



Australia's Next Generation of Culinary Talent Shines at the 2026 ACF National Apprentice Competition

Australian Culinary Federation celebrates the outstanding achievements of apprentices and culinary students from across Australia

The **Australian Culinary Federation (ACF)** is proud to announce the winners and medal recipients of the **2026 ACF National Apprentice Competition**, celebrating the skill, dedication and emerging talent of Australia's next generation of chefs.

Competitors representing **Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales/ACT, Queensland and Tasmania** came together to demonstrate their culinary skills under competition conditions.

From first-year apprentices taking an important early step in their careers through to final-year apprentices preparing to enter the industry as qualified chefs, the standard of competition demonstrated the depth of talent developing across Australia.



1st Year Apprentice Chef



CHAMPION – Fiona Heyink | Western Australia Silver Medal

Fiona Heyink delivered an exceptional performance to be named the **2026 1st Year Apprentice Chef Winner**.

Medal Results

WA – Fiona Heyink | Silver

SA – Anna Timpano | Silver

QLD – Isabelle Fawcett | Silver

TAS – Harry Stephens | Silver

Congratulations to all four competitors on an impressive achievement so early in their culinary careers.

2nd Year Apprentice Chef

 **CHAMPION – Bray Royle | Tasmania Silver Medal**

Bray Royle represented Tasmania with distinction to take out the title of **2026 2nd Year Apprentice Chef Winner**.

Medal Results

WA – Sienna Simms | Bronze

SA – Amira Simpson | Silver

VIC – Sam Castrechini | Silver

NSW/ACT – Isabella Pinzon | Silver

TAS – Bray Royle | Silver

The competition showcased another talented group of young chefs continuing to build their technical ability, confidence and professional skills.

Culinary Student

 **CHAMPION – Zetong Zhang | Victoria Gold Medal**

Victoria's **Zetong Zhang** produced a Gold Medal performance to be crowned the **2026 Culinary Student Winner**.

Medal Results

WA – Dian Pertiwi | Merit

SA – Joan Njuguna | Silver

VIC – Zetong Zhang | Gold

Congratulations to our culinary students for demonstrating the talent emerging through Australia's culinary education and training sector.

Final Year Apprentice Chef

CHAMPION & 2026 ACF CHAMPION APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

 **Kara Oxley | Victoria Gold Medal**

The Final Year Apprentice category brought together an outstanding field of competitors from across Australia.

Victoria's **Kara Oxley** delivered a Gold Medal performance to win the Final Year category and claim the prestigious title of:

Medal Results**WA – Alexis Mifsud** | Silver**SA – Bayden Mackereth** | Silver**VIC – Kara Oxley** | Gold**NSW/ACT – Eric Kilborn** | Bronze**QLD – Caleb Talbot** | Silver**TAS – Justin Woodward** | Silver

Kara's achievement is an outstanding milestone in her developing culinary career and recognises the skill, professionalism and commitment required to succeed at a national level.

Photographs <https://we.tl/a-Ngv9BhfL7QVZNWZ7>



For further information please contact

Deb Foreman office@austculinary.com.au