



MEDIA RELEASE

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Training boosts cooking skills for aged care sector

TAFE SA and the Maggie Beer Foundation are working together to lift skills and meal quality in aged care

Workers in aged care kitchens across the state have expanded their skills and gained new qualifications through a bespoke program run in partnership by TAFE SA and the Maggie Beer Foundation.

The 'Professionalising Skills for Good Food in Aged Care' project aims to raise the quality of food served in aged care homes by focusing on the skills of people working in the kitchens.

As part of the project, 11 participants from aged care and hospital kitchens have achieved a Certificate II in Cookery through a combination of recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessments and skills gap training at TAFE SA.

The bespoke program has included workplace visits, online study and on-campus training, and the participants - from Mt Gambier, Barossa Valley, Yorke Peninsula, Mid North and metropolitan Adelaide - have also contributed to important research into the training needs of the sector.

TAFE SA Chief Executive Adam Kilvert says the 'Professionalising Skills for Good Food in Aged Care' project is an important step towards lifting the number of skilled chefs and cooks available to work in the aged care sector.

"Industry feedback tells us that there is a lack of suitably qualified people to work in aged care kitchens, especially in parts of regional South Australia," Mr Kilvert says.

"By understanding the unique demands of cooking in an aged care setting, we can identify training needs and work towards solutions that will enhance skills and ultimately improve food quality and desirability.

"The project has been well supported by aged care providers, and we've welcomed the opportunity to work with the Maggie Beer Foundation which has more than 10 years of experience in this area."

Jane Mussared, CEO Maggie Beer Foundation: "The Maggie Beer Foundation was proud to collaborate with TAFE SA on this project, delivering insights that are helping to shape the future national curriculum for aged care cooks and chefs.

"We applaud these 11 aged care kitchen professionals for stepping forward — they are leading a movement to elevate food and dining experiences for older Australians in care."

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The 'Professionalising Skills for Good Food in Aged Care' project, funded through the State Government's Skill Shortage Solutions program, has identified the specific skillset needed for workers in aged care and hospital kitchens, analysed current skill levels and highlighted gaps where additional training could assist.

The project has included a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) conducted by TAFE SA with engagement from aged care providers, higher education researchers, and allied health professionals, and supported by insights from the Maggie Beer Foundation.

The bespoke training program provided current employees the chance to have their skills formally recognised within existing qualifications. Participating employers include Maitland Hospital, Snowtown Hospital, Clare Hospital, Orroroo Hospital, Millicent and District Hospital, Boandik Lodge – Mount Gambier, Helping Hand – Golden Grove and Oakden Green – Oakden.

The results of the project will be used to identify future training opportunities for the sector within existing qualifications and through short courses or skillsets.

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