

HOTEL ETICO  
A U S T R A L I A

**HOTEL ETICO**

**INDEPENDENCE  
PROGRAM**

**GIVING YOU SKILLS TO  
LIVE AND WORK  
INDEPENDENTLY**

[www.hoteletico.com.au](http://www.hoteletico.com.au)



## WHERE IT ALL STARTED

**Hotel Etico was inspired by Niccolò Vallese, a young man with Down Syndrome who interned at Tacabanda Ristorante in Italy, owned by Antonio and Egidio De Benedetto. Recognising Niccolò's potential and the barriers faced by people with disabilities, the De Benedetto brothers one day asked Niccolò what he had hoped for in the future. Niccolò responded.**



**“my dream is to work in a hotel”**

The brothers aimed to support Niccolò's dream of working in a hotel, this leading to the development of a permanent internship program run at the Tacabanda Restaurant that was adaptable to the needs of those with intellectual disabilities. The program, based on the "Download Method," focuses on skill-building through tailored on-the-job training.

In 2015 the first Albergo Etico hotel opened in Asti in Northern Italy. At its heart was the Accademia dell'Indipendenza (Academy of Independence) where independent living skills are developed alongside hospitality work skills. As of 2024 there are four hotels in Italy one in Albania, one in Argentina and bold plans for global expansion.

The program has seen hundreds of graduates move into open employment and develop strong independent living skills. Niccolò Vallese, the inspiration behind this movement, continues to work at Albergo Etico, achieving financial independence.

# HOTEL ETICO AUSTRALIA



Drawing inspiration from Niccolò Vallese's dream, the European Albergo Etico model was adapted to the Australian setting, launching Australia's first not for profit social enterprise hotel in the Blue Mountains in 2020.



During Hotel Etico's independence program, trainees are employed and paid full award wages from day one and are front and centre in the day-to-day operation of the hotel and restaurant, supported by hospitality and disability professionals.

Trainees are trained and rotate through a range of hospitality roles. They choose an elective role to work for the majority of their first year in the program. By participating in group training sessions, trainees have the opportunity to experience all operational functions of the role.

This enables our trainees to develop an understanding of where their strengths lie.

At the heart of Hotel Etico's Independence program is the Academy of Independence, a dedicated on site apartment where the trainees will stay on their rostered workdays providing a setting to experience supported independent living.

At Hotel Etico, we understand that to succeed in our careers and daily living, we must make sure we take care of our wellbeing. Our Wellbeing Program runs throughout the year, covering topics including but not limited to: stress management, nutrition, and exercise.





# UNLOCKING YOUR POTENTIAL

## WHY OUR PROGRAM WORKS



Participating in the Hotel Etico program offers a unique and transformative experience that combines personal development with social impact. Here are several reasons to consider our program:

### PROFESSIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Hands-on hospitality training in kitchen, restaurant, bar, reception, housekeeping, gardening and maintenance, equipping participants with valuable skills that are transferable to many career paths.

### PERSONAL GROWTH

Beyond professional skills, the program emphasises personal development, encouraging participants to build confidence, independence, and social skills, which are crucial for both personal and professional success.

### SOCIAL IMPACT

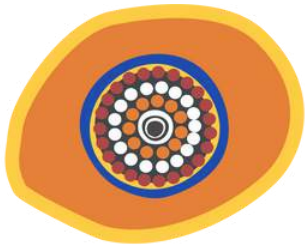
Being part of Australia's first not for profit social enterprise hotel, you contribute to a model of business that prioritises purpose over profit promoting inclusivity and diversity in the workplace and changing community perspectives about disability and employment.

### SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

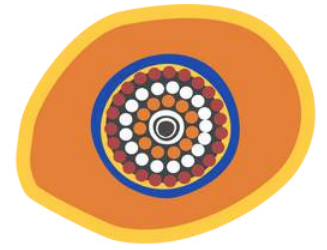
The program is designed to provide a supportive and nurturing environment that encourages participants to challenge themselves, take risks, and step out of their comfort zones in a safe and supportive setting.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Your participation directly supports Hotel Etico's mission to provide meaningful employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities, making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and the broader community.



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW



## YEAR 1:

During the first year, participants will work part-time at Hotel Etico while residing in the Academy of Independence for a minimum of three days a week. They will receive hands-on training in hospitality roles, participate in group training sessions and practice independent living skills in a supportive environment.

## YEAR 2:

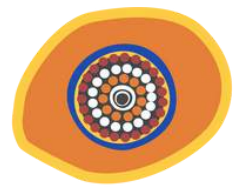
In the second year, participants will transition to the Employment Program, helped secure industry-based employment for further skill development and career advancement. Our Employment Manager will provide ongoing support for our graduates and our employment partners.



# ELIGIBILITY

The Hotel Etico Independence Program targets young adults with disability, who are interested in becoming hospitality professionals and live a more independent life. People wishing to apply for a position in the training program must meet the following criteria:

- Aged 18 to 35
- Low to moderate support needs
- Low personal care needs
- Good communication skills (verbal or otherwise)
- Registered participant with the NDIS



# COST / FUNDING

Funding typically used by Participants to cover the cost of this program comes from Participation in Community, Social and Civic Activities, Assistance in Daily Living and Life Skills, Assistance in employment and training support, and Group and Centre Based Activities.

## Year 1 – Program Cost

**Program period:** Up to 12 months with quarterly reviews

**Cost of Program:** Weekly cost will be based on level of support required.

Indicative weekly cost ranges from \$1,300 to \$1,500. Additional one off fees may apply.

In addition a \$50/week contribution to groceries and \$50/week contribution to accommodation will be charged to each trainee.

## Year 2 – Program Cost

This will be dependent on individual support needs.



# REFERRAL PROCESS

- 1** Apply online via our website [www.hoteletico.com.au](http://www.hoteletico.com.au)
- 2** Our team will review the application and if eligible, an in person interview and tour of the hotel will be arranged where you will get to meet some of the team and trainees and you will be able to share a bit about yourself and your goals.
- 3** If all goes well in the in person interview, you will be invited for a trial sleepover where you will get to experience life in the Academy and get a taster of what types of work you will be doing.
- 4** If everything goes well at the trial sleepover, you will be formally offered a position in the Hotel Etico Program.
- 5** Once offered a position you will be sent a service agreement and quote for service, the offer of employment and all other onboarding documentation.
- 6** Once everything is finalised and approved you will join Hotel Etico on the agreed day.

# TESTIMONIALS



“Our son Aaron has nearly completed the independence program and it has been wonderful. His confidence and skill set have grown enormously. This has been a direct result of the nurturing and supportive environment at Etico. The amazing staff provide opportunity for the trainees to build skills in new areas outside of their comfort zone in a supportive environment. Aaron will be leaving Etico having gained a holistic skill set and newfound confidence and pride in himself. Such a wonderful, structured program and beautiful dedicated staff, big thank you to all. ” **KATHY AND DAVID, AARON'S PARENTS**

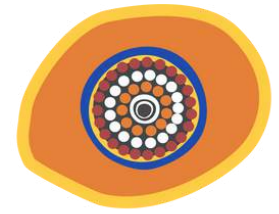
“We were served by Brandon, one of the trainees and were impressed by the skills he has learned. The mentors and trainees worked together beautifully and the service we received was faultless. In fact, the training programme made our visit more enjoyable than the usual hotel visit. Our enjoyment was shared by all the other guests who were privileged to be part of this wonderful social enterprise programme at Hotel Etico. ” **LINDA, GUEST**

“The Etico program has given Trent a sense of being able to achieve things he thought he wasn't capable of. He is so proud to tell people that he is at an Academy learning hospitality and will be graduating and getting a job.” ” **VICKY, TRENT'S MUM**





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## **Where is Hotel Etico located?**

11 Montgomery Street, Mount Victoria NSW.

## **Is Hotel Etico close to public transport?**

Yes, Mount Victoria train station is a 5 minute walk from Hotel Etico.

## **What will I be employed as?**

You'll be employed as a Hotel Etico Trainee.

## **How long will I be employed for?**

You will work at Hotel Etico part-time for 1 year on a fixed term contract. You will then be helped to secure employment in Industry with one of our employment partners.

## **Will I get paid?**

Yes, in Year 1, you will be paid by Hotel Etico full award wage in accordance with the Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010. In Year 2, you will generally be paid directly by our industry partner. All of our industry partners pay full Award wages.

## **How many hours work will I get?**

All Hotel Etico staff work different shifts that cover the hotel's operating hours. Hospitality trainees will work a minimum of 8 hours per week.

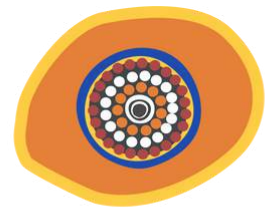
## **Do I live at the Academy of Independence permanently?**

No, you will live at the Academy of Independence for approximately 3 nights per week. Your arrival and departure dates will be outlined on your roster.

## **What are the other features of the Academy of Independence?**

Fully equipped kitchen, bedrooms, lounge and dining room, a mudroom – which is a fancy word for the entry where you can take off your shoes and hang your coat in winter, veranda overlooking Hotel Etico's gardens, heating, storage, Wifi and parking. Trainees and support workers will collaborate to determine appropriate use of shared amenities.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## Will I be sharing a room?

Yes. Each room has 2 single beds and specific sharing arrangements will be based on individual assessment.

## Is it just Hotel Etico hospitality trainees that live at the Academy of Independence?

No, dedicated support workers will be there to offer help when you need it at a ratio of 1:3 during the waking hours and 1 support worker (or more depending on need) will sleep over.

## Do Hotel Etico guests have access to the Academy of Independence?

No, only authorised staff at Hotel Etico are permitted access. Trainees may sometimes give a tour of the Academy to guests on request and with consent of trainees. No guests are permitted to enter the bedrooms – they will only enter common living spaces.

## What kind of support will I get?

Hotel Etico's is focused on a wholistic model of support for trainees. Dedicated support workers and hospitality professionals will be around to help when you need it in the Academy of Independence and throughout the hotel.

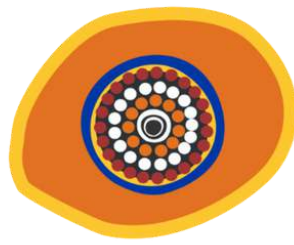
## What happens at the end of my service agreement?

**Year 1 - Graduation:** You will celebrate your graduation from the Academy of Independence after you complete the first 12 months of the Independence Program.

**Year 2:** Based on your individual needs, you will have the option to extend your industry based support agreement with Hotel Etico while continuing to be employed by our industry partner..

## Is there anything I can do to prepare for living at the Academy of Independence?

Many core skills will be taught within the Academy of Independence. All of these skills are part of our Independent Living Curriculum and will be practised on a daily basis. We also encourage our trainees to practice their skills while at home.



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# Empowering independence and transforming lives



## CONTACT US



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