

Celebrity chef back from bottom of a glass

Michael Quinn said he had turned his back on alcohol.

Ark Global

Former alcoholic Michael Quinn was at Bentley TAFE on Tuesday to launch Ark Global.

Mr Quinn said he established the foundation to raise awareness of alcoholism in the hospitality industry.

"Anybody can stop drinking," he said.

"The trick is staying stopped.

"I'm not here to wag fingers.

"I am here to educate young people at the hospitality school about alcoholism."



Michael Quinn cooked for the Queen, had one Michelin star to his name and was the first British head chef at the Ritz Hotel in London before his addiction took everything away.

He said the last 10 years of being an alcoholic were a nightmare.

"I drank from 18 years old until I was 49 years old," he said.

"When I first drank, it felt like I was on the right planet.

"I had confidence and I drank for the effect.

"I stopped working in the last eight years.

"I had to rely on the state to give me money. I was homeless, I had to sleep under bridges and in the Salvation Army hostels and I was desperate.

"I wanted to steal or cheat just to get a drink."

The father of three sons said he quit drinking after a near-death experience.

"I was admitted to the hospital for liver failure at 49 years old," he said.

"I was near death - a priest performed the last

rites when I was lying on the hospital bed."

"When that happened, I knew I would not need to drink again.

"I was determined to quit - I came out of hospital and made a commitment to not drink again."

Mr Quinn has been sober for the 12 years. He said it was a constant battle to stay alcohol-free.

"There have been times when I walk down the street, see the bar and I am tempted to go in for a drink," he said.

"But I replace the thought with images of what alcohol did to me."

Mr Quinn trained as an Alcoholics Anonymous counsellor. He said he had a new life.

"I am free from the compulsion to drink," he said.

"It is a new way of living. I don't have to drink alcohol anymore to get through the day.

"I don't miss the kitchen. I had a great career but the work I'm doing now is much more meaningful."