

Media release
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60 years of shaping the future: Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award launches for 2025

Nestlé Professional celebrates six decades of supporting the next generation of young chefs, offering \$38,000 in prizes.

The opportunity to be crowned the Nestlé Golden Chef of the Year has returned, with entries now open for 2025, marking the competition's monumental 60th anniversary.

Founded in 1965, the Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award (NGCHA) is Australia's longest running culinary competition. It is open to Australian and New Zealand apprentice and junior chefs aged 16 to 24.

The awards program offers a platform for young chefs to gain competitive experience, valuable mentoring, and networking opportunities to elevate their culinary skills. Entry is free and participants have the chance to win their share of \$38,000* in prizes, including an incredible 14-day international culinary trip to Singapore and Thailand, valued at \$12,000 AUD.

Over June and July, more than 150 young chefs are expected to compete in the metro and regional heats across Australia and New Zealand to determine the final 12 competitors.

The Grand Final will be held in September at Sydney's Fine Food Australia, where the remaining chefs will go head-to-head in the final cook-off. The national winner will then be crowned the Nestlé Golden Chef of the Year at the Industry Awards Dinner the following evening.

With an increase in prize pool and sponsors, finalists will also have a chance to receive one of seven prestigious awards, including Most Sustainable Practice, Most Creative Use of Nestlé Products and Best Dessert Dish. In 2025, Nestlé Professional will introduce a new Best Signature Dish Award, celebrating the diverse culinary backgrounds and personal styles of the young chefs.

Celebrating 60 years of culinary talent

For six decades, the Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award has helped shape the careers of more than 8,000 successful foodservice leaders and globally celebrated chefs from Australia and New Zealand.

This year also marks five years of the competition expanding to New Zealand, demonstrating Nestlé Professional's commitment to supporting young culinary talent in the region.

Nestlé Professional General Manager, Kristina Czepl, said: "Sixty years of the Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award represents our unwavering commitment to nurturing young culinary talent and building a sustainable foodservice industry. So many alumni have gone to work in world-renowned restaurants, compete on international culinary stages, and establish their own groundbreaking careers. At Nestlé Professional, we are incredibly proud of what this competition has enabled and, as we enter this new chapter, we're excited to see how this next generation of chefs will help redefine the industry."

Chef and owner of Adelaide's Arkhé restaurant and 2014 Nestlé Golden Chef of the Year finalist, Jake Kellie, said: "These Awards have been a key part of Australia's culinary scene for 60 years which is an incredible feat. This is a competition that provides young chefs with a unique platform to showcase their talent and build lasting relationships within the industry, which is so important. The

Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award was a game-changer for me, offering invaluable experience and industry knowledge that has helped me in my career."

Shaping the foodservice industry

The 60th anniversary of the Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award competition is a testament to the long-standing investment in the future of the foodservice industry from Nestlé Professional, Australian Culinary Foundation (ACF), and NZChefs.

ACF President, Karen Doyle, said: "The Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award is so much more than a competition. It is a platform that nurtures talent, builds confidence, and provides chefs with invaluable industry experience. It has been instrumental in building the confidence and skills of young chefs who have gone on to do great things for the Australian foodservice industry. The Australian Culinary Federation is honoured to support this initiative and celebrate six decades of championing the future foodservice leaders."

Continuing its commitment to nurturing culinary talent, Nestlé Professional will maintain its partnership with The Burnt Chef Project for a second consecutive year, providing chefs with access to wellbeing tools and support.

Last year, Nestlé Professional also announced a new partnership with the National Indigenous Culinary Institute (NICI) to help foster Indigenous culinary talent. NGCHA 2025 will continue to support the collaboration on mentorship, skills development and training opportunities for young Indigenous chefs.

These partnerships align with Nestlé Professional's goal of shaping an inclusive, sustainable, and innovative foodservice industry.

In 2025, the Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award will welcome new sponsors *Robot-Coupe* and *Cargo Crew*, joining partners *Rare Medium* (MLA Foodservice Division), *Koi Knives* and *Solidtechnics* and Nestlé Professional sub-brands, *Buondi*, *Maggi*, *Buitoni* and *Nestlé Docello*.

Entries for the *Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Awards* are now open and will close at 11:59pm AEST on 16 May 2025.

For more information or to register online visit, goldenchefs.com.au.

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Notes to the editor

- In 2020, the competition expanded to New Zealand to further support emerging culinary talent.
- Application is via an online form.
- Regional heats take place from 14 June – 29 July, in the following areas: Auckland, Grafton, Darwin, Adelaide, Christchurch, Perth, Newcastle, Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart, Brisbane, Canberra, Townsville.
- The NSW Regional cook-off will consist of two heats in Newcastle and Grafton. The NSW Regional participant who scores the highest points from the two NSW Regional heats will be invited to participate in the Grand Final.

Prize value*

- There are over \$38,000 AUD in prizes to be won across the regional and grand finals.

- The Golden Chef of the Year winning an all-expenses-paid trip Singapore and Thailand, including \$1,000 spending money and work experience at a renowned restaurant, valued at \$12,000AUD.

About Nestlé Professional

[Nestlé Professional](#) offers a comprehensive range of food and beverage solutions designed to meet the diverse needs of food service businesses. We proudly offer a portfolio of trusted brands and tailored solutions, including *Nescafé*, *Maggi*, *Buitoni*, and *We Proudly Serve Starbucks*. Our dedicated team of chefs, baristas, and nutritionists works closely with food service operators to ensure their success.

About the Australian Culinary Federation (ACF)

[The ACF](#) is the peak industry organisation representing professional chefs, cooks, young chefs, apprentices, and culinary students across Australia. Committed to developing professional skills and industry knowledge, the award partnership extends to over two decades.

About NZ Chefs

[NZChefs](#) has extensive involvement in the New Zealand foodservice industry and is dedicated to the continuing education and advancement of chefs through industry programs and culinary competitions.

About The Burnt Chef Project

[The Burnt Chef Project](#) is a globally recognised not-for-profit social enterprise, committed to making the hospitality profession healthier and more sustainable by focusing on placing people's wellbeing first. Founded in 2019 in the United Kingdom, The Burnt Chef Project fundraises and delivers market-leading wellbeing courses to create positive change in the hospitality industry and challenge the stigma that still surrounds mental health.

About National Indigenous Culinary Institute (NICI)

Founded in 2012 by Australia's leading chefs and restaurateurs, the National Indigenous Culinary Institute (NICI) was created to address the lack of Indigenous representation in the industry through offering pathways for chefs to gain employment in the best restaurants in the country.

A 'Skills for Success' training program was created by chefs, including Neil Perry, Michael McMahon, Matt Moran, Luke Mangan and Guillaume Brahimi, to provide apprenticeship opportunities in their restaurants. From here, NICI began delivering programs in Sydney and, over the past 12 years, experienced significant growth with programs now also operational across regional NSW, Melbourne, and Queensland. For more information about NICI and its training programs, visit: nici.org.au