

Country footy a winner thanks to Ahrens



RENÉE DE CICCO

GRASS roots footy is the big winner from a generous donation by engineering and construction company Ahrens, which has given 120 field bins to country football clubs in South Australia and Victoria to auction-off as a fundraiser.

Worth \$6950 each, the bins will undergo silent auctions by the football clubs, with all proceeds going straight back to the clubs.

Ahrens managing director Stefan Ahrens said the initiative is a way for the company to give back to its roots – the rural sector – and will act as a way of promoting its new agri division.

The donation also came about because the company is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Victorian operation this year, and saw it as an opportunity to thank rural communities for their ongoing support.

“Through all the support of rural business and farmers, the business really flourished,” he said.

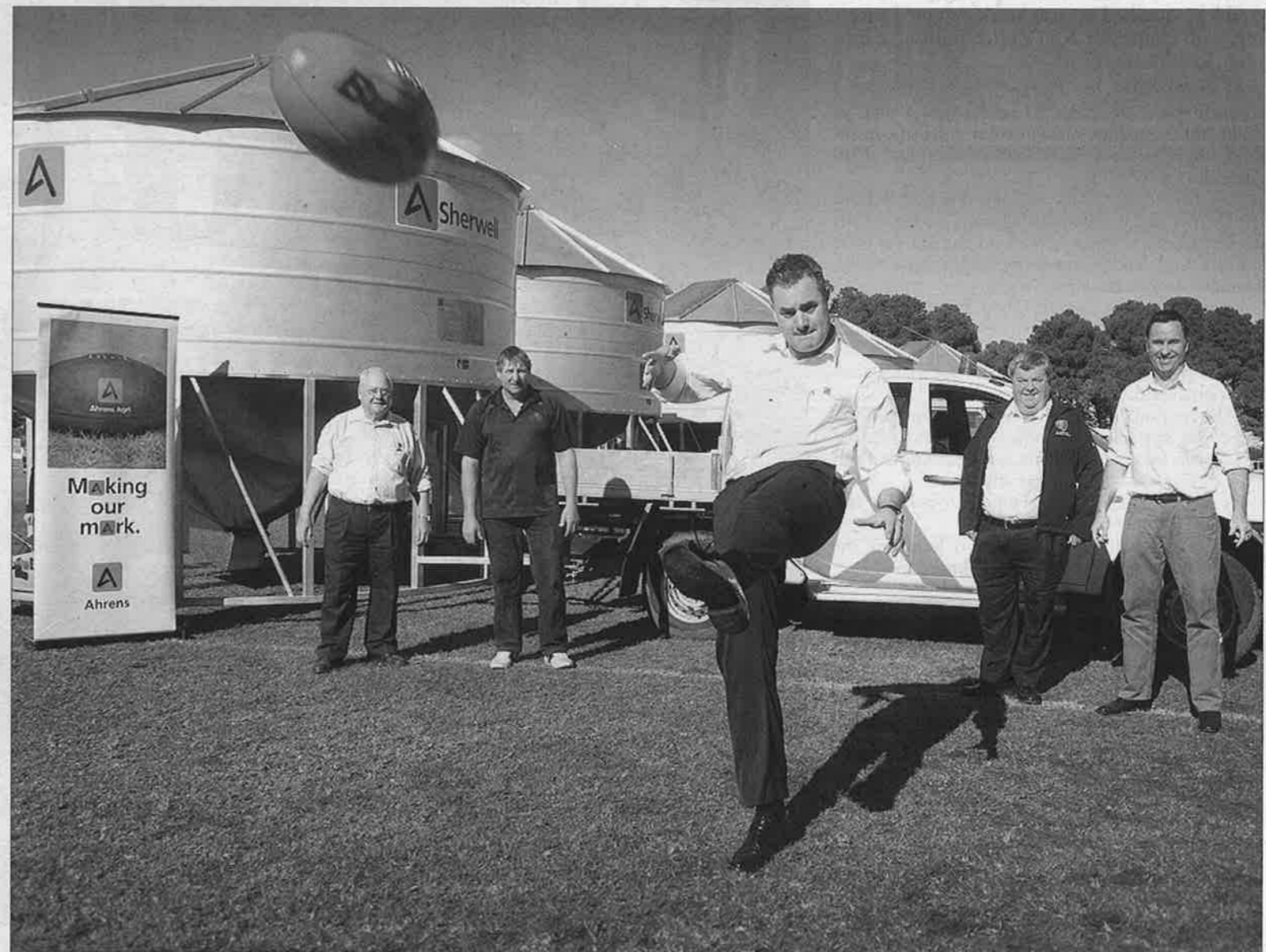
“We felt that we are quite a charitable company as well, and we thought it would be a great gesture to do something for the rural communities that have really built Ahrens.

“We decided we would pick 80 football clubs in SA and Victoria and donate a field bin, and that ended up growing to 100, and then 120.”

About 80 clubs in SA that were invited to take up the offer have now accepted, so Ahrens is in the process of distributing the bins.

SA Community Football Board chairman David Shipway declared the donation as the most significant gesture ever made to SA's country football clubs.

“To have the opportunity to earn



Stefan Ahrens (front), managing director Ahrens, along with, back: Bob Ahrens; John Muster, Freeling Football Club president; David Shipway, SA Community Football Board chairman and Tim Barrett, Ahrens general manager, with the Sherwell field bins being donated by Ahrens to regional football clubs.

this sort of money with no strings attached is so, so important,” he said.

“The old chook raffle is getting harder and harder – a bin auction is something that none of us would have dreamed of.”

Mr. Shipway explained how the fabric and culture of country towns

often revolve around their local football clubs, but many have suffered because of poor agricultural seasons and population slumps.

He thinks the generosity shown by Ahrens will make a significant contribution to the well-being of these clubs.

“Footy has been so good to the country, Ahrens has been so good to the country, this is just a fantastic thing,” Mr. Shipway said.

Freeling Football Club president John Muster acknowledged the contribution the field bin offer will make to local football in general,

and individual clubs.

“With our club, we have been involved with Ahrens before, but for them to do this for certain clubs in the state is certainly a great idea,” he said.

The club plans to include the field bin in the line-up for its goods and services auction on July 24.