

27 Oct
2014

Mr - Gilbert Cabral

Australian Meat Group

Formerly

CASTRICUM PROCESS-2011

Hammond RS

REFURBISHMENT OF \$30M (ABATTOIR)
TO EMPLOY 400 NEW JOBS

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DANDENONG JOURNAL

New abattoir cuts it

By CASEY NEILL

A REFURBISHED \$30 million abattoir in Dandenong South will create almost 400 new jobs.

Australian Meat Group managing director Gilbert Cabral said the Hammond Road premise had been closed since 2011.

"We purchased the site earlier this year, formerly from Castrium Brothers who operated the site as a lamb operation," he said.

"We are refurbishing and converting it into a beef operation.

"We are building a brand new cold store to handle all our export containers."

Premier Dennis Napthine announced the project last Thursday.

He said it would provide processing facilities for the domestic and Asian export markets and create more than 230 jobs in its first years and more than 370 down the track.

Mr Cabral said the State Government was contributing "modest assistance which will go towards training and induction" to the private project.

Australian Meat Group (AMG) is a newly-formed company.

"We were formerly owners of a company called Tasman Meat Group," Mr Cabral said.

"We sold to a multinational.

"After a period of non-competition, we've come back into the industry.

"We're a fresh new team but we've got extensive experience in the meat industry."

He said he'd been familiar with the Dandenong South site for a long time.

"We've operated with Castriums before," he said.

"The Castriums constructed a very sound abattoir and it comes with all the licensing.

"It makes it a lot easier for us to refurbish and operate."

Mr Cabral hopes the operation will be up and running early next year.

In June last year, Castrium Food Service managing director Gary Castrium told the Journal that



Premier Denis Napthine with Australian Meat Group managing director Gilbert Cabral. 129527

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

selling the 6.88 hectare Dandenong South facility had been in the works since the company closed its abattoir in 2011.

The high Australian dollar hampering export opportunities, years of drought forcing up stock prices, the need to upgrade the 25-year-old facility and family retirements brought about the decision.

"It was difficult times for a while there," Mr Castrium said.

Castriums has been operating a retail outlet on the site since and will continue to do so through a lease arrangement with new owner AAD Recycling Services.

"And we'll be there for some time yet," Mr Castrium said.