



**A City for Everyone Who Eats:
Inclusion, Diversity and FoodLab Sydney**

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About FoodLab

FoodLab is a not-for-profit food business incubator that helps reduce the social and economic barriers for local food entrepreneurs from vulnerable backgrounds to start or scale their food businesses in Sydney.

They run regular programs that offer training, mentoring and sales opportunities to help develop sustainable business models.

Where we began

- City of Sydney Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan
- Launched 2018
- Commitment to reduce food insecurity



FoodLab aims address two challenges:



**Equity &
Inclusion**



**Social, Financial and
Environmental
Sustainability**

Origin and Partners

We launched in 2019 (pre-pandemic), inspired and based upon the original FoodLab model in Detroit.

FoodLab Sydney launched as a multi-institutional partnership between:



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 - Migrants
 - Women
 - Culturally and linguistically diverse groups
 - First Nations people
 - Disabled
 - Socio-economically marginalised

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Workshops

- We co-created workshops with local experts:
- Business plan support
- Branding
- Financial and sustainability strategy
- Kitchen and culinary skills
- Food Safety

Mentoring

- We have over 80 mentors involved in FoodLab
- High-profile chefs
- Respected food business owners
- Retailers
- Distributors





Sales Opportunities

- Through partnerships, we offer opportunities for our entrepreneurs to:
- Sell their products
- Cater events
- Run workshops to build
- Start at the markets
- To help build exposure and income streams.



Malar's Story

Current Participant

Malar is a refugee, a single mum of three children that joined FoodLab two months ago.

With the help of FoodLab she raised \$700 to run her very first market stall for refugee week, selling out with her authentic and traditional cuisine.

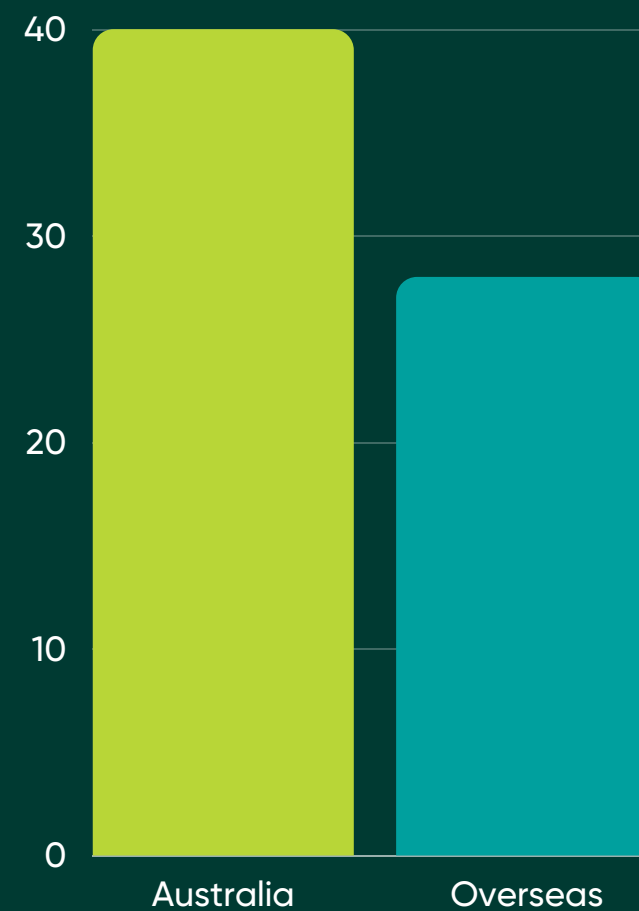
When we saw Malar on the day, she broke down crying tears of joy, saying 'today, my childhood dream came true'.



We have had 72 participants graduate since 2019...



75% Female
25% Male



41%
Born Overseas

17
Different Countries



Outcomes

- 1 Demonstrated success of multi-directional, strengths-based learning approaches
- 2 Confidence to participate in food system
- 3 Development of the 'Entrepreneurial Mindset'
- 4 Growing demand for guidance and support within uncertain times
- 5 Communities of care – relationships development



Network Weaving

Over three years of operations, FoodLab has connected with **491** different community entities and individuals

145 food businesses

89 were community organisations

18 social enterprises with a food focus

21 people/organisations from food media

Alumni Snapshot

64%

Gaining further training, volunteer or employment experience



39%

Launched their business (caterers, food trucks, market stalls and artisan products now stocked in Harris Farm)



7%

Scaling up regionally





FoodLab Today

- Cohort 7 starting this year
- Social enterprise model
- Ongoing engagement with the City of Sydney
- Ongoing engagement with USYD
- Alumni Engagement
- Kitchen Space

Follow our Story

www.foodlabsydney.org.au



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