



ROUNDUP



*In front of their mobile abattoir, Provenir staff Phil Larwill, CEO Chris Balazs, Jayne Newgreen and Christopher Horwe.*

## First new mobile abattoir

If you're on the road to Gundagai, or elsewhere in the New South Wales Riverina over the next few months, keep an eye out for a new mobile processing unit. Recently built in Western Australia, the 3-metre wide by 14.5m long unit fits on the back of a semi-trailer. Its 4.5m high roof expands out in order to hang carcasses. From June the unit will be travelling to small farming operations to slaughter and process 10 or so head a day.

Chris Balazs, CEO and founder of Provenir, the company that developed the unit, says processing cattle and sheep on farm is much better for their welfare. His own Hereford farm in Bannockburn, Vic, has been used for trials. "As a farmer myself, I hate loading my livestock onto the back of a truck," he says. "I work so hard to get them in top condition only to risk losing it all to a bad trip. This will be the highest welfare meat when it comes to processing. The animal doesn't have to go through the stress of transportation or spend 12–36 hours in an unfamiliar environment in an abattoir. And if the animal is calm, it just tastes better."

Beasts will be cut down to half carcass size and then sent to a fixed boning room for finishing every 4–5 days. "We're quite nimble – we'll be on each farm for 2–3 days," Chris says. He says the engineering is available to upscale the operation, which could make it feasible for longer-term stays on larger properties.

The unit was cofunded with a \$700,000 grant from Meat and Livestock Australia. Chris says Provenir is trying to raise another \$120,000 through crowdfunding to build two more mobile units.

"Mobile slaughter units have been around for quite some time," he says. "In Australia, there was one doing buffalos in late 1970s, early 1980s.

"One has been operating in the US for the past 7–8 years, but the world leaders are the Swedish, who have been operating a mobile unit for the past four years."

The unit will initially be restricted to working in New South Wales, where legislation is less ambiguous about mobile meat processing.

For more information, see [provenir.com.au](http://provenir.com.au).