

## Longitudinal Study of Student Outcomes – Commercial Cookery

### Final Insights Wave 1, 2 and 3

#### Introduction

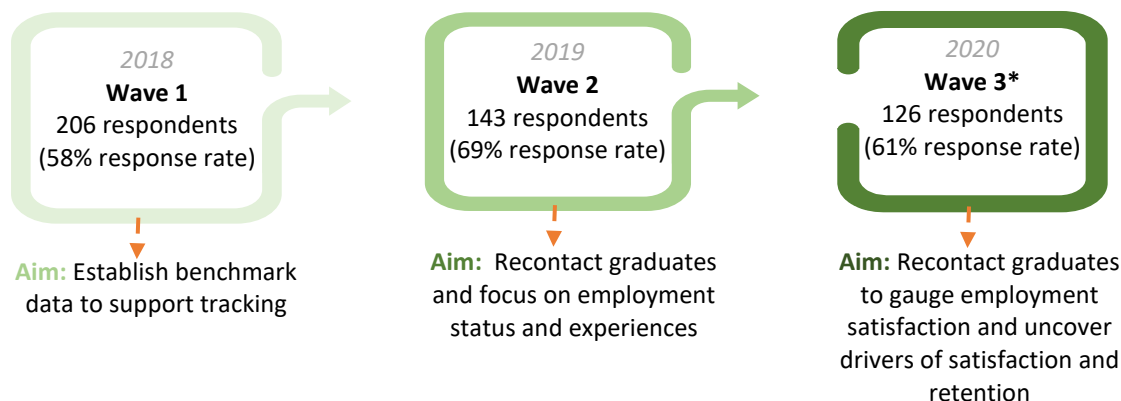
**Individuals who choose to study Commercial Cookery are enthusiastic about the industry and their future careers as chefs. Once working in the industry though, enthusiasm and satisfaction decline prompting decisions to leave.**

The hospitality industry is dynamic, and despite the enormous disruptions and mandated closures many employers have recently experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry is expected to recover quickly. Significant growth in employment is forecast with Food and Beverage services alone expected to need an additional 116,000 workers by 2025, and this includes an additional 18,300 jobs for chefs.<sup>1</sup>

The industry however faces **significant workforce challenges** regarding attracting skilled staff, as well as retaining staff noting high staff turnover and low retention. This study aimed to better understand an individual's journey into the Commercial Cookery industry, including course experience, employment outcome and job satisfaction to uncover reasons for leaving a job, and the industry.

Wave 3 represents the final survey conducted with a cohort of students who in 2018 had enrolled in or recently graduated from studying a *Certificate III in Commercial Cookery*. Please note that the Wave 3 survey was adapted to include questions regarding the 2019/20 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact they may have had on respondents and their careers in the Commercial Cookery industry.

Figure 1: Longitudinal Study into Student Outcomes – Summary of Samples Wave 1 to Wave 3



Note: \*Respondents to Wave 1 and/or Wave 2 were invited to participate in Wave 3. Please note the majority of respondents in Wave 3 completed all three waves of the study, with a small number (18 respondents) completing only Wave 1 and Wave 3.

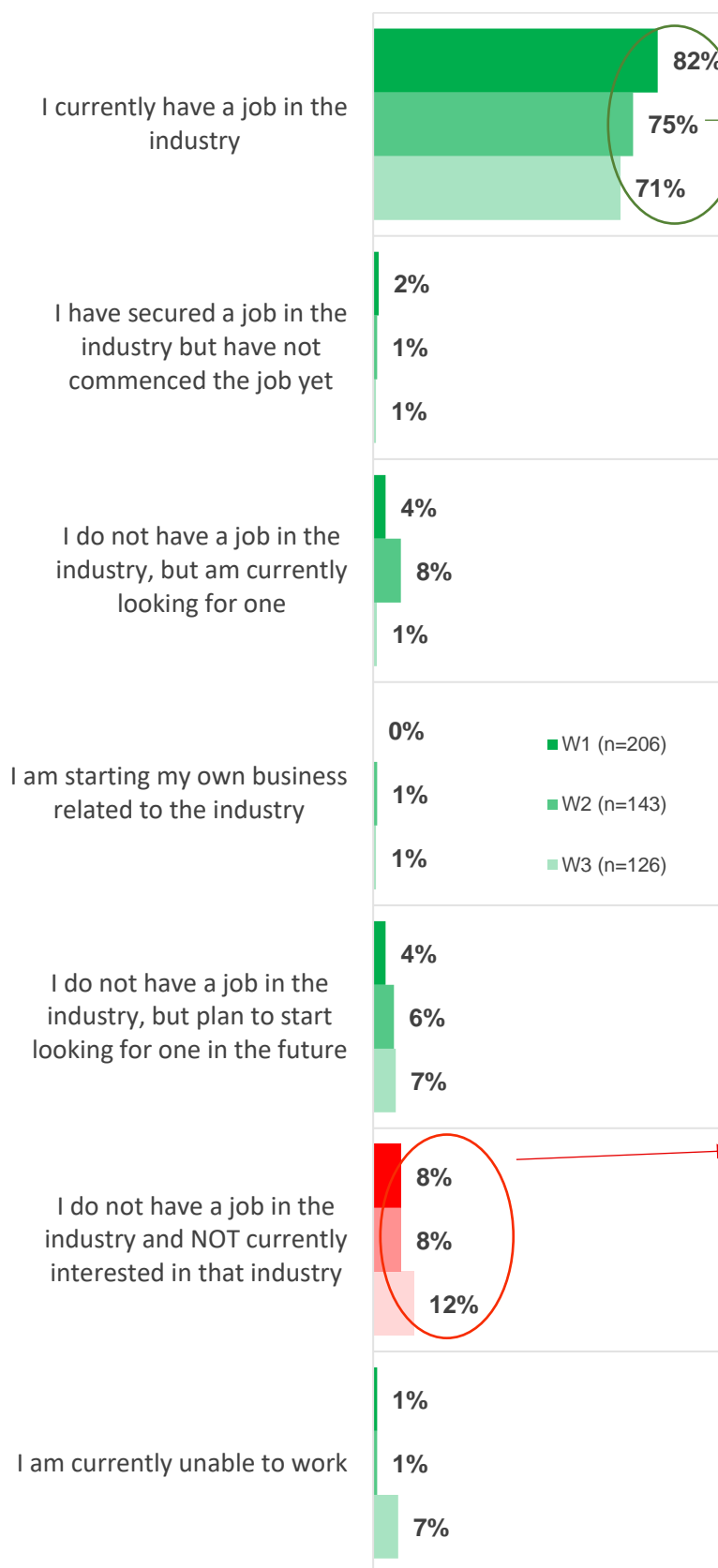
#### Learning Outcomes

- **Course completion is high** – by Wave 3, 80% had completed their qualification while 10% had withdrawn.
- The main reason for withdrawing from the qualification was due to deciding to change job/career goals (n=9).
- **The primary reason for enrolling** in the course is for work/employment purposes (96% of students). This includes 16% who enrolled to develop / start their own business.
- **Course satisfaction is high** – 89% were (net) satisfied with their course. Key course factors registering high satisfaction levels were the instructors (having relevant industry experience and able to clearly teach subject matter) and course content.

The student's learning experience is positive. Overall, the qualification is well regarded and considered highly relevant in providing key skills to work in the industry.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education, Skills and Employment. 2020 Industry Employment Projections to 2025, Food and Beverage Services' [Available at: [Welcome to the Labour Market Information Portal. \(lmip.gov.au\)](https://www.lmip.gov.au)] [Accessed 15 October 21]

Employment Outcomes across Waves



**Employment levels** peaked in Wave 1 (82%), and this may be attributed to the many respondents who were undertaking their course through an apprenticeship pathway.

**Employment conditions** for those working in the industry were similar across Waves:

- Approx. half (47%) were working full-time, and 15% and 35% were in part-time or casual roles.
- The median number of hours worked a week is 30-39 hours
- Across Waves the median income level increased noticeably from \$30k-\$39k in Wave 1 and 2 to \$50k-\$59k in Wave 3.
- 18% were working in two or more jobs.

**COVID-19/Bushfires 2019/20 impact:**

- 53% indicated these events had slowed their progress towards achieving their career goals
- 19% intend to train or reskill and move into a different industry due to the upheaval of these events.

**Disengagement** with the Commercial Cookery industry and departures increased by Wave 3.

Whilst the number of respondents in the sample who left the industry was small (n=18), their feedback indicated:

- The main reasons for leaving included the **nature of the work not stimulating, mistreatment by colleagues/employer, salary/pay issues** and **work hours issues**.

Those who had left the industry at Wave 1 were more likely to cite that the nature of the work was not stimulating. Mistreatment by colleagues/employer was a reason that was more likely to be given at Wave 3.

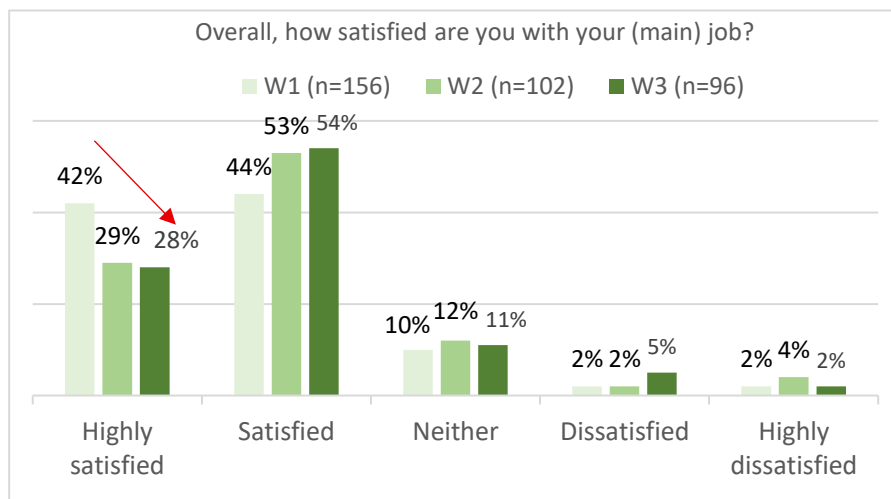
- The majority of leavers went to work in another industry and are satisfied with their new job.

Over the course of three years, the workforce ‘leaving’ rate increased marginally from 8% to 12%. The majority of leavers went to work in a different industry and confirmed they were happy with their new jobs therefore suggesting little intention to return to Commercial Cookery.

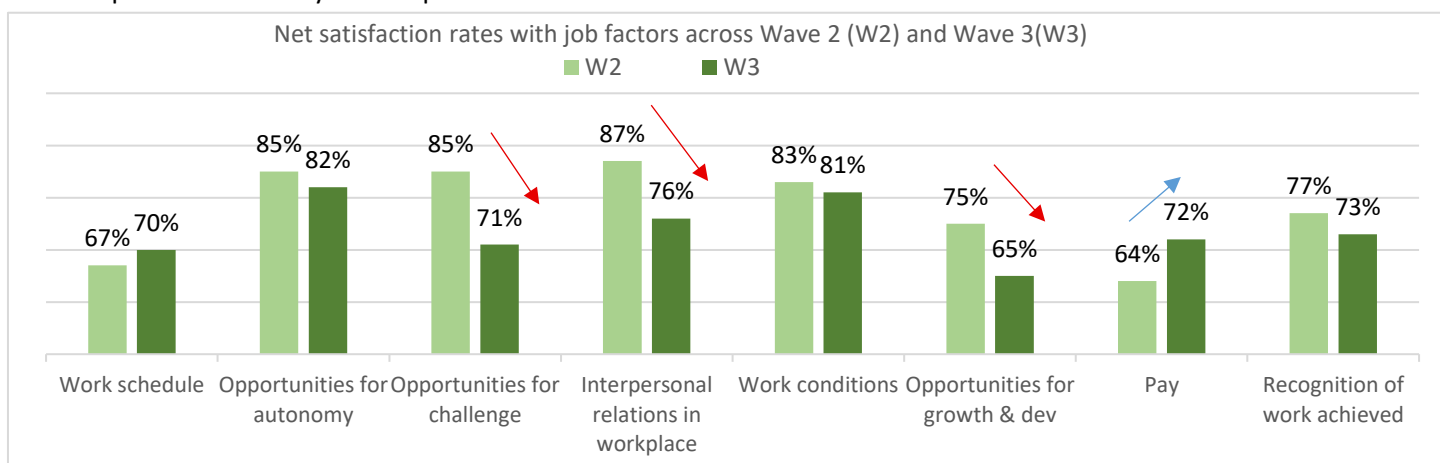
The disruption of COVID-19 and/or the 2019/20 bushfires on the industry are significant and the most recent wave suggests 1 in 5 workers intend to move to a different industry.

### Employment Satisfaction across Waves

- Overall job satisfaction declined with each successive wave.
- Those highly satisfied with their job dropped significantly between Wave 1 (42%) and Wave 3 (28%).
- Across waves, satisfaction levels with most job factors measured fell with significant drops in:
  - Opportunities for challenge (85% to 71%)
  - Interpersonal relations in workplace (87% to 76%)
  - Opportunities for growth & development (75% to 65%).
- Satisfaction with pay however improved noticeably as a respondent's income increased over time.



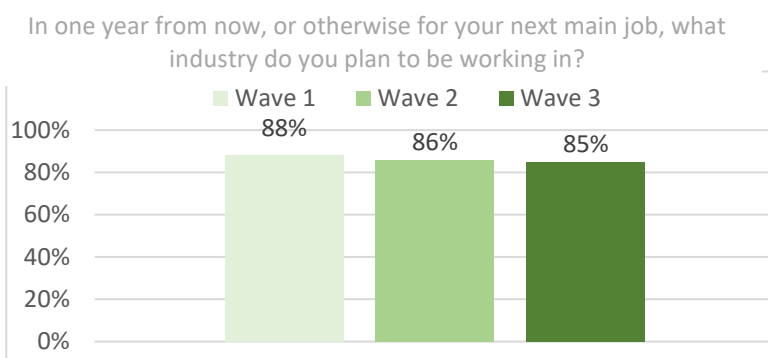
Note: 'Unsure' has been excluded and so W1 % may differ from the Wave 1 report.



### Future career plans

**Short-term (in one year's time)** The proportion of respondents wanting to work in the Commercial Cookery industry fell only slightly across waves (88% to 85%).

**Longer-term (in five year's time)** Nearly one quarter (24%) of respondents working in Commercial Cookery did not plan to work in the industry in five year's time.



Base: Currently working in industry, W1 (n=187), W2 (n=132), W3 (n=111)

### Recommendations for improving conditions in the Commercial Cookery industry

The top 5 suggestions on how to improve the industry were:

1. Better pay/benefits (24%)
2. Better hours / work conditions (17%)
3. More appropriate / experienced staff to work with (13%)
4. Better regulation / oversight (11%)
5. More staff / better staff ratio (9%).

As individuals spend time working in Commercial Cookery, satisfaction levels in general fall. This transitions into decisions to leave the industry either in the short-term or long-term.

Triggers for leaving the industry cover two key themes:

- Work conditions (i.e. hours and pay)
- Workplace treatment (i.e. staffing).