



By Matthew Jones

Thursday 17th June 2021, 7:49 GMT

MMA supports industry-first qualification



Anthony Natoli

Scholarship helps Melbourne greengrocer gain formal recognition for his trade

A Chadstone greengrocer with over 30 years of on-the-job experience is one of the first recipients of the Melbourne Market Authority (MMA) Greengrocery Scholarship.

Anthony Natoli will use the full-tuition scholarship to complete Certificate III in Greengrocery at Melbourne Polytechnic.

The qualification is the first of its kind in Australia, providing those in the industry with an opportunity to be formally recognised for their trade.

"Despite over 34 years of experience working with fresh produce, I realised I had nothing to show for my wealth of industry knowledge," said Natoli. "Enrolling in the course at Melbourne Polytechnic was an opportunity to finally have something on paper to back up my hands-on experience.

"Having this industry-recognised qualification is important to bring new

talent into the industry and help our trade to be taken seriously."

Natoli's passion for fresh produce stems from a childhood spent in his parents' suburban fruit shop.

"As a kid, I was always in the shop and at the wholesale markets with my father; that's where it started for me. At 17, I started working for my parents – wholesaling, providoring and supplying a supermarket chain with fresh produce," he explained.

After working with his parents for 12 years, Natoli's experience saw him branch out and run three businesses in Melbourne's South East. Natoli is currently managing a fruit shop in Bentleigh, overseeing the day-to-day store operations and providing fresh food for his local community.

Certificate III in Greengrocery has been developed by Melbourne Polytechnic, together with MMA, to provide retail grocery workers with a formal qualification.

Committing A\$15,000 to launch the new course, the MMA Greengrocery Scholarship will help support the first group of students who train in the course with full or part tuition.

"For retail grocery workers, Certificate III in Greengrocery is a nod of appreciation to a previously unrecognised profession," said Mark Maskiell, chief executive of Melbourne Market Authority.

"As a trade that's often taken for granted, the MMA is proud to support students like Anthony to advance their experience to the next level and to help them provide exceptional customer service across Victoria.

"As well as providing a recognised qualification for those already in the industry, the course is an ideal start for those wanting to begin a career in fresh produce."

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