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## McDonald to the rescue of Super Butcher

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The Land

CATTLE king Zander McDonald is Australia's new 'super butcher' after helping to save one of the country's largest independent meat retailers from extinction.

Mr McDonald, who heads the pastoral powerhouse MDH Holdings based at Devoncourt near Cloncurry, has joined forces with executives from meat wholesaler the Melrina Group to buy the ailing Super Butcher discount meat chain for an undisclosed sum.

Mr McDonald is the chairman and major shareholder of a new company called Stone Reconstructions. The venture was established by Gary Stone, the principal of Auswide Meat Wholesalers, part of the Melrina Group, for the direct purpose of buying the financially-stressed business.

Spokesman for Stone Reconstructions Otto Wurth said the successful bid was accepted by Super Butcher's administrator on Tuesday and contracts were signed later that night to seal the purchase.

Mr Wurth said the buyout would save 161 jobs and protect the full entitlements of workers including their super.

He said all Super Butcher outlets across Brisbane and the Gold Coast would remain open and the operation would continue to trade as normal.

Mr Wurth said it still remained unclear if all creditors would receive their money, with that decision in the hands of liquidators.

Both Auswide and MDH were part of a long line of creditors, reported to be collectively owed more than \$5 million by Super Butcher's former owners, with an additional \$2 million owed to the Australian Taxation Office as well an undisclosed figure owed to the Commonwealth Bank.

Auswide was the largest of the unsecured creditors, owed \$960,000, while \$170,000 was owed to MDH.

The driving force behind the Super Butcher discount meat concept, Andrew McDonald (no relation to Zander McDonald) and a syndicate of other investors were reportedly the rival bidders for the troubled company, which was placed into administration in May due to its mounting debts.

Zander McDonald said his first priority as chairman of the new company would be to "settle things down" over the next 12 months and return stability to the operation in a bid to win back customer and supplier support.