

## **MR ROGER JAMES FLETCHER**

### **Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Business (*honoris causa*)**

Roger Fletcher is Managing Director of Fletcher International Exports Pty Ltd (Dubbo Abattoirs) NSW, and Fletcher International (WA) Pty Ltd (Narrikup Abattoirs), Western Australia.

Roger Fletcher is a self-made success story. From droving sheep in 1967, he is now the owner and proprietor of one of the most successful abattoirs in NSW (Fletcher International Exports Pty Ltd, located at Dubbo), with another plant located at Narrikup near Albany in Western Australia (Fletcher International (WA) Pty Ltd). More recently he purchased the Mudgee Abattoirs. Through these operations Fletcher International Exports is now the largest and most integrated sheep meat processor in Australia, and the company is 100% owned and operated by Roger Fletcher and his family. Fletcher is also Dubbo's largest employer, and a BRW Rich 200 member. In 2002, *The Bulletin* published a list of top 50 Australian innovators – Fletcher was ranked first in the agribusiness category.

A self-described high-school drop-out, Fletcher traveled Australia for many years as a drover. His droving days came to an end in 1972 when he commenced employment at the Moree Council Abattoir. There he sold carcasses to major wholesalers including Woolworths and Coles, and also to export boning rooms. In 1974, Fletcher moved into the export business for himself, exporting bagged carcasses to Japan and Korea, mainly through brokers, until 1978. He also acquired the boning room at Chullora Packing House in 1975, before obtaining his own export license three years later.

Fletcher has been involved with abattoirs at Mudgee until 1988 (prior to his recent purchase of the Mudgee Abattoirs), and Gunnedah until 1994. In 1988, the greenfield site of the Dubbo Abattoir was commissioned and has expanded to become one of the world's leading sheep meat processing plants. In 1990, the fellmongery commenced operations, and 1995 saw the commencement of the wool scouring and topmaking plant which runs 24 hours a day, five days a week – this is the first example of a wool processing plant being incorporated with an abattoir. The company is able to process its own wool and significant quantities of shorn wool into tops, which are sold across the world to be made into yarn. The rendering plant and skin processing facility, and more recently a chamois factory, have increased production and fulfill the company policy to process every part of the sheep.

In 1998 the company expanded into Western Australia with yet another greenfield site being developed at Narrikup near Albany. The new plant is fully integrated, currently employs 400 people and boasts a fully automated boiler system and deboning machines, with the workforce rotated through all of the plants areas of operation to ensure multi-skilling. The Western Australian plant also includes pelt-pickling facilities and a fellmongery.

Fletcher International Export's main production is in sheep meat, wooltops and various co-products, which are exported to more than 70 countries. Main export regions include Europe, America, the Middle East and Asia. Fletcher sources stock from every state in Australia – the combined processing capacity of the plants in

NSW and Western Australia is more than 90,000 sheep and lambs per week. The company employs over 1,000 people.

Fletcher's business philosophy is based on maximizing efficiency through value-adding; maintenance of high standards (what Fletcher refers to as 'clean and green'); and working with and understanding people from diverse cultural backgrounds. As a strong advocate for regional development, Fletcher has developed one of Australia's largest Indigenous and youth training programs as part of his business strategy. He has also called for the establishment of an Indigenous training organization in the city of Dubbo, and improved infrastructure across rural NSW. Fletcher International Exports also employs a number of refugees from Afghanistan, for whom Fletcher has developed a mentoring program, including the rostering of at least one translator on each shift.

In November 2006, Fletcher was recognized for his achievements in the inaugural 2006 Jobs Career Future awards:

- Fletcher International Exports was awarded the Outstanding Corporate Citizen Award, for support for Indigenous employment. Over the past six years, Indigenous employment in the company has grown by 36%; the company currently employs 250 Indigenous people and aims to place Indigenous employees throughout the organization;
- Roger Fletcher was awarded the Neville Bonner Memorial Award in recognition of his personal drive and commitment to Indigenous employment. Mr Fletcher has created a workplace that is inclusive and culturally safe; he is directly involved in community liaison and community projects; and the company provides additional support to employees including the payment of major health care expenses and assistance with travel. Mr Fletcher's work with the local high school in employing disadvantaged youth, particularly Indigenous youth was also highly commended by the judges. Mr Fletcher has also been active in promoting Indigenous employment to other businesses in the Dubbo region, and is a passionate spokesperson for corporate social responsibility in relation to Indigenous employment.

Roger Fletcher is based in Dubbo.

#### **Memberships**

- Chairman, National and NSW State Export Lamb, Sheep and Goat Industries Council (an Industry Council of the Australian Meat Industry Council)
- Director, Australian Meat Processor Corporation
- Board Member, the Australian Sheep Industry Cooperative Research Centre
- Member, Australian Meat Industry Council
- Member, National Food Industry Council
- Member, Rural Australians for Refugees Temporary Protection Visa Employer's Group

**Dated this Twenty Fourth Day of May Two Thousand and Seven**