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AUSTRALIAN STEELERS SHARPEN THEIR SKILLS

Australia's top butchers have sharpened their skills in Queensland this week ahead of the TriNations international butchery competition early next month.

The team of six butchers come from across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria and converged on Helensvale for its last training session.

Captain, Michael James, from Carina North Quality Meats in Queensland, is taking on the role for the third year and said competition was set to be fierce when Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand go head-to-head in Auckland in September.

"The Tri-Nations butchery competition will see our team, The Australian Steelers, go up against two other teams in the three-hour test of skills, innovation and presentation," Mr James said.

"We've all been working on developing our skills individually and as a team to ensure we've got the greatest chance to slice and dice our competition."

The team has new sponsors for 2015, including Australian Pork Limited. For the first time, the competition will also have the butchers work with pork.

"We all love pork, so this is great for us," Mr James said.

"We are just working together to ensure we're ready to serve up perfect cuts, well presented in the competition. We need to be getting it right now, because on the day, we'll be dealing with challenges like sourcing the right ingredients overseas and the time pressure of the competition.

"We're now ready to carve a victory for the Aussie Steelers and make minced meat of current title-holders, the Sharp Blacks."

The Australian Steelers will head to Auckland on 5 September and compete for the TriNations title on 10 September. The Kiwi team, the Sharp Blacks is not only hosting the 2015 competition, but also defending their back-to-back titles. The British team are expected to step up their skills after losing at home in 2014.

Representing Australia this year will be:

Michael James, Carina North Quality Meats, Queensland

Matthew Papandrea, Joe Papandrea Quality Meats, Bossley Park, NSW

Adam Stratton, Tender Gourmet Butchery, NSW

Ben Barrow, head butchery teacher South Western Sydney Institute, NSW

Tom Bouchier, Peter Bouchier Butchers of Distinction, Victoria, and

Paul Brady, Tender Gourmet Butchery, NSW

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