

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL CHEFS

Annual General Meeting - 30 October, 2017

Report: Portfolio - Education
By: Ernst Schwab

In 2015, when taking on the portfolio liaising with the Vocational Education and Training sector (VET), I was looking forward to work closely within a field I have been employed for over 40 years.

Being aware of the decline of training standards for a number of years, the response from Chef Instructors/Trainers/Teachers to join the AITC has been just as poor. After numerous approaches to RTO's, specifically TAFE Institutes, very few professional chef trainers have joined the AITC. Perhaps, it is a reflection of the attitudes towards the Culinary training sector by TAFE Institutes, perpetrating a feeling by staff of "not seeing a light at the end of the tunnel".

Here are some of the issues the VET/Culinary sector is dealing with:

- Budget cuts. Cuts to training budgets over many years, even though "class material" costs are rising each year.
- TAFE Institutes finding ways to shorten practical class hours, or, replacing them with "workplace assessment", often a code for "tick-an-flick".
- Downgrading the political influence of industry organisations over the past 10 – 15 years, i.e. AHA, RCA and ACF.

Following the disappointing responses in 2016 –

- George Hill and I attended a Victorian Statewide TAFE Hospitality Network meeting. Enquiries from two attendees.
- Handing out AITC pamphlets to a large number of Chef Instructors at FINE FOODS Australia Exhibition. Two new members.
- A number of other attempts to access TAFE staff. Very few responses.

Change of approach in 2017 –

- Direct mail, coinciding with mail out of Handbook.
- Requesting 'face to face' meeting with Australian Defence Force Cooks trainers at Holmesglen TAFE. ADF trainers are qualified chefs in the Air Force, Navy and Army.
- Influence: AITC accepted by SkillsIQ (a Government advisory body on training needs)

Summary:

1. AITC membership of Culinary Educators is very important. The promotion of the difference between the professionally skilled and 'others' should be emphasized in the classroom.
2. A more vigorous approach by the AITC to require TAFE Institute culinary trainers to become members.