



Holco seeks bigger slice of Queensland

Greater expectations of meat quality and a new processing and distribution plant in Brisbane are key ingredients for SA-based Holco taking a bigger slice of Queensland's mining industry meat market.

Each week Holco processes and delivers about 300 tonnes of fresh beef, chicken, lamb and pork products across Australia from its operations in Adelaide and Darwin.

After opening the Queensland plant in late August, Holco expects to boost production by 50 tonnes per week within six months.

"We believe our income out of Queensland can grow to almost \$20 million within 18 months," says Holco MD, Mike Rankin.

Holco is already a major supplier of meat to the mining industry, through direct contracts or as a supplier to catering companies.

"With the rapid mining expansion in Queensland, we believe there is potential to significantly increase sales to mining camps, and this new plant will help us deliver that," Mike says.

In 2010-11 Holco achieved \$118 million turnover, an increase of 9% over the previous financial year, and aims to reach \$140 million turnover within two years.

"We have got off to a good start this year, winning two major contracts in SA with a combined value of \$3 million," Mike says.

"Seeking new opportunities within Australia and overseas will be an ongoing focus for us in the next 12 months."

Holco delivers meat to more than 250 hotels in South Australia and the Northern Territory. It also supplies a wide range of fresh meat products to restaurants, cafes, supermarkets, commercial caterers, mining sites and healthcare organizations in SA, WA and the Northern Territory. Each day 24 trucks make 400 to 500 deliveries in SA alone.

"In our market, food safety and hygiene standards are critical. So too is speed and reliability as we are often called on by customers in emergency situations to provide quality meat products at the last minute," Mike says.

"Holco's comprehensive quality assurance monitoring procedures, both in the production room and the delivery process, ensure clients receive goods produced to the highest standards of hygiene and temperature control.

"While processes to trim and package meat products have not changed significantly in recent years, Holco is

committed to ensuring workers have the right tools and training to do their job efficiently and effectively."

Mike believes staff training and development is essential for ongoing growth and butcher's apprenticeships are a key element. He knows first-hand the value of apprenticeships and where they can lead, having begun his career as an apprentice butcher.

Holco's commitment to apprenticeships is best reflected in the management of its Springfield Butchers chain, where 10 of the 21 managers have come through Holco's apprenticeship program. At present are 28 butchers' apprentices at various stages within their four-year training program.

"It is important to give people the skills they need to make a career and to offer the opportunities to advance within the company using these skills," Mike says.

Holco's training commitment extends beyond apprenticeships, with opportunities in a variety of fields including front line management, administration, food processing and transport being undertaken to over 30% of employees in past two years.

Now more than 30 years in business, Holco employs 300 full time and casual staff in SA, NT and Queensland.



Holco Meats facility in Adelaide