

MEDIA RELEASE

June 25, 2014

Ref: MRCC3/14



Kids ready to tackle kitchens

ABOUT 200 budding young chefs are sharpening their knives and brushing up on their blind baking ahead of this year's Murray River Culinary Challenge.

The ninth annual event began this month with Year 10-12 hospitality students from 24 schools in five regions competing in three-tier cook-offs.

They will be judged by industry professionals, including guest chefs, and teachers of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate in Hospitality.

The two highest-scoring students at each school will compete as a team at one of the five regional finals. Regional winners will contest the Grand Final, to be held at Galen College, Wangaratta, on September 15.

An invitational event, the challenge is open to VET Certificate in Hospitality students in the Echuca, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Wangaratta and Wodonga regions.

Murray Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network senior project officer Sue Grumley said the tasks in the challenge reflected the standards and conditions of the Regional World Skills competition event.

Ms Grumley said students would be assessed by judges, many of them executive chefs and industry professionals.

They will critique the students during the competition and mark them on areas such as: mise en place, bench work, workflow and management, methods and principles of cookery and creative presentation.

The menus focus on fresh regional produce and progressively become more complex with each level of competition.

Murray Downs Golf and Country Club executive chef Rebecca Hart, who was a judge last year, said she was always impressed by the skill level of students and the food they produced.

"The challenge is a great insight into our industry for any students thinking of becoming a chef," she said. "Competing definitely opens doors to becoming an apprentice."

The challenge was established in 2006 to forge links between schools, students and the hospitality and tourism industries, lift the profile of VET in schools, promote regions along the Murray River and showcase local produce.

"It has raised the bar in hospitality training in all the schools involved," Ms Grumley said.

"Students have been given the opportunity to enhance the skills acquired in their vocational training by working alongside experienced chefs. The hospitality industry has been exposed to the talents and skills levels of these young people, who they now regard as a 'pool' of future chefs."

Last year's challenge was won by Rochester Secondary College, with the St Mary MacKillop College team from Swan Hill finishing runners up.

(Ends)

MEDIA: For further details phone Sue Grumley on (03) 5033 2017.

Photo Caption: St Mary MacKillop College students Lisa Bartalotta (left) and Ella Marmottan hard at work during last year's Regional Final at Swan Hill.

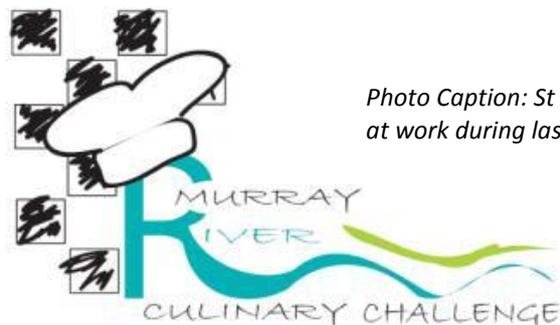


Photo opportunities (others yet to be confirmed)

School competitions will be held at:

Galen College, Wangaratta, June 26
St Mary's of the Angels, Nathalia, July 16
Bendigo TAFE, July 16
Tallangatta Secondary College, July 16
St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill, July 17
Mansfield Secondary College, July 18
Notre Dame College, Shepparton, July 18
Bright P-12 College, July 22
Bendigo TAFE, July 23

The Grand Final will be held at:

Galen College, Wangaratta, on September 15, 2014.

Schools by region:

Echuca – Contact Jacq Campbell 0409 177353, Campaspe Cohuna LLEN (03) 5482 6055

Echuca College
Rochester Secondary College
St Joseph's College
Kyabram P-12
Rushworth P-12

Swan Hill – Contact Sue Grumley 0408 579199, Murray Mallee LLEN (03) 5033 2017

St Mary MacKillop College
Swan Hill College

Shepparton – Contact Kristen Elliott 0458 277888, Goulburn Murray LLEN (03) 5831 5198

Nathalia Secondary College
Numurkah Secondary College
Cobram Secondary College
Shepparton Christian College
Wanganui Park SC
Mooroopna SC
Shepparton High School
McGuire College
Notre Dame College
St Mary's of the Angels, Nathalia

Wangaratta – Contact Shane Crispin 0400 904106, NE Tracks LLEN (03) 5762 7777

Mansfield Secondary College
Galen College
Wangaratta High School

Wodonga – Contact Angela Pesavento 0419 442592, North East LLEN (02) 6056 0996

Catholic College, Wodonga
Tallangatta College
Bright P-12 College