

MEDIA RELEASE

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Culture in the kitchen: Mandoon Estate backs First Nations youth on path to global culinary stage

Mandoon Estate has celebrated its long-standing connection with Noongar Elder Dale Tilbrook, joining forces with Western Australian not-for-profit Prepare Produce Provide (PPP) to host the inaugural *From Country to the World* bushfoods and cultural showcase last night.

The event brought together secondary school students, Elders, bushfoods specialists, educators and hospitality leaders to celebrate First Nations food culture and create pathways for young people through food, education and cultural leadership.

It also raised funds to support a First Nations Youth Delegation to attend Terra Madre 2026 in Italy, the world's largest gathering celebrating food culture, sustainability and Indigenous knowledge. PPP hopes to send up to 14 youth ambassadors, emerging leaders, educators, chefs, Elders and cultural advisors.

Mandoon Estate General Manager Andrew Pruyn said hosting the event was a natural extension of the Estate's long-standing connection with Dale.

"Our relationship with Dale is built on genuine connection and a shared belief in the power of food and storytelling to bring people together, and we're proud to extend that support to the important work of Prepare Produce Provide," Mr Pruyn said.

"We're incredibly proud to have hosted an evening that celebrated Aboriginal culture and bushfoods while creating tangible opportunities for the next generation. It's a collaboration we hope to continue building into the future."

Through Maalinup Aboriginal Gallery at Mandoon Estate, Dale shares Aboriginal art, culture and knowledge with visitors, while her onsite Bushtucker Talk and Taste experiences introduce guests to native ingredients, traditional uses and connection to Country.

Dale is also one of PPP's longest-standing supporters. As a Patron, cultural advisor and bushfoods educator, she has worked alongside the organisation for more than 12 years, guiding cultural protocols, mentoring young people and creating opportunities for students and communities.

Ms Tilbrook said the opportunity for First Nations young people to participate in Terra Madre by Slow Food was particularly significant.

“Terra Madre is an incredible opportunity for our young people to take their knowledge, culture and stories to the world, while learning from Indigenous communities and food cultures from around the globe,” Ms Tilbrook said.

“I’m very proud of the relationship we’ve built with Mandoon Estate and it was wonderful to see them provide Wild Swan for an event that means so much to PPP and these young people. Bringing everyone together around food, culture and Country made it a very special evening.”

At the heart of Monday night’s event were the Gold Medal-winning students from the inaugural WA Secondary School Bushfoods Competition.

Guests were served the competition’s winning dishes: Finger Lime Chicken Katsu by Dianella Secondary College students Angela Moran and Summer Perry; Chicken and Mushroom Wontons with Parmesan Native Thyme Katsu Chicken and Finger Lime salad by Mason Hoffman and Mason Nicholls of Armadale Senior High School, and Wattle Seed Chocolate Ganache Tart with Biscoff Cream and Poached Pear Catherine Mwamba and Adam Montallana, also from Armadale Senior High School. The dishes will represent Western Australia at the National Competition in Melbourne later this year.

Mandoon Estate Executive Chef Michael Hartnell and Wild Swan Executive Chef Anthony Power led the kitchen team, working alongside bushfoods specialist Rohan Park from WA poultry and game supplier Mahogany Creek, Peter Tischhauser from the Australian Culinary Federation, acclaimed Perth pastry chef Julia Buri, and the students and members of the Australian Culinary Federation WA Youth Culinary Team.

From Country to the World also celebrated more than a decade of PPP creating opportunities for First Nations young people through food, culture, education and leadership, as it prepares a First Nations Youth Delegation for Terra Madre 2026.

PPP Founder Catherine MacDougall said the event demonstrated what could be achieved when culture, education, community and industry worked together.

“Dale has been part of the Prepare Produce Provide journey for more than 12 years, so having *From Country to the World* at Mandoon Estate, where she has such a strong and established connection, made this a particularly special event,” Ms MacDougall said.

“The funds raised will help take that next step onto the international stage, giving First Nations young people the opportunity to share culture at Slow Food’s Terra Madre while developing confidence, leadership and career pathways.”

The evening also featured cultural storytelling led by Dale Tilbrook, student showcases and chef mentoring, presentations and a live auction.

The partnership reflects Mandoon Estate’s broader commitment to recognising and celebrating the Aboriginal heritage of the land on which it operates.

In 2022, Mandoon Estate commenced its 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan, formalising its journey towards strengthening relationships, respect and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As part of that journey, the Estate renamed its 32-room accommodation to Maya Maya, meaning "camp" in local language, acknowledging the site's significance as a traditional camping place for Whadjuk Noongar people. Developed in consultation with Traditional Custodians, the Maya Maya identity incorporates artwork by Minang and Kaneang artist Samaja Miller.

Hosting *From Country to the World* builds on that commitment, bringing together Mandoon Estate's connection with Dale, its support for PPP and a shared belief in celebrating Aboriginal culture, sharing knowledge and creating opportunities for future generations.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Tori Johnson

M: 0402 712 947

E: media@mandoonestate.com.au

Cath MacDougall

M: 0409 970 070

E: catherine@prepareproduceprovide.org