

IN FOCUS

## WORK IT OUT

### cooking up a career



**A desire to help his people leads one man to the kitchen.**

**W**hen Nicholas Morris was growing up, he was painfully aware of the health problems that faced his family and his community. He also saw that there was something that could be done about it.

"I was conscious of the fact that the food we eat has an effect on our health," says the 22-year-old Indigenous man, originally from Shepparton. "Many of the health problems that our people face are diet-related, and if we are going to raise the level of health in our communities we need to address the issue of our diet."

Nicholas' interest in food led him to working in a restaurant in Chicago, USA, called Soul Vegetarian. "I saw the effect that the restaurant's healthy, nutritious food had on the community. It really inspired me to do something similar at home."

Since first deciding to follow this idea through in 2004, Nicholas travelled the world, learning about many unique styles of food, as well as the importance of nutrition in health. He has now set up his own catering business – Soul Veg.

"I had studied hospitality in a VET (Vocational Education and Training) course at Shepparton TAFE," says Nicholas. "Then I did a business course through NEIS (New Enterprise Incentive Scheme), and from there I started up the business."

Soul Veg specialises in internationally inspired dishes that are not only tasty but also healthy. The business offers catering services for events of all sizes and types, including themed catering and self-catering hampers, and wholesale and retail online sales.

"I want to be able to show our people that we have the ability to make our lives better and our health better

and that we don't have to wait for health problems to arise before we address them," Nicholas says. "I also want people to know that healthy food can still taste good!"

After he began trading in March of this year with his wife Yahvinah, Nicholas entered the Nescafe Big Break – a competition that gives away cash grants to help people turn their big ideas into a reality.

"I made it to the final 14," he says. "Then we had to go to Sydney and present our business idea to a panel of judges."

Nicholas has now made it into the final six, and if he wins, he'll be awarded \$100,000 to fulfil his dream – setting up a Soul Veg restaurant.

To find out more about Nicholas and Soul Veg, head to [www.soulveg.com.au](http://www.soulveg.com.au)

To vote for Nicholas, head to [www.nescafebigbreak.com.au](http://www.nescafebigbreak.com.au)



### ACTIVITY 1: SKIMMING FOR MAIN IDEAS

Look at the heading on page 22 (Cooking up a Career), the photograph of Nicholas Morris and the sub-heading below the photograph (A desire to help his people leads one man to the kitchen).

1. What do you think this report will be about?

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2. Why did Nicholas become interested in nutrition?

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## ACTIVITY 2: SCANNING FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1. Where did Nicholas grow up?

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2. Find and write the words that tell us what Nicholas was aware of when growing up in his community.

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3. What is the name of Nicholas' catering business?

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4. What course did Nicholas study at Shepparton TAFE?

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5. What type of food does the business specialise in?

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6. What does Nicholas want us to know about healthy food?

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## ACTIVITY 3: UNDERSTANDING WORDS IN CONTEXT

Write your own meaning for the words from the article in the boxes below.

| WORDS   | MEANING |
|---|---------|
| ...painfully aware of health problems   |         |
| Many of the health problems that our people face are diet-related.                                |         |
| Soul Veg specialises in internationally inspired dishes that are not only tasty but also healthy. |         |





#### **ACTIVITY 4: WHAT DOES VEGETARIAN MEAN?**

Soul Veg makes delicious recipes from food that does not include meat. Some reasons that people choose not to eat meat are:

1. Animals don't have to suffer and be killed to provide us with meat alternatives.
2. Reducing your consumption of meat helps reduce your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, and certain forms of cancer.
3. Meat alternatives are cholesterol free, or very low in cholesterol.
4. Meat alternatives are lower in saturated fat and total fat.
5. The production of meat alternatives has less impact on the environment.
6. Meat alternatives are very tasty (particularly these days), and many have a similar texture to meat.

#### **ACTIVITY 5: DO SOME VEGETARIAN COOKING!**

Try this delicious recipe. These pancakes are fantastic for weekend lunches.

##### **You will need:**

- 4 medium-sized potatoes
- 2-3 medium-sized carrots
- 1 medium-sized onion
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 heaped tsp self-raising flour
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 to 1 tsp salt

##### **Method:**

1. Coarsely grate the potato and carrot. Finely dice the onion.
2. Add all ingredients to a large bowl and mix well.
3. Fry the mixture in spoon-sized quantities in a fry pan with sufficient oil to cover the bottom of the pan. Flatten into pancakes and cook on both sides until golden brown and the potato and carrot is cooked through.
4. Serve as a side dish or as a meal on its own.

##### **Further research:**

To read more about Nicholas and Soul Veg, head to [www.soulveg.com.au](http://www.soulveg.com.au)