Whilst retired and "old school" I am delighted to be able to make a small contribution to a group of young professional chefs who have initiated a process that aims to acknowledges those who are worthy of being called a "professional chef".

This initiative is not government endorsed. However, as "chef" is not a protected title in Australia, unfortunately anyone can claim to be a chef without the necessary skills, attitudes, knowledge, or experience or have agreed to adhere to standards and codes of conduct.

TechnicalChef is the only opportunity currently available to those who operate at the professional level and eligible, to self-protected themselves in a consensus based and voluntary membership of an association: The "Australian Institute of TechnicalChefs".
*I am involved because it is time to create a **Chartered Professional Chef**; represented by a professional chef who has passed the benchmarks required to be inducted into the Institute of TechnicalChefs, licensed to use a TChef logo and for legitimacy identified on the Institutes directory / webpage. George Hill*

http://www.technicalchef.com

Why do professional chefs need TechnicalChef in Australia?

"TechnicalChef" is an Australia wide association that credentials chefs at the professional level. The growing membership may be viewed on the directory of technicalchef.com, (not including a number of applicants currently under review).

Why: There is a need for professional accreditation, which is more than a cookery qualification or membership of a social club.

A professional describes an individual who has proved they are trained, adheres to ethical standards, agrees to codes of conduct, are accepted by the public as having specialist knowledge and skills and constantly continue strive to improve themselves in their profession.

The principle strategy professionals use to network in a profession is to join a professional association, and there many excellent professional chefs' associations across Australia that chefs join to network.

However, the plain truth is that existing chefs' associations do not offer all the foundations required to be a legitimate network for a professional accreditation body.

In reality, existing chefs' associations are structured as social clubs, as they principally cater for the wage earning professional, accept membership for life, and do not offer or enforce all the principles required to be a professional association for a profession. The time has come for an accreditation organization in Australia to go the next level and offer membership of a profession rather than membership as a professional.

Why: **It is necessary for the professional chef be to be branded.**

The vocation needs to rid itself of the ambiguity that currently exists and the public should have the right to easily distinguish a genuine qualified chef by a simple logo.

Claims are regularly made to be a chef often by people with no commercial qualifications, or hold certificates that have insufficient rigor to develop into a competent cook, or incorrectly often, chefs who declare to a professional, while not keeping pace in an ever-changing industry.

To maintain the integrity of the professional kitchen, there is a mandate to introduce a common indicator that educates the public to understand the term chef has two levels of capability: The Chef and the Professional Chef.

Additionally, professionals need a simple classification to show their proven attributes of: authenticity, respectability and creditability.

Why: *It is time for professional chefs to create a new identity.*

There is a hug onal because they earn a wage; and a professional who is employed in a profession that is governed by standards of behavior, codes of practice, and has advanced expertise.

Currently being a chef in Australia is primarily defined as a wage earning professional.

However, there is a smaller group who have earned professional status founded on skills, attitude, inspirational leadership, managerial competencies and advanced culinary. competence

The commercial kitchen requires two categories of chefs: the semi-skilled and the expert, with both needing each other.

Evolution has driven the two very different levels to use the same title, causing a muddling of the definition and role description of a fully mature professional chef, who now has inherited an identity crisis.

Due to ambiguous nature of the contemporary title chef, it is time for professional chefs to realign their identity to be seen as a professional working in a profession, not only as a professional working for a wage.

Why: It is long overdue to start the process to obtain a "credential to practice" at professional levels.

In the current commercial cookery free market, no association, nor government agency is accepting responsibility to set compulsory graded skills and knowledge, set standards of conduct, provide support for continuous development or deal with serious misdemeanors.

The only mechanism available to existing practitioners is to create an industry driven classification that hopefully in "the passing of time" will prove the legislative need to adopt a process that requires more than an online food handler certificate to be called a professional chef.

The road to legally credentialing a professional chef is almost impossible in the current environment where the range of skills required ranges from making sandwiches in a café, being employed in the majority of family style eating houses, or engaged in diminishing small top end fine dining restaurant, all further complicated by cultural influences and individualism.

However, there is no doubt, if ever a license to practice as a professional chef is achieved, it will be a gradual, time intensive process that will encounter opposition and hurdles on the way.

Industrial accreditation at the professional level in other disciplines required decades of endeavor to achieve the mission, but the process to include commercial cookery in this quest must start somewhere, and must be started by professional chefs now.

WHY: Reality demonstrates that no existing association is capable to deliver all the professional needs of chefs, in such a multi-complex industry, that has so much individuality and is so geographically spread.

Sixty years of chef's association history across Australia, has demonstrated a reality that it is very unlikely there will ever be a "one chef's organisation", structured to be able to deliver every condition to be an association, as well as administer a formal industry credential as a profession chef.

As far back as the nineteen sixties the Catering Institute of Australia had in most Australian states a small chapter of chefs. Numbers built up to the mid-nineteen eighties, when state driven associations operated independently and Victoria and New South Wales participation dominated across Australia.

Australia now has significantly less chefs participating in industry associations than in 1983 when Victoria alone with well over 600 more members in the "Australasian Guild of Professional Cooks" with probably more than currently are members of all combined chefs' associations across all Australia.

And the Professional Chefs Association in New South Wales, I understand at that time was larger than Victoria.

The attempt to amalgamate chefs' associations into one federation across Australia has not affectively stimulated a "one association for all" because chefs still gradually moved their allegiance to many other associations.

We can currently identify at least nine not- for - profit associations that have chefs as members, not including the eight ACF state associations.

Please do not get me wrong, I am not against in anyway the existing association, quiet the reverse, Chefs associations provide a vital, specialised, unique, and localized service to their members and there is additionally, a need to cater for the wage only chef.

All I am suggesting is that no single association in Australia is able to cater for the needs for all chefs in this vast complex continent, therefore the supply of professional services needs to be split into specialist segments.

The reality of digital networking through social media, a phenomena that has diverted chefs from joining associations   the reality that limited numbers of professional chefs will only join an associations when it suits their immediate needs, the truth that most chefs do not belong to any association and the geographical size of Australia, impedes a one chefs association for all chefs.

These wake-up calls indicate the only remaining opportunity for chefs to have a common bond is an unbiased accreditation system that encourages chefs to belong to a cohesive group irrespective of their allegiance, neutrality, or location, while still encouraging them to belong to whichever association that supplies their needs.

There will be huge long-and short-term gains for all chefs from recognizing that all professionals need a common connection.

Why: It is now or never to offer professionals the opportunity to agree to one umbrella using a common denominator as a unified identity.

For a person to develop into a commercial competent professional chef, they require four attributes: Skills, Attitude, Knowledge, and Experience. (*The Sake Philosophy*).

To develop these characteristics, a person needs to undergo two learning curves. An initial cookery qualification combined with basic practice in a commercial kitchen and a second learning curve as an "intern" in various commercial operations.

This internship used to be identified as a "commis" who subsequently matured into a professional chef. The commis position has all but nearly died out, and anyone with basic cookery skills is now considered a chef.

What then replaces the time proven process that branded a skilled mature chef?   I advocate that accreditation with The Australian Institute of TechnicalChefs is the only way forward for chefs to defend their unique occupation and show they have successfully completed their internship under **one umbrella of national consciousness**.

Why: **There is a need, and how to bring back control of the destiny of a chef especially with the primary input of experienced professional chefs.**

Professional chefs need to oppose the current practice where commercially motivated businesses, who, notwithstanding are employers, are excessively influencing the content and nature of commercial cookery training.

Especially when some decision makers are not trained chefs, additionally, appear to focus on their specific sector and disregard the need to develop mobile cooks for large and small properties.

Employers also have vested interests to lower the basic skills and knowledge required of a chef, because, it's in their financial interest to reduce skills that ensure staff are not commercially mobile.

Additionally, semi-skilled staff are less remunerated.

There is substantial reason to suggest that employers should pay directly for training for they their unique business operations, or accept the standard role model that is funded and delivered by government. A model that should only be designed and driven by existing trained professional chefs.

The commercial cookery industry has had undue employer influence on formal training for decades without any measurable positive result; quiet the reverse, notwithstanding promises by employer groups and substantial funding for various programs over decades; the industry still suffers from a growing shortage of skilled professional chefs.

Further investigation:

- ➤ Further details
- ➤ Online application
- ➤ Australia wide governance
- ➤ Directory of members
- ➤ Resources

htttp://www.technicalchef.com

Ends