Winning the awards was surely one of the most important and exciting moments in my life. …being recognised for all the hard work that has been done was really great and wonderful and I now feel more confident in my ability to take on future challenges.

Lai Poh Lee (Malaysia)
Commercial Cookery

Studying at Sunraysia Institute of TAFE (SuniTAFE), provides you the opportunity to be eligible for the Institute’s International students awards as well as other National and State awards. Here is one of our graduates Lai Poh Lee’s story.

Originally from Malaysia, Lai Poh Lee began her study in Diploma of Hospitality and Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery with Sunraysia Institute of TAFE in 2013. She won SuniTAFE’s award for the International Student of the Year for 2014, as well as being awarded a State finalist in the Victorian International Education Awards 2015, presented at Government House in Melbourne. Lai Poh also met the Governor of Victoria Linda Dessau and the Minister for Education and Skills, the honorary Steve Herbert.

Lai Poh Lee successfully completed her study in Advanced Diploma of hospitality Management in December 2015, and employed as a chef by a local restaurant of a club in Mildura, currently she is living and working in Mildura.

“I feel I am fortunate to be able to study at SuniTAFE. The teachers and staff are AMAZING! They are supportive, really care and are there to help you succeed. The facilities are great and well equipped. The multicultural environment makes study even more interesting.”

“I would highly recommend SuniTAFE to anyone looking to pursue a career in the hospitality industry. It’s never too late to start, just get on and do it!”

SuniTAFE International Student of the Year 2014

Lai Poh Lee attending the Victoria International Education Awards ceremony with the Governor of Victoria Linda Dessau (middle), and SuniTAFE’s Manager of International Programs Bradley Fyfe (right)

Lai Poh Lee with the Minister for Education and Skills Steve Herbert (first on the right). SuniTAFE’s Manager of International Programs Bradley Fyfe (first on the left). SuniTAFE’s Coordinator of Student Support Annette Whittaker (No. 2 on the left).

CEO of SuniTAFE Ms. Win Scott (First on the right), SuniTAFE Teacher of Hospitality, Sandra Slatter (No. 2 on the left), SuniTAFE Coordinator of Student Support Annette Whittaker (first on the left).
FOR Malaysian born Lai Poh Lee, a career change was the driving force behind the move from her home country to Mildura, and lead her to recently be awarded one of SuniTAFE’s most prestigious honours.

MALAYSIAN-BORN Lai Poh Lee has been named one of 22 state finalists in the Victorian International Education Awards for her work at Mildura’s Sunraysia Institute of TAFE.

Looking to re-skill and experience the Australian lifestyle, Ms Lee embarked on a backpacking adventure that saw her travel to capital cities including Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, before choosing to settle in Mildura.

"I came to Mildura in 2013 visiting a friend and explored the Sunraysia region," she said.

“When I found out they offered a hospitality course I looked through the campus and decided this is the place I should study,”

In Malaysia she held numerous roles including working as an accounting clerk, at a GP clinic and in sales, before deciding she was ready to focus on a career in the hospitality industry.

After 18 months studying Certificate IV in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery), Ms Lee was named the International Student of the Year for 2014, as well as receiving SuniTAFE’s Board Excellence Award.


After moving to Mildura from Malaysia in 2013 to complete Certificate 4 in Commercial Cookery, the mature-age student progressed to the Advanced Diploma in Hospitality, which she will complete at the end of the year.

“After I went through a few jobs I decided to change to a career in hospitality,” Ms Lee said.

“So I thought it was necessary to get a proper education to get into the industry and I have the determination and passion to get involved in the studies, not just hand in the assignments and say I’m done.

“I’m very proud to be the only finalist in my VET category from regional Victoria.

“I’m very happy to be able to represent my country as well as Sunraysia so that hopefully it will attract more international students to study here and not just in capital cities,” she said.