

**\*MEDIA RELEASE\***

**For Immediate Release**

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## **VALUABLE EXPERIENCE FOR BUDDING IPSWICH CHEF**

Recently five cookery students from TAFE Queensland South West battled it out for a chance to compete at the TAFE Queensland Iron Chef Cooking Competition final, and win an all-expenses-paid work experience trip to Japan.

South West Regional Finals Coordinator Chef Jason Ford (from TAFE Queensland South West), explained that French Iron Chef Hiroyuki Sakai announced the competition in April during a live cooking demonstration in Brisbane.

“This competition will provide two students with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work at one of Chef Sakai’s restaurants for a week, and from the South West region we are able to send two finalists,” said Chef Ford.

“We are excited to announce that after a gruelling day of competition, Kylie Leask from Kingaroy and Jemaima Gaspar from Toowoomba will represent the South West region.

“Each student had to create three dishes containing Chef Sakai’s special ingredient, coconut, including a vegetarian entrée, chicken based main, and dessert using gelatin.

“We also invited two representatives from industry to judge their dishes, provide commentary and feedback, and help prepare the students for the final competition.”

Experienced chefs Chris Clark and Rob Balderson said that they were both excited and felt privileged to be part of the day and assist in judging because it was a chance to see part of their industry that is not always visible or appreciated.

“This type of competition is very intense for the level these students are at, but they handled the pressure very well which is a credit to their teachers,” said Chef Balderson from Pizza & Pie Co.

“It was such a tight competition. I thought there would be a stand out from the beginning but it twisted and changed all day, so congratulations must go to not just the winners but all of the student competitors.”

“These students could very well be working for me one day, or I could be working for them.”

Ipswich local Nathan Hine, who works at Metro Hotel Ipswich International, was lucky enough to compete on the day and gain experience, despite not progressing to the final.

“During the competition I wish I had been a bit more organised, but it was a great experience,” said Nathan.

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“For the regional finals I cooked coconut tomkhagia as an entrée, chicken coulard with coconut risotto as my main, and for dessert a chocolate coconut ganache swiss roll, with coconut mousse, poached apples and a red wine reduction sauce.

“To get the judges’ feedback on my dishes will help me learn, and develop my skills further.”

A special thanks must go to Metro Hotel Ipswich International for supporting Nathan’s participation in the competition.

The final will be held in South Bank in August where student finalists from across the state will compete – we wish them all the best.

For more information about TAFE Queensland South West call 1300 914 754 or visit [www.tafesouthwest.edu.au](http://www.tafesouthwest.edu.au)

**Photo Caption 1: TAFE Queensland Iron Chef Cooking Competition South West Finalists Jemaima (left) and Kylie (right) with coordinator and TAFE Queensland South West teacher Chef Jason Ford (centre).**

**Photo Caption 2: Ipswich local and competitor Nathan Hine with his main dish.**

**Photo Caption 3: Nathan in action in the kitchen.**

**-ENDS-**

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