

Chefs in Oz to boost their Iron

By MATILDA ABEY

BEFORE there was *Master Chef* and the current fad for all things food-related on television — there was *Iron Chef*.

The cult Japanese television show aired on SBS, is translated into English by a voiceover, and is a perennial favourite as guest chefs battle to beat the *Iron Chef* (or master chef).

Last week, two of the chefs from the popular program, Hiroyuki Sakai — who is the reigning *Iron Chef* — and Tsutomu Ochiai, were in Australia to sample the local produce.

The pair visited TopCut Industries in Flemington as part of a lightning visit to Australia. They also inspected eel and salmon farms in Tasmania and spent a day at Greenham's

processing plant.

They finished their tour in Sydney, where they dined with Australia's most famous Japanese chef Tetsuya Wakuda.

The chefs were brought to Australia by Toho beef and seafood wholesalers and Meat and Livestock Australia as part of a program aimed at promoting country-of-origin labelling.

"Currently 60-70 per cent of all beef that comes into Japan goes to food services," MLA's Japan manager Glen Feist said.

"However, there is no country-of-origin labelling — it may be labelled as overseas beef, but we want it to be labelled as Australian beef."

MLA started a "chefs club" in Japan a couple of years ago to enhance the reputation of Australian beef among chefs.

"It is a real coup for us to have the *Iron Chefs* come out to Australia, they are super stars in Japan, and they absolutely loved Australia," Mr Feist said.

East meats West: reigning *Iron Chef* Hiroyuki Sakai and competitor Tsutomu Ochiai in Flemington.

