

Families' beef with price rise

RENEE VIELLARIS

SKY-HIGH beef prices are taking steak and snags off the menu in many households, prompting fears the great Aussie barbecue is at risk.

Australia's beef cattle herd is at a 20-year low, contributing to higher prices at the checkout. The price of mince has doubled in the past two years to more than \$10/kg and in June eye-fillet steaks were averaging more than \$50/kg. Cheaper cuts like beef cheeks, shanks and even offal have also increased. Butchers say families are abandoning beef.

A Meat and Livestock Australia spokesman said the Eastern Young Cattle Indicator, one of the leading benchmarks for the market, reached a record high of 725.75c/kg of carcass weight in August 2016, up from less than 300c/kg in 2014.

"The recent higher prices are predominantly on the back of very low cattle availability, with the national cattle herd now down at a 20-year low following the drought experienced across many parts of northern Australia over the past couple of years," the MLA spokesman said.

"Parts of western Queensland and NSW have experienced herd declines of up to 40 per cent in just three years.

"The national herd has dropped from a peak of 29.3 million head in 2012-13, to 26.2 million head this year."

About 70 per cent of Australia's beef is exported.

Senator Matt Canavan — who lives in Australia's beef cattle of Rockhampton in Queensland — said he wanted to help mums and dads keep Aussie steak on the barbie.

'Errors made' in ferry crash

THE owner of the Manly Fast Ferry that crashed into a wharf on Thursday — injuring six passengers — says errors were made but "we do not know what they were".

The skipper has passed alcohol and drug tests, and is working with investigators. No fault has been found with the ferry.

Ocean Wave hit Manly Wharf, gouging a hole in the bow. As reported in The Manly Daily, six passengers on the 12.10pm service from Circular Quay had to be given first aid on board after the accident, which threw people from their seats, witnesses said.

IT'S A JUMBOREE

WHY SCOUTING RANKS ARE RAPIDLY RISING



Scouts Luc Fryer, Emma Selwood, Isla Selwood and Kailash Sureshkumar. Picture: Richard Dobson

EXCLUSIVE
ANNABEL HENNESSY

SCOUT numbers across the nation are booming, driven by parents who want their children to be prepared for a life beyond their devices and unit-block homes.

About 1500 Australian children and young adults are joining Scouts each year, with enrolments expected to top more than 90,000 by 2020 — up from 70,000 today.

And females now make up 45 per cent of all Scouts, with groups and activities for people aged 6 to 25.

Inner-city areas such as Alexandria and Kensington

in particular are seeing a spike in new Scout numbers.

Retired NSW Children's Guardian Kerryn Boland, who was newly appointed to Scouts' NSW board, said with more children living in apartments or homes without backyards, parents were looking to Scouts as a way to expose them the outdoors.

"From the parents and children I've spoken with, they're very vocal about their desire to be outside and experiencing that environment," Ms Boland said.

Ms Boland also said Scouts could be a "safe place" for young people to build friendships and crucial life skills,

particularly in the face of rising rates of cyber bullying or domestic violence.

"Scouts is also working with partnering with schools as a way of giving young people an opportunity to experience things they're not getting in the classroom," Ms Boland said.

NSW Scouts youth commissioner Lloyd Nurthern said Scouts was no longer "just about tying knots".

"We have programs focusing on everything from arts and performance to social justice," Mr Nurthern, 21, said.

"It's about building important leadership skills and teaching young people to

engage with their community.

"I meet a lot of young Scouts who live in apartments or (homes) without a backyard and for them they love the opportunity to go camping and explore.

"Also with parents so busy these days, the meetings can help young people build up those social skills and interact with new kids."

All three of Shane Selwood's children are enrolled in Winston Hills Scout group and he is a group leader.

Mr Selwood likes that Scouts gives children an option away from social media.

"It gives them a chance to

interact in an environment that doesn't have the pressure of school," he said. "They're not talking online but talking to other kids in person."

Dorine Fryer enrolled son Luc, 9, in Scouts two years ago because she liked the values it teaches and the opportunity to get outdoors.

"If he was at home he'd want to be playing games on the iPad. At Scouts he gets to experience outdoor activities," she said.

Luc now hopes to one day become a Scout leader.

"I've made lots of friends and learnt lots," he said. "I like building things and you learn how to make everything."

Top tradie's tarps, stars and stripes

CLARISCA DYER

being frustrated by blue tarps fly — being heated — allowing people to



TRIPPY MOOD FIX

MAGIC mushrooms could be available on prescription in Europe to treat depression