora Cricket Club
- Heyfield Tennis Club
- Ellinbank Football & Netball Club
- Loch Bowling Club
- Leongatha Town Cricket Club
- Hedley CFA
- Dalyston Football & Netball Club

INDONESIA’S DAIRY PRODUCT APPETITE GROWS

Indonesia has developed into an important and valuable market for the Australian dairy industry.

With a population of 273 million, it is the largest country in South-East Asia and one of the fastest growing economies in the Asia-Pacific region, with a developing appetite for quality food products and ingredients.

Dairy Australia data indicates total exports of dairy products to Indonesia have almost doubled since 2000, reaching 52,500 metric tonnes in 2020 with a value around A\$205 million – making it Australia’s third largest dairy export market in value terms after China (A\$1,052m) and Japan (A\$408m).

The Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement signed in July 2020 has created an additional platform for preferential market access and a framework for business growth, by eliminating import tariffs on Australian dairy products and focusing on many non-tariff barriers to trade, across a range of products.

Similarly for Burra Foods, Indonesia has developed into an important export market across a number of its value-add product categories. With a young population and robust birth rate, Indonesia has been a target market for infant nutritional powders as well as specialty milk powders for use in local Indonesian infant formula manufacture.

It is also an emerging market for Burra Foods’ range of frozen cream and concentrated milk ingredients which are used in the manufacture of fresh dairy beverage and pasteurised milk for retail sales and food service outlets, including the flourishing coffee shop and convenience store coffee market.

According to Des Reilly, Burra Foods’ Sales Manager – Ingredients, Indonesia has suffered extensively through the Delta strain of COVID, with new cases peaking at 57,000 per day in July.

“Only an extended period of Stage 4 restrictions and an expanded vaccination program have managed to bring COVID under control. Key customers are now indicating daily life and business in Indonesia is beginning to return to normal,” Des said.

“We’re also seeing orders start to recover to pre-COVID levels and are looking forward to working with customers in 2022 to resume the growth trend characteristic of recent years.”

Brook Farm milk manufactured in Indonesia from Burra Foods frozen milk concentrate.





AND THE GOLD GOES TO...

Congratulations to the following Milk Supply Partners who have received the Gold Milk Quality Award for season 2020/21:

- Stuart & Jenny Bland
- Shane & Isobell Derrick
- Brad & Tenielle Elliott
- Terri Geary
- Rick & Jackie Schneider
- Jones Family
- Peter, Helen & Michael Thomson
- Jon & Esther Hofman
- Peter Russell & Bronwen Russell
- Robert, Beverley & Rachael Lade
- Matthew & Rosalie Coleman
- Phillip, Kerri, Graham & Kerry Wildes
- AJ Boulton & Colin Wilson
- Graham Francis
- Campbell & Karen Chapman
- Graham & Jane Pouw
- Neville, Val, David & Terry Robertson
- Ross Arezzolo
- Evan & Sheriden Williams
- David Johnson & Laurie Jensen
- Matthew Loader & Megan Kirk
- Alex Spencer

Recipients of the Burra Foods Gold Milk Quality Award have an average Bulk Milk Cell Count of <100,000 c/ml and 0-1 warnings for Total Plate Count and Thermiduric over the season.



Reggie Mohun, Senior Project/Process Engineer, inspecting boiler house modifications.

BOILER MODIFICATIONS TAKE HEAT OFF ENERGY USE

Modifications within the boiler house at the Burra Foods factory are generating multiple benefits for the company and the environment.

Opportunities to reduce energy use and costs associated with boiler operations were identified a couple of years ago in a comprehensive audit of Burra's Korumburra site by an energy consultancy. At the time, the company's combined electricity and gas bill had increased by nearly \$4 million per year.

Given the massive energy cost increase, it was imperative that avenues for reducing consumption and expense were explored.

Burra's Project Management Office Lead, Michelle Rubina, said that having identified savings to be made through boiler modifications, funding was sought and granted through the Victorian Government's Business Recovery Energy Efficiency Fund, in addition to executive-approved capital expenditure.

Involving a total investment of \$550,000, the boiler modification project has entailed a number of initiatives over the past year.

"One has been the installation of an exhaust gas or oxygen trim probe that enables real time monitoring of exhaust gases and variation of the boiler fuel-air ratio to ensure optimal burn," Michelle said.

"This has led to a gas saving of 2.5 per cent across all boilers."

Boiler sequencing improvements have allowed for preferential use of the more efficient boilers for steam production and the ability to potentially turn off one boiler for extended periods.

"This has shown that efficiency gains of 3.5 per cent are possible," Michelle said.

Reducing the boiler blowdown frequency has also contributed to energy use and cost savings. This has resulted from controlling Total Dissolved Solid levels of the boiler drum up to an acceptable range, meaning significantly less water is needed for blowdown processes.

Michelle said that once all modifications were fully activated, a "not insignificant" reduction in gas consumption of 4.9 per cent was expected.

"The economic rewards are important, but so too are the benefits in terms of the environment and sustainability," Michelle said.

"The boiler improvements will contribute significantly to Burra's overall sustainability strategy to reduce waste, cost and environmental impact, and brings the company closer to meeting our energy efficiency goals."



GRANT KEEN TO DIGEST DATA FROM FEED ADDITIVE TRIAL

Hallora dairy farmer Grant Williams understands and appreciates the value of relevant research, especially when the outcomes generate opportunities for improvement and advances on-farm and within the family business.

That is why Grant (pictured above) did not hesitate to be involved in a trial of a feed additive to determine its effectiveness in reducing methane gas emissions.

"I'm constantly looking for new ideas and seeing whether research results can have application in our operations here, because I think there are always improvements to be made," Grant said.

Being such progressive dairy farmers, Grant and his wife Leesa are hosting a trial of the Polygain™ feed additive through which methane emissions from the cows are being monitored and recorded.

"We were approached about the trial because of the way we have set up our automated milking and feeding systems whereby all cows wear electronic collars, which lend them to a trial of this nature," Grant said.

"I was interested in trialling this product because we have the facilities to feed cows at different rates and we're already collecting data and metrics out of our robotics regarding milk flow, composition, health traits and activity.

"I'm keen to see what additional data can be recorded through the trial. If the additive can reduce methane gas emissions which can flow to milk production gains, then that is a win-win.

"By hosting the trial, which is non-disruptive to the cows, I have the opportunity to watch over the project and get a genuine feel as to how the system could operate on our farm."

Burra Foods milk supply partners since 2004, the Williams family milks 600 cows through two automated dairies, comprising Lely robotic technology, which operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All four children – Ryan, Brett, Lauren (and her husband Andrew) and James – have been or remain involved in the operation.

The Williams family was approached about the trial of Polygain™ – a natural plant extract from sugar cane – by Neil Lane of Dairy Consulting Services Australia.

According to Neil, Polygain™ is a natural product rich in compounds known as polyphenols that are noted for their health-promoting properties across most species. It is being brought to market via a partnership between the manufacturer

The Product Makers (TPM) and ProviCo Rural, Australia's largest producer of calf milk replacers, electrolytes, milk fortifiers and other animal health products.

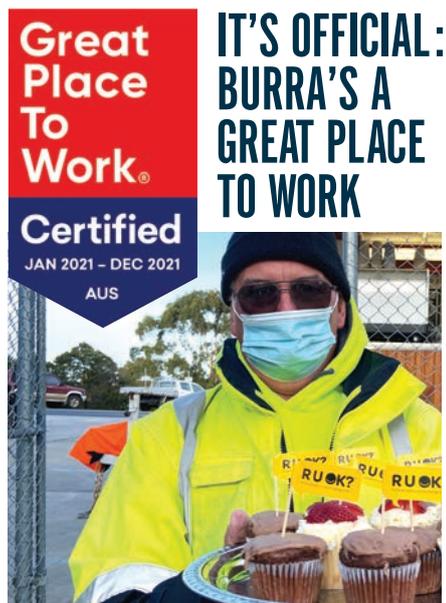
"In early trial work across a diverse range of animals (from racehorses to farmed prawns), Polygain™ has shown to improve feed intake, feed conversion efficiency and overall animal health and performance," Neil said.

"During some of the horse trial work, it was noted that the number of methanogen-producing microbes was being significantly reduced. This prompted some feeding of Polygain™ to a small number of cows and using methane meters developed at La Trobe University, a significant reduction in the methane produced by the Polygain™-fed cows was confirmed."

This then led to the full-scale methane trial on the Williams's farm.

"In what is possibly a world first trial on a commercial dairy farm, we're capturing all the feeding, milk production and milk quality data, changes in liveweight collected by the robots and marrying this up with methane output for every cow at every milking," Neil said. "Measuring methane compared to production per cow on a commercial scale is a world-first.

"The results we're starting to see coming through are very encouraging."



Burra Foods staff member Chris Waetford serving cupcakes on R U OK? Day.

Great Place to Work® is a company that helps businesses around the world survey their employees, benchmark their results against similar industries, and use the results to identify opportunities to improve their workplace culture. They also rank workplaces based on how satisfied and engaged employees are.

“Following the last company-wide survey, Burra was awarded certification of being a Great Place To Work, of which we are immensely proud,” said Burra’s Human Resources Manager, Helen Falls.

“The certification acknowledges the culture at Burra, which is underpinned by its values and behaviours,” Helen said. Those values are:

Energetic – we are responsive and engaged

Focused – we are prepared and do what we say

Respectful – we have open conversations and show genuine care

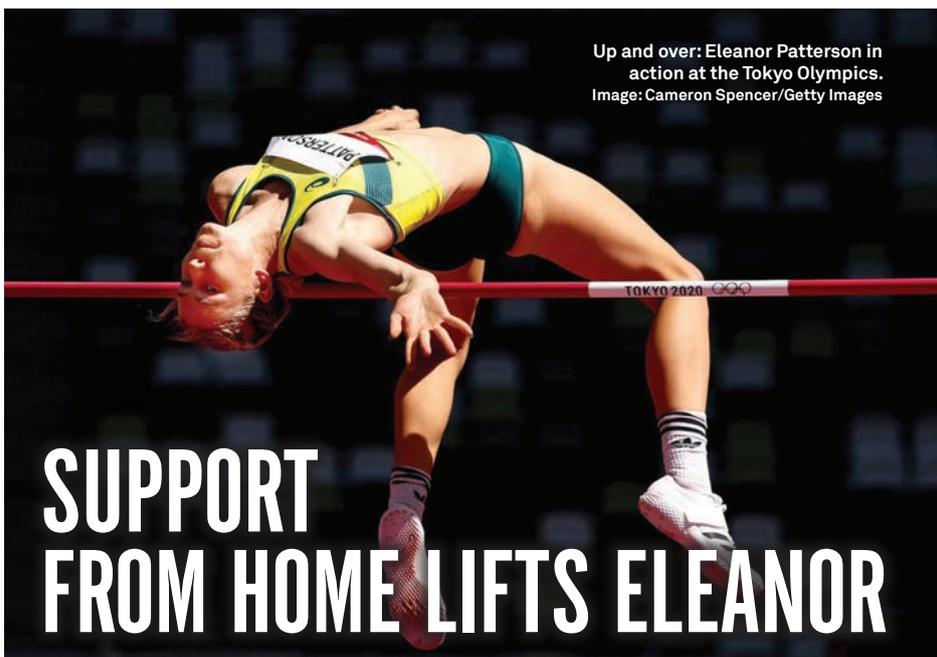
Collaborative – we find ways to work together and have each other’s back

“From the survey, the Burra BETTER cultural improvement program was born and is aiming to make Burra an even better place to work,” Helen said.

“A cross-functional team has been established to deliver initiatives that build on our culture.”

One of those initiatives was to create a mental health and wellbeing calendar of events, an example of which was Burra’s support for the national R U OK? Day.

Designed to encourage collaboration, having open conversations and showing we care for each other, the day involved the consumption of seven dozen cupcakes and more than 100 coffees on site. An online gathering was also held where Burra Milk Supply Partner and mental health advocate, Joe Meggetto, spoke about his own mental health journey and the importance of encouraging others to seek help.



Up and over: Eleanor Patterson in action at the Tokyo Olympics. Image: Cameron Spencer/Getty Images

Japan National Stadium in Tokyo is more than 8,000 kilometres from South Gippsland – a distance that seemed even greater due to the global pandemic and the restrictions on travel to this year’s Olympic Games.

Yet for many residents of South Gippsland there was a sense of being present at the Games, thanks to Burra Foods’ Brand Ambassador, Eleanor Patterson, who transported many of us to the Olympics through her incredible performance in the women’s high jump final.

With every one of her jumps in Tokyo, Leongatha born-and-raised Eleanor was propelled by the collective support and hopes of Burra’s staff, milk supply partners and the local community.

That encouragement was not lost on Eleanor – in fact, it fuelled her drive to perform.

“I fed off all the support from Burra Foods and the community back home,” Eleanor said while in Italy taking some time out from international competitions that followed the Olympic Games.

“I haven’t been home in a long while so to have that support, contact and communication meant so much. The partnership I have with Burra is second to none. I’m proud of where I come from; home and the people there occupy a big place in my heart.”

Eleanor regularly interacted with Burra staff and milk supply partners via virtual business updates and newsletter contributions. Burra staff were very excited to hear from Eleanor when she joined an internal Business Update direct from the Athletes Village at the Tokyo Olympics.

Fifth place on the world’s biggest sporting stage was immensely satisfying and rewarding for Eleanor whose journey to the Games was far from ideal.

“It certainly wasn’t smooth sailing in the lead-up to the Games, with two different stress fractures taking out a chunk of my preparation,” she said.

“But I threw myself in the deep end by competing in Europe ahead of Tokyo and I was able to find some good consistency at the right time.

“I was happy with every facet of the final at Tokyo – I gave it my all and was very proud of myself and what I achieved.

“What was really pleasing was knowing that I was able to perform at that level with so little preparation. It’s exciting to think about what is possible; I know I can jump higher.”

Eleanor said the experience of competing at the Olympic Games in Japan was “wonderful but somewhat surreal.”

“Due to COVID-19, we lived in a bubble in the Athletes Village. It was a strange, alternative universe that we were not accustomed to but because of that we all got to know each other so well.

“It was a journey for everyone in the world to be at the Tokyo Games and that reminded us all that sport is not the be-all and end-all.”

Eleanor was planning to return to Australia by the end of November and was looking forward to spending time with her family and friends before applying herself to university studies and next year’s competitions which include the world championships and Commonwealth Games.



TRAINEES SET SIGHTS ON CAREERS IN DAIRY

The Burra Foods trainee program is opening doors and creating career opportunities for its young participants.

Ashleigh Challis and Sam Jones are currently undertaking traineeships at Burra, and both are relishing the experience.

Ashleigh is a laboratory trainee, while Sam has taken on a production traineeship. Both work full-time while studying Certificate II (Ashleigh) and Certificate III (Sam) in Food Processing through TAFE.

Ashleigh, who is the daughter of a local dairy farmer who supplies milk to Burra, began her traineeship in December 2020 after completing year 12 at Leongatha Secondary College where she saw the position advertised.

She said her traineeship was largely focused on dairy product quality.

“It’s an area that I really enjoy and hopefully I’ll be able to continue working in this aspect of the dairy industry once I’ve completed my traineeship,” she said.

“I’m very grateful for all the support I’ve been receiving from everyone at Burra.”

Leongatha resident Sam is a new trainee but he is a familiar face at the Burra factory where he was employed on a casual basis, mainly as a forklift operator, before the traineeship opportunity arose last year.

Keen to broaden his knowledge and skills, the traineeship has increased Sam’s exposure to other elements of the Burra business.

“I’m working on the larger pieces of equipment here at Burra, including the powder pack, the separators, evaporators and the dryer,” he said.

“It’s work that I find incredibly interesting.

“The traineeship is setting me up perfectly for a future in the dairy industry, maybe as a supervisor. It’s a great stepping stone.”

Being a 27-year-old with previous dairy factory experience, Sam said his was largely a self-driven traineeship and he appreciated the trust placed in him by his supervisor and Burra management and staff.

Burra’s Human Resources Manager, Helen Falls, said the traineeship scheme – part-funded this year by the Australian Government – provided a meaningful career springboard for young people while at the same time assisting Burra with capacity in certain parts of the business.

“Ashleigh and Sam get to complete their Certificates in Food Processing while developing skills that will serve them well in their working lives,” Helen said.



Trainees Ashleigh Challis (top) and Sam Jones are relishing the experience of working at Burra Foods.

AND NOW FOR SOME NUMBERS...

Burra Foods’ contribution to Gippsland 2021

Burra Foods is committed to supporting the Gippsland community and strengthening the region’s economy. Through sustainable investment and positive operational developments, Burra Foods is creating employment opportunities and bolstering spending within local businesses and services.

PURCHASED MILK FROM
 **200**
MILK SUPPLY PARTNERS



63K MT
 OF PRODUCT PRODUCED FROM
336M
 LITRES OF FRESH MILK COLLECTED

INVESTED
\$6M
 IN CAPITAL WORKS USING LOCAL SUPPLIERS & CONTRACTORS WHERE POSSIBLE



| Year ended 31st Dec | 2019 | 2020 | 2021* |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total revenue (\$M) | 315 | 403 | 393 |
| Total assets (\$M) | 200 | 236 | 243 |
| Raw milk collected (M litres) | 332 | 354 | 336 |
| Manufacturing output (MT) | 62,307 | 60,218 | 63,302 |
| Employees | 191 | 189 | 169 |

*2021 Calendar Year based on Jan-Oct actual and Nov-Dec forecast



BURRALINK TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

One of the most recent improvements to the Burra Foods business has the potential to also be one of the most impactful.

The company has implemented the centralised BurraLink business management system to streamline internal processes and enable the company to improve the quality of its products, customer relationships and transparency.

Burra Foods' Quality Lead, Ian Hammam, said the new technology platform, delivered company-wide by Melbourne-based Element3 Solutions, was incredibly flexible and had eliminated slow and risky manual processes.

"The new BurraLink software system has standardised our business processes, from document updates to incident management and recording," Ian said.

"It has automated communications and approvals and enhanced the visibility and traceability of issues and decisions within the business.

"We are now able to better monitor issue trends which will assist with the capital allocation process – we can direct funds to those areas that are most affecting the performance of the business.

"No more spreadsheets or paper sign-offs. The BurraLink system fits perfectly with the new 'working from home' model which has been introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Burra Foods is committed to developing a quality culture which requires investing in our staff and providing them with the tools to identify problems before they occur so they can make smart and informed decisions. BurraLink empowers our staff in that regard."

Ian said the new business management system could easily be expanded to meet future business needs.

Burra Foods Quality Specialist-Process Control, Steve Loader, said BurraLink was the "best" system to have been implemented during his time with the company.

"No need for messy paperwork and chasing managers for signatures – it's all done within BurraLink," Steve said.

"At the click of a button, the information is updated and every user has access to the same information. This will make life easier for everyone at Burra Foods."

STAFF'S CHARITABLE SPIRIT SHINES



As far as Burra Foods staff are concerned, charity starts in the workplace.

Over recent months, the charitable spirit of Burra staff has shone brightly through their commendable fundraising efforts.

Three initiatives have raised funds for causes close to the hearts of Burra staff.

When Procurement Manager, Paul Dixon's mother, Janette, was diagnosed with advanced Alzheimer's disease, Paul created a fundraiser page through Dementia Australia in an effort to make a difference to the lives of people with dementia (of which Alzheimer's is a form). Central to the fundraiser was the promise that Paul would shave off his beard if he raised \$1,000.

"Mum hated my beard so she was instantly on board with the fundraiser and happy to share her story if it would help raise awareness of the disease and also some much-needed funds for support services to help people with dementia," Paul said.

With Burra Foods matching employee donations up to \$2,000 and Korumburra businesses and community members pitching in, a total of \$16,500 was raised – way beyond the \$1,000 initial target.

That meant Paul's beard had to go, and it was Janette who had the honour and pleasure of shaving it off.

Clockwise from left are Steve Nash and his daughter; Paul Dixon (before the shave), his mum Janette and sister Karen; Susan Maskell competing in Fred's Big Run.

In September, Technical Administrator, Susan Maskell, organised a Burra Foods team to compete in Fred's Big Run to raise money for the Fred Hollows Foundation which works in developing countries and indigenous communities to restore sight to those who are needlessly blind.

"The team consisted of 10 Burra employees who challenged themselves to walk or run what eventually amounted to a combined 1,213 kilometres," Susan said.

"The team raised \$5,000 which has helped restore sight to 190 people."

In another fundraising effort, Burra Foods set up a GoFundMe page to support the eight-year-old daughter of staff member, Steve Nash, who succumbed to cancer in July this year. Steve was a valued team member at Burra for seven years.

Led by Food Preparation Department Manager, Matt Murnane, the initiative raised just over \$3,000 – all contributed by Burra staff.

The fundraiser will help Steve's daughter with her schooling over the coming years.

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