

From Cinderella to Nigella: a short history of employment relations and food in New Zealand tourist hotels

This presentation discussed the links between employment relations in the Tourist Hotel Corporation (THC) and the development of food and hospitality skills in New Zealand from 1955 to 1991. The paper argues that the THC transformed the food and service culture both in hotels but also greatly affected the wider industry. In addition, the THC became the benchmark for high-end food and service and that by the 1980s the THC had created established career paths, excellent training and an internationally recognised standard of food and service.

The paper shows that the THC were very influential in establishing the early hospitality training schools for the industry and that their staff went on to drive many of the iconic restaurants in post-war New Zealand. The paper finishes by suggesting that the significant achievements of the THC have been undermined by the current, dominant neo-liberal ideology which portrays the THC as a failed experiment and a prime example of the 'bad old days' of Government owned organisations.

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