



MEDIA RELEASE

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Celebrity chef, gardener and author rally to improve kids' health during NATIONAL ORGANIC WEEK

October 4 – 13 is NATIONAL ORGANIC WEEK. Australian Organic announces its new ambassadors - chef Pete Evans, ABC *Gardening Australia*'s Costa Georgiadis and health author Therese Kerr.

They have joined forces to improve child health through the Australian Organic Schools initiative, where children learn how food is farmed, how to grow it and the value of healthy snacks and meals.

Over 1,400 schools – or 20 per cent of primary schools – have registered with Australian Organic Schools since it launched in 2010.

It's free to participate making it one of the most accessible kitchen garden initiatives around.

Best known as a host and judge of *My Kitchen Rules*, Pete Evans' passion for promoting quality food has developed a keen following of 75,000 people on Facebook.

He says, "My philosophy is simple – the more great stuff you put in, the less room or desire there is for the bad stuff. I think eating real food is what it's about."

With two children of his own, Pete says there is no greater gift than teaching children about nutrition and healthy eating and he advises to lead by example.

"There is so much truth in the saying, 'You are what you eat,' or perhaps the saying should be, 'You are what you absorb,'" Pete says. "In our home food is our medicine, or medicine is our food, and it's one way to make life as easy and enjoyable as we can."

Costa is keen to get more children digging in the soil, believing once they are involved in growing food growing they will readily eat it.

He says, "Australian Organic Schools is probably the most exciting part of curriculum development for the future because these skills are simple and what they actually do is build a real community thread within a school.

"When you can pass on from one class to the next these skills and responsibilities then you actually build a resilience within kids and within a school to understand that anything you want to do is underpinned by quality food."



Therese is co-author of one of iTunes top sellers *Lunchbox Solutions* and soon to be released *Breakfast Solutions*.

She is also mum to supermodel Miranda Kerr.

Therese says, "I am passionate about sharing the certified organic message. Prior to having had tumours in my spleen in 2001, I lathered myself in products that contained harmful chemicals and although we ate healthy, I never understood the large number of additives and other harmful ingredients found in conventional food and personal care products.

"Education is key and through Australian Organic Schools we have the ability to educate our young as to where food comes from, the nutritional importance of food and how to create organic gardens for a sustainable future. I am excited to be involved in such an incredible project."

Through hands on lessons, students learn where food comes from and that food can be produced in a sustainable manner, free from herbicides, insecticides and fungicides, which is better for their bodies and the planet.

Schools can meet Pete, Costa and Therese

To celebrate National Organic Week, Australian Organic Schools is launching a competition that gives eight lucky schools a chance to meet Pete, Costa or Therese for a cooking demonstration, a garden consultation, or a canteen makeover.

All schools have to do is submit pictures of their vegetable gardens, or plans for one, and explain in 200 words how the garden or proposed garden teaches students about growing and preparing fresh food and the benefits of organics for our health and the environment. See organicschools.com.au. Entries close November 12.

Australian Organic Schools is proudly supported by Bendigo Bank, The Sunraysia Natural Beverage Company, five:am and the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Extra information: Australian Organic Schools is available to all schools organicschools.com.au It is an initiative of the country's largest organic industry group, Australian Organic which owns the logo that appears on the majority of organic products on our shelves Australian Certified Organic.

Images available.

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