

GROWING BUSINESS WITH LEAN MANUFACTURING

A passionate team at Stainless Steel Associated Fabricators (SSAF), led by Owner and Manager Chris Stacey, is reaping the rewards of implementing lean manufacturing techniques and maintaining a loyal client base.

Based in Sunbury and specialising in the design and manufacture of food grade equipment, stainless steel and sheet metal fabrication, SSAF is committed to delivering best practice and high quality solutions for its clients. Major projects include conveyors and platforms for some of the biggest names in Australasian food processing.

With 25 years in sheet metal fabrication management, Chris sold his previous business in Sunshine and became a consultant for the Australian Stainless Steel Development Association. He sought to set up a new business closer to home in Sunbury and two-and-a-half years ago, Chris formed SSAF.

With a part-time engineer, Chris began drafting and designing projects for clients, while facilitating outsourced production. Due to his reputation as a quality manufacturer, clients would request he manage projects from end-to-end, and SSAF soon brought production in-house.

“Our engineer Brian and I started making bin tippers and small conveyors. We added a tradesman and an apprentice and built the business from there. Now we’ve grown to have a great team of six and we’ve just taken on another apprentice who lives locally in Sunbury.

“My wife has also recently expanded her role in the business, looking after office administration and our ISO 9001 quality management system. I’d like to add a sales estimator and another fabricator to the team,” said Chris.

Previously, Chris’ business offerings were incredibly diverse, completing work for clients across a range of industries, covering aluminium, metal and stainless steel projects.



SPARKS FLY DURING ANGLE GRINDING

“Concentrating on too many areas wasn’t a cost-effective strategy for us or our customers, so with SSAF we planned to specialise in quality stainless steel fabrication for the food industry. We researched and implemented a lot of European and American manufacturing standards and technology.

“Where a single team member used to complete a job end-to-end, we have changed to a production line, with each team member working on designated elements such as cutting, welding or assembly. Our lean manufacturing processes have increased efficiency, thereby reducing costs to our customers and allowing SSAF to be more competitive,” said Chris.

Through continuous improvement of SSAF’s design and internal processes, the business has been able to create more effective solutions for a wide range of end-users. Businesses of all sizes approach SSAF, with different needs, budget constraints and briefs.

“After more than 35 years in the industry, the most valuable knowledge I’ve gained is how to assess a client’s specific requirements in order to provide solutions to best suit their needs. We do the right thing by the customer every time. The team are enthusiastic and push the limits of what we can achieve.”

Chris Stacey

An impressive client list includes Moe Meats, Vegco, Australian Meat Group, Rhine Ruhr, Goodman Fielder and Signify Casings. SSAF also partners with Victoria’s premier lamb exporter, the Australian Lamb Company, who have been one of Chris’ loyal clients for over 20 years.

“We’re working on a project for the Australian Lamb Company at the moment, manufacturing 450 metres of conveyor system, which required 17 tonnes of stainless steel. We’ve had to extend into space in the neighbouring factory for the project. It’s a great contract for us and we’ve had a fantastic year,” said Chris.

For more information, visit: ssaustralia.com.au



PLANS BEING TRANSFORMED IN PRODUCTION