

From the Classroom to Top Class Chef and an International Career

It's a long way from a Food Technology classroom for a Year 9 student to a three Michelin star restaurant in London – but that is the exciting pathway a Central Coast student in the Diocese of Broken Bay has recently undertaken in a few short years.

Anthony Lacovazzi's passion for cooking and hospitality began at St Peter's Catholic College, Tuggerah. Through the vocational pathways available at Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB), Anthony gained his practical and industry experience which turned his passion into a career reality.

He won the *Battle of the Chefs*, competition in 2023 which brings students together from across CSBB schools to test their culinary skills in an authentic industry environment and experience the challenge, creativity and teamwork of professional kitchens.

Apprenticeships at leading restaurants followed along with Gold Medal awards which contributed to his selection for the Oliver C. Shaul Scholarship, which recognises Australia's emerging culinary talent and opened the door to his international career in a few short years.

The scholarship allowed Anthony to travel to London and gain experience at the internationally renowned three Michelin star The Ledbury in London – where he has recently been offered a fulltime position.

"I think VET Hospitality played a huge role in shaping my future pathway. It gave me the practical skills, confidence and experience I needed to pursue a career in hospitality, while also giving me opportunities to compete, challenge myself and work alongside other passionate chefs. The work experience I gained through VET Hospitality really helped me excel and realise just how much I wanted to pursue a career in this industry," Anthony said on a return visit home before taking up his new role at The Ledbury.

"This pathway also allowed me to continue my studies at TAFE, gain experience in some amazing kitchens and compete in cooking competitions."

Before returning to London, Anthony went back to where his dreams of becoming a top chef all began – St Peter's at Tuggerah. He was invited to be one of the judges at this year's *Battle of the Chefs*, and spent time mentoring a number of the students who share the same dreams and passion for culinary expertise.

Catholic Schools Broken Bay Director of Schools, Danny Casey, said Anthony's journey demonstrates the importance of creating opportunities for students to discover their strengths and connect their learning with the world beyond school.

"Anthony's journey is a wonderful example of what can happen when learning is connected to real opportunities, industry experience and strong pathways. His story began in a CSBB classroom and has now taken him to one of the world's great culinary cities."

St Peter's Catholic College Principal Roisin McVeigh said Anthony's journey demonstrates the importance of giving students authentic opportunities to explore their strengths while they are still at school.

"Anthony's story began with an interest in hospitality, but the opportunities available to him at St Peter's helped him turn that interest into a pathway."