

1 December, 2025 – Immediate Release

Chef Dale Lyman Awarded the Sidney Taylor Memorial Black Hat by the Australian Culinary Federation

The Australian Culinary Federation Victoria has announced Chef Dale Lyman as the recipient of this year's Sidney Taylor Memorial Black Hat.

The award was presented at a collaborative Christmas Cocktail event held at Le Méridien Melbourne, delivered in partnership with Les Toques Blanches Victoria, the Asian Chef Club, Chaîne des Rôtisseurs and the Australian Institute of Technical Chefs. The Black Hat is one of the most respected honours in the Australian foodservice profession. Established in 1990 by Aelfryn Bailey, it recognises not cooking skill alone, but a chef's long-term contribution to the advancement, ethics and professional standards of Australian cookery. Recipients must demonstrate leadership, professionalism, enthusiasm, good nature, conscientiousness and a minimum of ten years of meaningful industry contribution.

About Chef Dale Lyman

Dale is a respected and highly skilled chef whose philosophy is grounded in passion, respect and a deep appreciation for the food industry.

Raised in a family where food, tradition and creativity were ever-present – from a well-travelled father, a Country Women's Association Nanna, a saddler grandfather and a supportive mother – Dale's path towards the kitchen began early.

"I love what I do, and I do what I love," he says, a motto that has shaped his entire career.

Whether cooking for charity, teaching young chefs or developing recipes, Dale's approach is consistent: share knowledge, honour tradition and respect the people and ingredients that bring food to life.

His contribution reaches far beyond the pass, having mentored emerging chefs, supported community initiatives and upheld the values that strengthen the Australian foodservice industry year after year.

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Quotes

Jacqueline Bates

Victorian President, Australian Culinary Federation

“Dale represents everything the Black Hat stands for – professionalism, generosity, and a genuine commitment to our community. His leadership and support of young chefs have shaped the culture of our industry in Victoria. Recognising him with the Black Hat is both fitting and well-earned.”

Karen Doyle

National President, Australian Culinary Federation

“Dale’s contribution to Australian foodservice has been long-standing and meaningful. His integrity, work ethic, and willingness to share knowledge embody the true purpose of the Sidney Taylor Memorial Black Hat. This award acknowledges not just his skill in the kitchen, but his service to the profession.”

Historical Context of the Sidney Taylor Memorial Black Hat

The Sidney Taylor Memorial Black Hat is one of the most respected honours in Australia’s professional cookery community. Its origins trace back to the traditions of English Master Cooks, where the black skullcap was reserved for cooks of the highest standing. In 1980, this tradition was adopted in Australia, becoming the Black Hat we recognise today.

The award is not about cooking skill alone. It acknowledges a chef’s contribution to the profession – leadership, ethics, enthusiasm, and service to the development of Australian cookery. Awardees earn the right to wear the traditional Black Hat, receive Honourary Life Membership, and have their name recorded in perpetuity.

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Image Chef Dale Lyman wearing the Black Hat

