



Factory springs to life

Camperdown's former Bonlac foods factory has been sitting idle for 10 years, but the dilapidated site is in the middle of a revival.

Since last month's announcement that the factory would once again be used for milk processing, residents will have noticed the factory has been a hive of activity.

Aussie Farmers Dairy is approaching the next phase of its extensive refurbishment of the site, with truckloads of equipment due to start arriving from today.

Chief executive officer and former Camperdown resident Peter Skene said works were progressing well.

"Since we took over the site on April 6, we have done a huge amount of work to get the building up to an appropriate standard again.

"There were a number of holes in the roof and the place was filled with birds' nests and was really in a bad way," Mr Skene said.

"We have cleaned all that up and are now in the final stages of the refit, with the trucks bringing equipment and machinery due to start arriving from Friday,"

Mr Skene said that up to 11 truckloads of machinery were due to make the trip from Melbourne, within the next week, as well as three large milk silos.

"The silos are loaded and ready to go, but they are fairly large so we are working with VicRoads to gain permits for their transport.

"Hopefully they will be

on the road today," he said.

Mr Skene said 1400 square metres of insulat-

ed panel had been installed in the main building and power and other essential services were connected throughout the week.

"The power was connected on Wednesday, so residents will start to really notice the work we have been doing now.

"With the fit out now very close to completion, we will have teams of 15 people in working to install the machinery, for the next three months.

"After that we move into a testing phase with com-

mercial production due to begin in January," he said.

The revival of the site has been a labour of love for Mr Skene, who was once employed at the Bonlac factory.

"We have had a couple of goes at getting the place up and running again, so its third time

lucky I guess.

"It was something that needed to be done, we have 1500 farmers producing some of the best milk in this country, and a dairy processing site sitting idle. It didn't make sense," Mr Skene said.

The factory will be able to produce 100,000 litres

of milk a day and create 40 jobs in its first year of operation with possible expansion to 100 jobs by year five.

Mr Skene said the key to the factory's success was the local community.

"We are using local

tradespeople and will attempt to hire as many local people as we can.

"Aussie Farmers Dairy is excited by the link with the Camperdown community and plan to be in the town for a long time to come."



Above: Adam Narik from Kiran Maintenance services flicks the switch to turn on the power at the Aussie Farmers Direct processing plant. 2010D



Aussie Farmers Dairy chief executive officer Peter Skene. 2010E