



## **Tabled for discussion and debate. George Hill July 2022**

**Synopsis:** This paper:

1. Provides a brief analysis to show how the shift in the English language has redefined the title “Professional Chef”
2. Provides the evidence that commercial chefs have split into two groups
3. Demonstrates why “Professional Chef” is not adequate to define a legitimate professional in contemporary kitchen.
4. Describes the components required to be either a ‘Professional Chef’ or a ‘Chartered Professional Chef’.
5. Why chefs need to be Chartered.

### **Definitions used in this discussion paper:**

- Mindset (Attitude) - is used in the context of how a chef thinks, conducts, behaves in a positive principled way when at work.
- Trait (Attribute) is used in the context of there are four necessary attributes in a Professional Chef being: Skills, Attitude, Knowledge, and Experience.
- Chartered is used in the context of a chef who is acknowledged by an Industry Chef’s organisation (upon application for membership) as a Chartered Professional Chef.

### **It starts with my opinion:**

- Most food services across Australia in hotels, restaurants, clubs, pubs, bistro, (including commercial, non-commercial, institutional, and fast foodservices) are staffed by chefs (untrained, semi trained or formally trained) who offer great, reliable meal experiences for their target market and price point.
- The title Professional Chef as a classical definition was applied to a culinary skilled professional with supervisory responsibilities in a commercial kitchen, this fundamentally was a:
  - Chef de partie responsible for a commis and trainee chefs.
  - Sous-chef responsible for chef de parties.
  - Chef de cuisine responsible for the whole brigade.

**Evolution of foodservice sectors, driven by modernisation, downsizing, eating habits, diet, socialisation, marketing, culture, and particularly changes to English language has adapted the term chef to reflect these changes and has established two distinct groups of chefs who now staff modern kitchens.**

- 1. Chefs who are defined as a Professional Chef because they earn a salary.
- 2. Chefs who are defined by their professional traits and mindset while earning a salary.

**Evidence of change of “chef” defined by salary**

- **In the English language dictionary, “professional” is defined as anyone who earns a salary as one's main paid occupation.**
- There is a substantial number of commercial and non-commercial kitchens staffed by self-taught, semi trained or inward-looking chefs who are earning a salary.
- The contemporary public perception is, that anyone engaged to prepare food in commercial, non-commercial, institutional, or other foodservices is a Chef.

**Consequently it could be seen that:**

- Anyone who earns a salary in commercial food preparation is defined as a chef and is entitled to claim to be a “Professional Chef”.
- Accordingly, there is a group of chefs defined by salary and **understood by the community to be a Professional Chef.**
- Therefore, the contemporary ‘Professional Chef’ now includes all chefs who are:
  - Not trained - Semi-skilled - In training – or on the frontline / on the pans
  - May have supervisory duties – manager of their kitchen - or are owners or owner/operators
  - May succeed in other spheres of culinary involvement such as: celebrity, demonstrators, personal chef, etc

**Professional Chefs defined by salary are most likely to have the following profile.**

- Primarily in manual employment, on the frontline to prepare and serve food.
- The primary goal is to earn money.
- They may not be concerned about developing a successful culinary career.

- They may not agree to subscribe to common rules in professional behaviour or development of a Professional
- They are not willing to demonstrate they follow culinary industry standards or principles.

#### Evidence of change of “chef” defined by mindset and traits:

- In the English language dictionary, “professional” is also defined as an expert blended with a professional mindset (Also referred as one’s attitude) when engaged in one's main paid occupation.
- Professional Chefs by traits must **have four** proven attributes (*Attributes*): Skills - Attitude - Knowledge - and Experience.
- None of these four traits can be self-assessed or self-proclaimed and must be varified independently and unambiguously by an industry professional organisation.

#### Evidence of change of chef defined by Traits:

- There are numerous commercial and non-commercial kitchens staffed by chefs who are expertly trained, commercially experienced, and have developed a professional mindset.

#### Consequently:

- Anyone who earns a salary in commercial food preparation with evidence of skills knowledge and experience (traits/*attributes*) and has **developed a professional mindset** is also entitled to claim to be a Professional Chef.
- This shows how industry evolution has amalgamate the title Professional Chef.
  - One defined as a **professional by salary**, sits alongside a group of chefs who are defined as a **Professional Chef by traits**.
- Both groups unfortunately have the same title, reputation, occupational interpretation of the role of a professional chef in the supply chain, and society.

#### Professional Chef defined by Traits/Attributes are most likely to have the following profile.

- Employed in food preparation and service, more often with additional degrees of administrative responsibilities.
- Their professional status is defined on formal education, training experience and developed professional attitudes.
- They are dedicated to self-improve and are upward mobile.
- They have developed superior skills and a professional mindset.
- They agree to subscribe to common rules in professional behaviour created by peers.

**Both groups are noble endeavours.**

- There is nothing wrong or inferior in being a manually focused group defined as a Professional Chef by salary.
- Both chefs by salary and chefs by traits need the services of each other to deliver a successful food service.

**In the public arena there is no distinction between the two because, the traits: competence, skills, ethics, mindset, knowledge, or experience of a chef does not concern them. Their primary considerations mainly comprise of the perception of:**

- Quality delivered.
- Perceived value.
- The environment of the meal experience.

**Professional Chefs by mindset and/or trait are not elitist; however, need to be considered as a separate entity from Professional Chef by salary for the following reasons.**

- The current situation is socially and industrially confusing and needs to be identified as two separate divisions.
- Being identified as a Professional Chef does not fully describe the true nature of a matured professional culinary expert.
- The title “Professional Chef” is entrenched in conversational English and it’s not possible to change colloquialisms or conversational English.
- The two divisions need to be separate to clearly define the difference between chefs who just prepare food to earn a salary from those who have a professional mindset and traits, underpinned by education-based competence and people skills and responsibilities as this will:
  - Identify professionals who are more serious about their role and responsibilities in society
  - Provide a mechanism to be appropriately acknowledged by peers
  - Educate the community that there are different types of “Professional Chefs”

**Chefs should be able to, and do make a personal choice to be:**

- Acknowledged as a Professional Chef by their capacity to earn a salary.
  - **Or choose to be:**
- Acknowledged as a Professional Chef by their mindset and traits.

### **To be acknowledged as a Professional Chef by salary**

- The chef needs have at **least one trait**: Skills – Professional Attitude- Knowledge or Experience.
- However, when they are not able to externally prove they have all four traits it demonstrates they are not a Professional Chef by traits.

### **To be acknowledged as a Chef by traits/mindset:**

- Must **have all four proven traits**: Skills - Attitude - Knowledge - and Experience
  1. Skills: An expert who is competent, developed during training and practice.
  2. Knowledge: Obtained during and post formal culinary education
  3. Experience: A Chef who has risen during the ranks to understand the development stages in their career
  4. Attitude/Mindset: A chef who displays high standards of ethics, and behaviour, in their duties that emulated from the influence of a mentor and developed maturity.

### **Attitude is the most revealing trait that sets apart Professional Chef by trait from Professional Chef by salary:**

- Chefs who have documented evidence of skills, knowledge and experience and claim to have a professional mature attitude need to be recognised, and they deserve to be identified as a **Chartered Professional Chef**.

### **However, by not willing to be involved in being chartered is:**

- In and of itself evidence that they have not reached the full professional understanding required for a professional mindset.
- They let their colleagues and the trade/profession down.
- They need to realise only a small circle of local colleagues know and acknowledge their real status.
- By association they choose to sit in the same group with all other chefs identified as a chef by salary.

### **To be acknowledged as a Professional Chef by traits, one must be chartered by an industry chef's organisation.**

- The Australian Institute of TechnicalChefs is the only organisation in Australia that specialises in Chartering Chefs by their traits.

- The Institute identifies chartered chefs by the title “Technical Chef “or colloquially named “TChefs”.
- This purposely separates the contemporary chef into the two groups, Professional Chef by Salary, and Professional Chef by traits.

**This is purpose and mission of The Australian Institute of TechnicalChefs (AITC) is to verify a chef has the four professional traits:**

1. They are effectively trained.
2. They are culinary educated.
3. Have the mindset that is inherent in a professional career.
4. They have the experiences that allows seamless trade mobility, and ready to be employed in a responsible supervisory role that is more than just preparing food.

**The method used to protect Chartered Professional Chefs is by the authorised use of a copyrighted TChef logo.**

- It is also possible that the logo may be used inappropriately, however
- The user should / could face copyright action
- There is an additional safety guard with an internet directory controlled by the Institute that verifies the current legitimacy of the Chartered Professional Chef outside the access of individuals.

**Why did AITC originate.**

- In 2015 a small group of Professional Chefs became aware of a growing decline in industrial professionalism and there was a growing need to protect the industry. One and the same time, they realised the next evolution in the Australian industry was to introduce a Chartered Status that legitimised professional chefs and introduced a process to demonstrate how they conduct themselves and use their skills and knowledge in commercial cookery.

**Next time you meet a Professional Chef**

- Ask yourself are they a Professional Chef or a **Chartered Professional Chef**.
- And any chef who believes themselves to believe to be a professional, **have a duty to apply to be chartered to legitimise the fact.**