

MIGHT OF THE MURRAYLANDS



There's more to the Mighty Murray than watersports, barbecues and holidays. The Murraylands has an array of world-class businesses, from olive oil to steel, that are also relied upon by city folk

WORDS ELISA BLACK

Found where the River Murray broadens and slows as it makes its final journey towards the Southern Ocean, the Murraylands is a region that makes the most of the water. It boasts sunset-coloured limestone cliffs, slow-moving houseboats, fishing, and some of our state's best fresh produce.

The food industry is big business in the region - according to the Murraylands Food Alliance, the area's 10 biggest food companies have a combined sales revenue of \$1.5 billion, producing or processing products including lamb, pork, cheese, potatoes, onions, olives and carrots.

Located an hour east of Adelaide, the Murraylands is a relatively strong export performer. Regional Development Australia found about 41 per cent of surveyed businesses export out of the state.

Here we highlight some of the region's great success stories in driving local jobs and selling the best of SA.

Cheese Please With more than 30 years of experience, Cheese Please cheesemaker Wayne Austin makes small batches of cheese each designed to "create a unique artisan-style gourmet dining experience". Wayne uses milk from Mannum's Simons family dairy to produce a range of fresh and matured cheeses made using a blend of traditional techniques and current science and, when he's not making cheese, you can find him teaching cheesemaking to small and large manufacturers around Australia.

Two of his cheeses - Flinders and Belvedere - were 2016 Royal Adelaide Show gold medallists. The business, which is wholly SA-owned, employs two part-timers. cheesepleasesa.com.au

Longridge Olives The largest producing super high-density olive orchard in Australia, Longridge Olives makes about 160,000 litres of certified Australian Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) a year.

Owned by the Rowntree family, the Coonalpyn business sells its product locally, interstate and overseas and during the busy harvest and oil processing season employs local people on the farm and throughout the year to help manage the orchard.

Lisa Rowntree says, wherever possible, the business sources farm needs from local suppliers and values environmental responsibility.

"We ensure that we use our precious water resource efficiently to avoid wastage, we are also three years into a program that provides essential nutrients to the soil structure and simultaneously develops biological activity within the soil structure," she says. "This is already showing results with increased yield and healthier trees."

Longridge Olives sponsors the Peake & District Footy Club, Coomy Pedal Prix, Relay for Life, and is a fundraiser for local athletes and, most recently, Community Food SA.

longridgeolives.com.au

Coorong Wild Seafood Owned and run by husband and wife team Glen and Tracy Hill for 25 years, Coorong Wild Seafood specialises in Coorong Mullet and only processes the species caught in the Lakes and Coorong. While most of the fish is caught by their own business, from time to time they also purchase from a select group of local fishers, providing them with another outlet for their catch.

Coorong Wild Seafood employs up to five full-time and three casual staff and has expanded with



value-added products to ensure it has work all year round for its employees. By diversifying into tourism with a Seafood Cellar Door and factory tours, Tracy Hill says the business will be able to provide additional jobs in Meningie.

Product is available from Foodland, IGA's, seafood retailers and the business supplies some of the top restaurants in Adelaide and Sydney. coorongwildseafood.com.au

Bridge Aluminium From its factory in Murray Bridge - where it has been operating for more than 30 years - Bridge Aluminium distributes ladders under the ALLWELD brand to all corners of Australia. Director, Ian Bates, says their ladders are unique because of their high strength and have earned their reputation as genuine industrial-grade ladders, making them a firm favourite with the orchard and mining industries.

"Our Folding Platform Ladders were the ladders of choice at the RAH construction site," he says.

Bridge Aluminium employs seven people. platformladders.com.au

McCue's Bakery Family owned and operated for 29 years, McCue's Bakery employs 42 local people in wholesale and retail (with more than 30 types of sausage rolls, pies and pasties, you need a small army to help deal with demand). Since buying the business in 1987, Kerry McCue says they have tripled their service and staff.

Makers of the original Savoury Slice - a Murray Bridge icon - goods are made using Australian-grown or produced ingredients, including Mypolonga-grown apricots. The business also supports local schools, sporting clubs and charities. mccuesbakery.com.au

Murray Bridge Farmers Market The best place to find a huge selection of all of the great produce the Murraylands has to offer is the Murray Bridge Farmers Market, held every Saturday from 8am to noon in the local government centre car park. With an aim to developing a social and sustainable environment that offers access to



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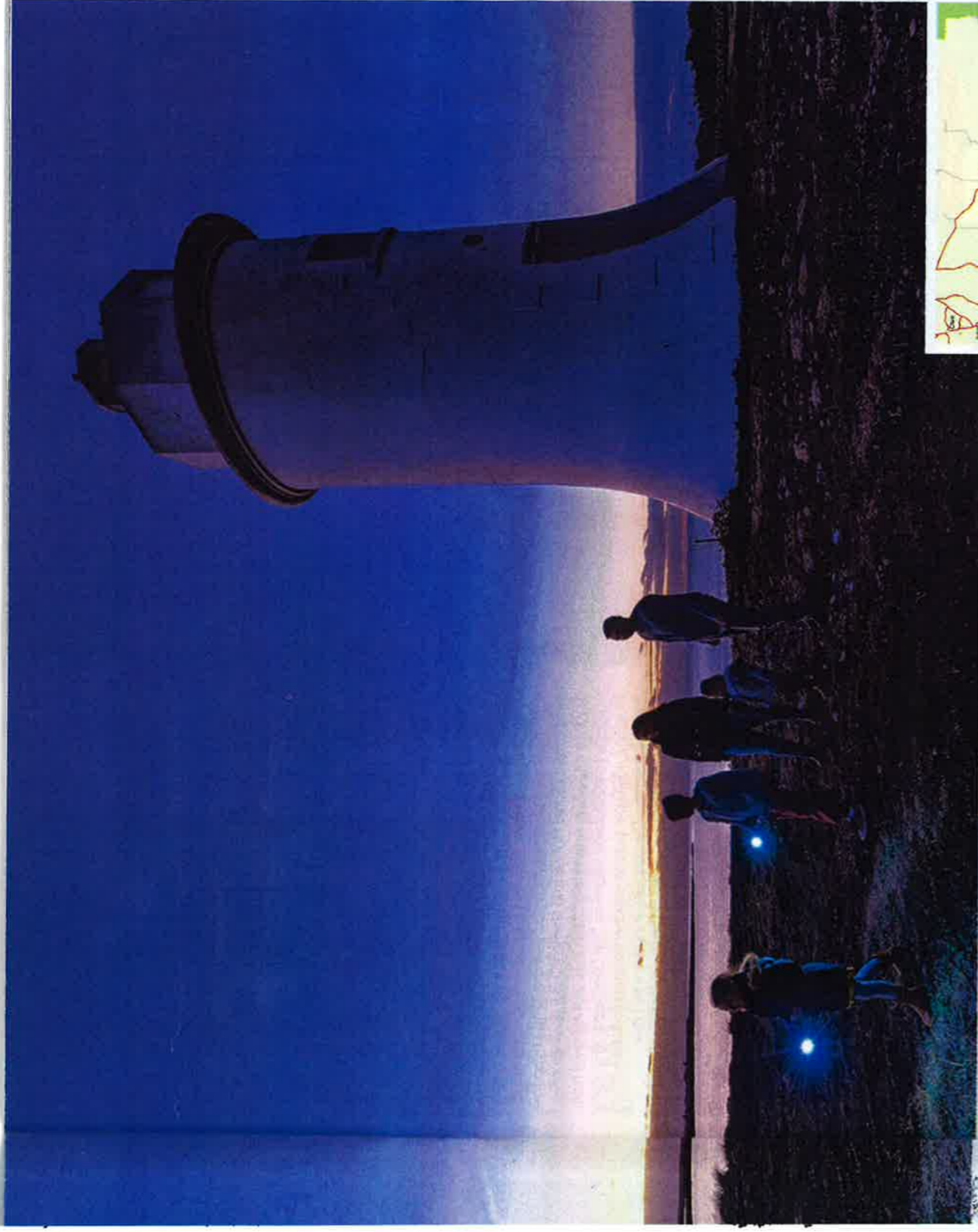
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authentic, fresh and seasonal produce, the market showcases producers and makers including Murray Bridge's Fancy Some Food, Succulent Lane and Webb's Produce; Monarto's Gotcha Paracord and Ark Angel Creations; and Mannum's Nellie's Nursery. About 300 people visit the market each weekend.

murraybridgefarmersmarket.com.au

Bowhill Engineering Their product isn't something most of us spend a lot of time thinking about, even though it makes up much of the fabric of our daily lives. From Southern Expressway sign gantries and ferry landing structures to the





Main picture, Point Malcolm Lighthouse; left, family holidays on the Murray, and Longridge and Olives at Coonalpyn; and bottom, a Bow Hill engineering ferry is launched



A TALE OF TWO DAVES



Dessert at The Davery

David Phillips, proud owner and operator of The Davery Establishment, says his goal from the very start was to bring a "dining experience like no other" to Murray Bridge.

"Having been open for nearly four years and never wavering from our original goal, I believe we've been successful," he says. "We aim to set ourselves apart by offering a dining experience that isn't standard cafe fare and creates an overall experience specific to the Murraylands region."

Where possible David uses local and SA producers, including Murray Bridge's Cheese Please, Mt Barker's Skara Smallgoods and Prancing Pony, Robe's Mahalia Coffee, Langhorne Creek's Bremerton, and meat and vegetables from local businesses. The menu is based on seasonal produce and offers daily and weekly specials designed to showcase producers and seasonal ingredients – items like "slurpy soup with house-made bread" or the cheeseburger with a "beef and ale patty" marinated in the Prancing Pony's best.

"We spend considerable time training our staff and extending their knowledge of the local producers so that they can talk with confidence about the food they're presenting," David says.

"All of our employees – 12 in total – are locally based people who share a passion for food and excellent hospitality. I have two staff that are completing their Year 12 via an independent learning centre and doing hospitality certificates to complete their SACE. I also have one staff member who completed her Year 12 (the same way) and is now doing her apprenticeship with us.

"The aim with these young people is to encourage them to pursue their careers without having to leave the region."

The Davery Establishment has a regular stall at the Murray Bridge Farmers Market.

thedavery.com.au

Big Bend By Night A nature-based tourism business set on the family farm at Swan Reach, Big Bend by Night offers a range of tours designed for the adventurer and epicurean alike.

From a ride in a specialised vehicle to check out the property's kangaroo and wombat populations (plus bats and owls) at night, to a bush tucker breakfast or outback pub crawl, Big Bend guests can also enjoy a three-course riverbank dinner while watching the sunset before heading off on a nocturnal tour.

There are also chauffeured driven tours into the Barossa Valley or Langhorne Creek regions.

bigbend.com.au



employees and clients as friends and family". boweng.com.au

Pretoria Hotel Set in the heart of Mannum, the Pretoria Hotel has prime position on the banks of the mighty River Murray. Priding itself on that warm country hospitality, the hotel has been designed and decorated around its heritage, you can even see the high-tide marker from the 1956 flood – the main street bar was totally under water. There's room for 300 people in the bar and bistro, where you get a great view of the river, and every Saturday night local and Adelaide bands take to the stage. pretoriahotel.com.au

Christies Beach Desal Plant and bridges galore, structural steel engineering firm Bowhill Engineering is there. The Murraylands-based business represents the SA steel industry nationwide and delivers some \$5 million worth of landmark projects annually.

A South Australian family-owned business, it employs more than 22 people and supports other local businesses, community groups and sporting clubs. Managing director Jeremy Hawkes says, as well as Bowhill Engineering's "world-class innovative solutions and low-risk profile" there was another important factor that set it apart from other businesses: our "country values, treating

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