

To whom it may concern,

The Australian Pork Limited PorkStar program has achieved a great deal in its 13 years. It continues to grow pork demand in this country and significantly influence Australia's highest profile trend setting chefs.

I'm a chef with more than 25 years of experience and was involved, as a consultant, in the program at inception some 14 years ago. At that time, I had just left the position of executive chef at the hatted Sydney restaurant Otto Ristorante Italiano at the Finger Wharf in Woolloomooloo to develop a high-end foodservice consultancy business. My role, working with the Australian Pork team, was to help develop the concept and attract high calibre influential chefs to the newly minted program.

Since that time, the PorkStar program has gone from strength to strength. It has attracted some of the industry's biggest names (including internationally renowned chefs), supported the development of young chefs and taken pork from an after-thought to a must have component of any menu. It has influenced chefs in their menu choices, from the program's high end target chef group, trickling down to the volume foodservice market and even across to home chefs and consumers at large. Who would have ever thought 20 years ago that pork belly would ever be sold in a supermarket?

When I returned to the restaurant industry as an owner and operator from 2008, opening Pendolino and La Rosa in Sydney's Strand Arcade, my support for the program continued and I became one of the featured chefs in a PorkStar line-up in 2009. In 2014, a highlight of the year included joining other PorkStars in cooking for the prestigious Decade of PorkStar celebrations in the Strand Arcade.

I haven't been closely involved in the development of the Porkstar program for a long time but I can say that it has become iconic within industry circles. It is a very unique program that is the envy of many a producer sector. Of course, I serve pork in my restaurants and the program has also connected me directly with local producers, some of whom I worked with to develop a bespoke charcuterie range specifically for my restaurants. It has also sparked a keen interest in pork production and processing, resulting in overseas research and study tours to expand our collective knowledge and understanding of world class pork products.

I am deeply passionate about our industry and I think it is critically important that the food service sector celebrates the extraordinary local produce that we have in this country. It can only benefit all involved in the industry and have significant knock-on effects to the Australian economy as a whole. These values are reflected in the work PorkStar does connecting producers and chefs, educating the next generation and developing networks between professionals.

Each year the Porkstar program seems to innovate and evolve into something ever more engaging and exciting. The team delivering the program are continually looking for new opportunities to celebrate Australian pork, chefs, and other local produce and build a strong future for the pork and food service industries in Australia. What's more, the program has such strong support from its chefs and the community it has built, it's now developing an international profile that will only amplify the benefits to Australian producers and chefs.

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