

# Reducing environmental footprint



**S**EVERAL recent or pending projects at Oakey are based around further reducing the business's already modest environmental footprint.

As recently as last week, Oakey commissioned a new centre pivot irrigation project, on land adjacent to the abattoir.

The \$250,000 investment, based around a Bauer eight-span pivot purchased through CRT Dalby

**LEFT: Oakey general manager Pat Gleeson on the site of the new centre pivot irrigation project near the plant.**

Rural Supplies and installation of underground mains piping water from the factory, will produce silage and crop from a 65ha cultivation circle for local livestock industry use.

Up to a megalitre of nutrient-rich recycled water from the plant can be applied every three hours through the system, used this winter to grow black barley.

The facility will grow up to three crop cycles each year.

In other water applications, steriliser water from the kill floor is recycled for use through the extensive pre-slaughter cattle wash facility, designed to reduce E coli load on hides before livestock enter the kill floor.

Another strong environmental prospect under examination at Oakey is

the harvesting of methane gas from anaerobic wastewater ponds on the site, which could further reduce energy requirements.

A feasibility study will shortly be carried out on the site.

Currently boiler and other plant energy requirements come from two sources: gas and coal.

AGL has a large gas line running straight past the plant, which Oakey taps into for a clean, efficient energy source.

On a per-beast basis, substantial improvement has been made in energy requirements and reducing water use through the plant, particularly since the completion of the new boning room and kill floor.

## Big changes in half-century

**T**O many, Lennie Henschell is the heart and soul of the Oakey abattoir.

He has worked at the plant continuously for the past 52 years, starting with the original owner Fred Keong in 1958, just two years after the business opened.

He proudly bears the payroll office identification number of 'One.'

Now 73, Lennie has spent most of his working career boning and slicing, and later on the kill floor in a variety of roles.

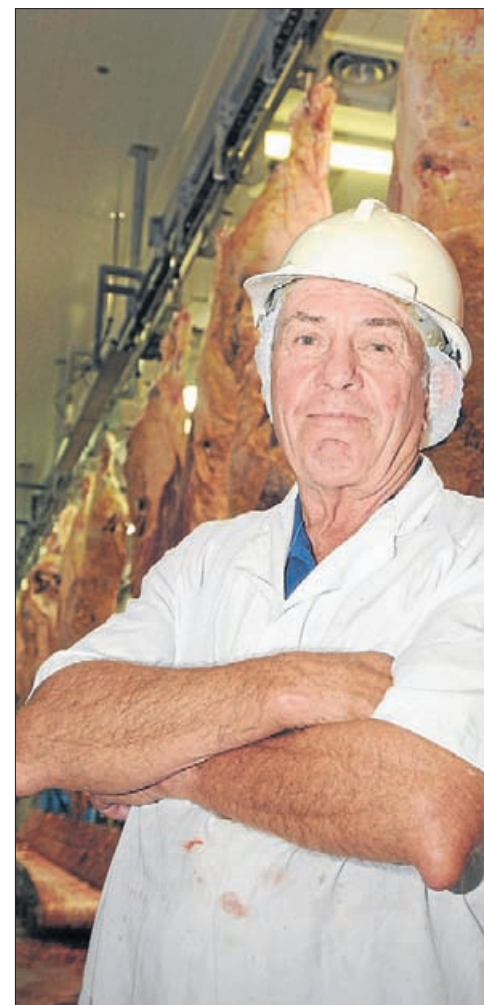
"Oakey was a much smaller plant back then – it could still process 500-odd cattle a day, but they were long days to do it," he said.

"It's hard to believe the changes that have occurred here in half a century – hygiene standards, the adoption of new technology, processing aids – the changes have been fantastic, and are all about producing a better product, more efficiently and more safely.

"When I started we all wore thongs to work," Lennie said

"But circumstances change, consumers' expectations change, and we all have to move with the times.

"I don't have any immediate plans to retire, but it depends on these fellas," he said, pointing with a smile to plant manager Pat Gleeson.



**Lennie Henschell has worked at the Oakey plant since 1958, just two years after the business opened.**

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### Transforming Ideas Into Products

G&B Stainless would like to congratulate Nippon Meat Packers on its Oakey Abattoir Project.

G&B Stainless was one of the main contractors responsible for the design, Construction and installation of the conveyor systems and the mechanical handling equipment on both the Slaughter Floor and the Boning room at Oakey.

G&B has a long term relationship with Oakey and has had over 50 years experience within the Abattoir Industry completing many projects. G&B is involved with design and innovation to improve productivity of many food processing plants throughout Australian as well as overseas.



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