

MEDIA RELEASE



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MURRAY BRIDGE EMPLOYEES TAKE UP NEW POSITIONS

Thomas Foods International's Murray Bridge employees are returning to work. Our family company has begun redeploying staff impacted by the January 3 plant fire.

Together we take a major step forward today.

As part of the initial tranches of positions, 340 Murray Bridge employees have now started work at our Lobethal meat processing facility and we are currently in the process of making another 70 positions available there in the short term.

We are also in the process of creating approximately 150 new positions at our Tamworth facility for our employees, effective immediately. This is in addition to the current recruiting campaign we have in place in Tamworth for local residents seeking to join our company.

More than 90 staff remain employed at Murray Bridge working in specialist areas within our operations unaffected by the fire.

Our company and people have been truly tested these past weeks but we are a resilient and determined team. There are no easy solutions in a difficult situation such as this. To find new positions for the majority of our 900-strong permanent workforce so soon after the fire is testament to the outstanding efforts of everyone involved. This shows what can be achieved when industry, government and communities work together for a common goal.

We have met with our insurers and we are now in the initial stages of planning for a rebuild of our Murray Bridge operations. We are committed to Murray Bridge and while it is too early to provide further detail on what may be required, the rebuild process could take between 12-24 months. Demolition work on site has already begun and we will keep the community informed as we develop our exciting plans for bigger and better Murray Bridge operations.

In the meantime, production levels at our other processing plants will increase significantly – doubling in Lobethal and by more than 20% in Tamworth – as we continue to manage our customer requirements. We are working closely with local government in Lobethal and Tamworth where we have received a very positive response to the employment opportunities and broader economic benefits in both regions.

Ever since the outstanding actions of the first staff responders on the night of the fire, our focus has been on our workforce. Thomas Foods International will be offering support to employees in their transition to new positions as well as providing access to services for those who will no longer be with the company.

We can't say for certain how many staff will eventually take up new positions with the company but from our discussions with various organisations, we're confident that there are employment opportunities for workers – whether with us or with other local businesses that have pledged their support to offer jobs.

Ultimately it's about maximising the employment opportunities for everyone affected by the Murray Bridge fire and working together as an industry and community at this challenging time. As a company we remain fully committed to a positive future.

Darren Thomas
Chief Executive Officer, Thomas Foods International