

## THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS

Moving into the restaurant game is a serious business. The perception that good cooks make good restaurateurs is very much an understatement of the reality. Restaurants make less than 2% profit before tax and are very difficult businesses to run well.

Information technology is taking over the world, yet there is no technology replacement for cooks in the kitchen or waiters serving tables. The restaurant business is labour intensive and as customers get more and more discerning, the quality of service offered becomes more and more important.

The key to operating a successful restaurant is finding (and keeping) good staff. This is difficult anywhere in Australia and is even more difficult in remote locations (such as tourist areas). Partnerships with local schools, colleges and employment service providers are absolutely vital.

A restaurant is both a production and a service environment. The kitchen produces product for sale and is subject to a very large number of processes to make this happen. Some of these processes have an inherent risk and need to be managed to ensure the service of safe food.

In the service environment, the business faces all of the challenges of dealing with the public and keeping customers coming back. Targeting and building markets is an important facet of keeping a restaurant business in front of the market.

The network of State based Restaurant & Catering Associations, through Restaurant & Catering Australia, is there to help restaurant businesses survive. For information on joining your local association call 1300 722 878 or visit [www.restaurantcater.asn.au](http://www.restaurantcater.asn.au).

Among other services, the Restaurant & Catering Associations offer certification for restaurant operators. This program recognises the skills necessary to run an effective restaurant business. There is a training program linked to certification as a Certified Professional Restaurateur. This is a good place to start in preparing to open a restaurant business.