

Mobile abattoir to improve animal welfare, quality of produce, takes to the road to the delight of station hands

By [Michelle Stanley](#) 3rd May 2019



Mr Balazs described on-farm processing of cattle as the "holy grail". (Supplied: Provenir)

One of Australia's first mobile abattoirs has been built in an effort to improve animal welfare and the quality of meat produced on Australian farms.

Key points:

- Mobile abattoirs reduce the live transport of cattle and improve animal welfare
- A mobile abattoir in NSW can process 10–12 head of cattle daily
- The multi-million dollar cost of the abattoirs can be cost prohibitive for individual producers

The unit was built by Perth-based manufacturing company, Simmons Global, after being commissioned by [Victorian ag-tech company, Provenir](#).

Chief executive of Provenir, Chris Balazs, took delivery of the unit in late April and said on-farm processing was the "holy grail" from a farmer-processor perspective.

"The ability to control the transformation of an animal into an edible product ... has been a dream for [more than] 5 years since I've been producing meat," he said.

Reducing the live transport of cattle, improving animal welfare, and highlighting provenance were also key drivers in commissioning the unit.



Provenir's four of the founders: Phil Larwill, Chris Balazs, Jayne Newgreen, and Christopher Howe. (Supplied: Provenir)

Mobile hopes for remote Australia

The mobile abattoir, which is set to be based in the New South Wales Riverina region, took more than 18 months to design and a further 12 months to build.

It has the capacity to process 10–12 head of cattle each day.

In Western Australia's remote Pilbara Annabelle Coppin from Yarrie Station has been considering mobile processing options for more than a decade.

There are currently no abattoirs in the Pilbara, so Ms Coppin currently trucks her cattle more than 3,000 kilometres return to supply Yarrie's branded line, Outback Beef.

In February, Yarrie received a \$79,000 grant from the State Government for a feasibility study into mobile abattoirs in northern WA.

"Margins are very fine in slaughtering animals all the way through the supply chain," Ms Coppin said.

"So we've just got to try and look at options to keep the [Outback Beef] dream alive."

She does not think a mobile abattoir would be a complete solution for her business, but sees it as an option to diversify her markets and build an economy in remote parts of northern Australia.

"This is not about efficiencies and processing in big numbers," she said.

"It's more about smaller numbers, more of a story, and making your product a niche product and into more of a branded beef product."



In 2009 Annabelle Coppin from Yarrie Station travelled to the USA to begin investigating the viability of mobile slaughter units in remote Australia. (Supplied: Annabelle Coppin)

Strict regulations lead to high cost

Five additional mobile abattoir units have been slated for production in Perth, with one expected to be based in WA's south-west.

But due to the strict regulations regarding the processing of animals, as well as transport regulations, chief executive of Simmons Global, Dave Simmons, believed the multi-million dollar units could be cost prohibitive for individual producers.

"There's a lot in it, and when it rolls down the road it looks like an over-size truck and looks very simple," Mr Simmons said.

"But there's the very many attributes of the food and abattoir regulations that have gone into that.

"Simple things like hygiene [are] taken for granted in a fixed facility, but in this sort of environment is a costly and challenging pursuit."

Provenir has begun a crowd-funding campaign to secure pre-sales for meat packs produced in the mobile unit.

On-farm processing on properties in the Riverina is expected to start before the end of May.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2019-05-03/animal-welfare-benefits-expected-from-mobile-abattoir/11066694#lightbox-content-lightbox-8>