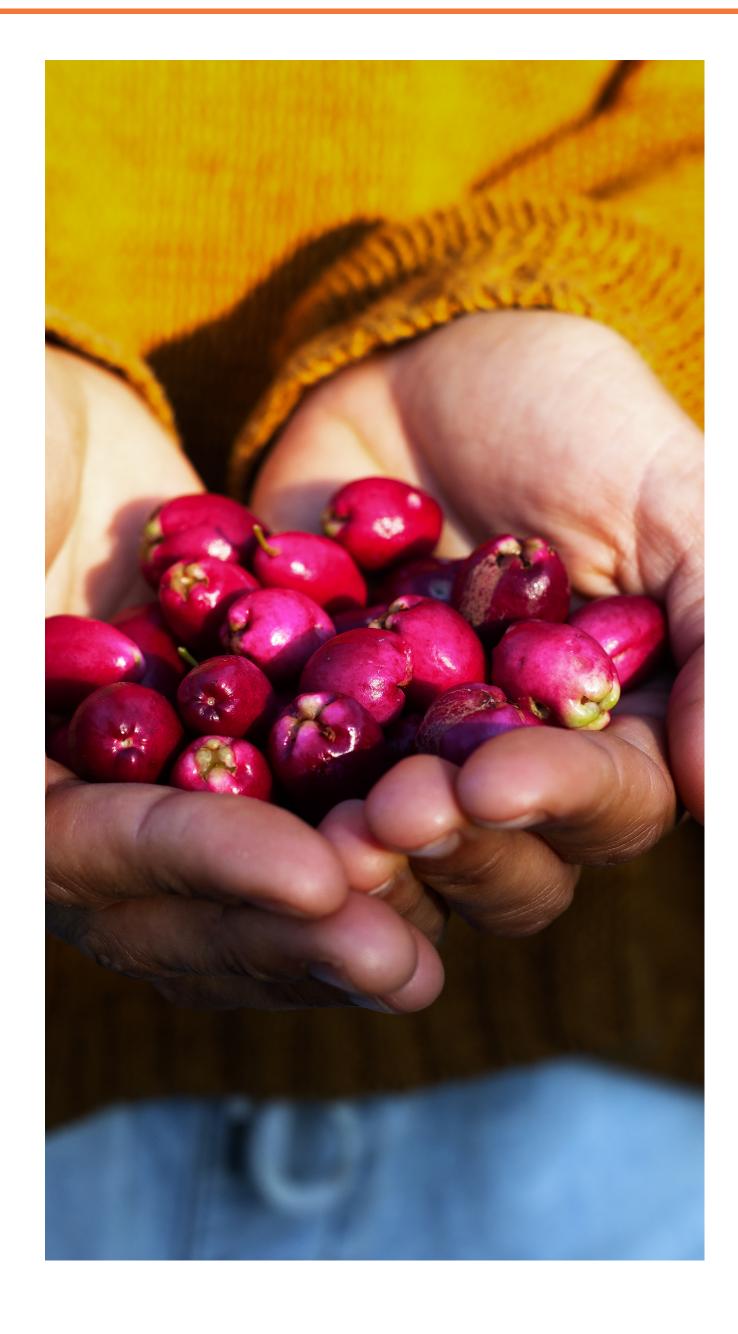
# NATIVE AG+F00D IDEAS2BUSINESS

2020

# Program Report







# CONTENTS

03 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

04 OUR PURPOSE

05 GROWING THE NATIVE AG&FOOD SECTOR

06 OUR INITIATIVES

07 IDEAS2BUSINESS OVERVIEW

08 MEET THE COHORT

09 PROGRAM MENTORS

10 PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

11 CASE STUDIES

20 CONCLUSION

21 TEAM





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOOD FUTURES COMPANY WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR PARTNERS AND MENTORS WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY PROVIDED THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO ENSURE THIS FIRST NATIVE AG+FOOD IDEAS2BUSINESS PROGRAM WAS A GREAT SUCCESS.

- ThincLab (The University of Adelaide): Eloise Leaver (ThincLab International Incubator Program Manager & ThincLab Waite Manager) has been involved throughout the design and delivery of the program including developing program content; recruiting and selecting participants; connecting to an extensive network of mentors and experts; and providing coaching support to participants throughout.
- Australian Native Food and Botanicals (ANFAB): Suzanne Thompson (Chair) and Dale Tilbrook (Director) supported the Food Futures team with their extensive knowledge of the sector; during the selection process; and by officially opening the program and providing the teams with their insights and guidance in relation to access and benefit sharing.
- Bite Communications for their partnership through generating news for Food Futures Company and supporting our cohort with media training.
- AgriFutures Australia are supporting Food Futures initiatives via a research grant.
- The experts and entrepreneurs who shared their experience and knowledge during the Masterclass series, as panel members, and as judges during the pitch event.
- The many mentors who helped guide the teams as they explored their ideas and established their native ag+food businesses.

ThincLab.







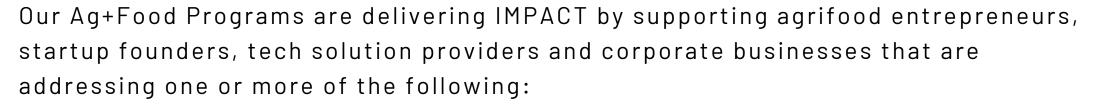
Food Futures Company acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# OUR PURPOSE

WE ARE A BUSINESS WITH A CLEAR PURPOSE TO WORK ON THE KEY CHALLENGES REQUIRED TO TRANSFORM THE GLOBAL AGRIFOOD SYSTEM.





- Making a positive contribution to human health & wellbeing
- Creating agrifood production systems that are transparent, ethical and environmentally sustainable
- Reducing waste and improving food security
- Supporting Australia's regional development





# GROWING NATIVE AG+FOOD SECTOR

THERE IS CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL FOR THE NATIVE AG + FOOD SECTOR TO ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AND DELIVER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH OUTCOMES THAT WILL BENEFIT INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS; COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS; REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES; AND THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY.

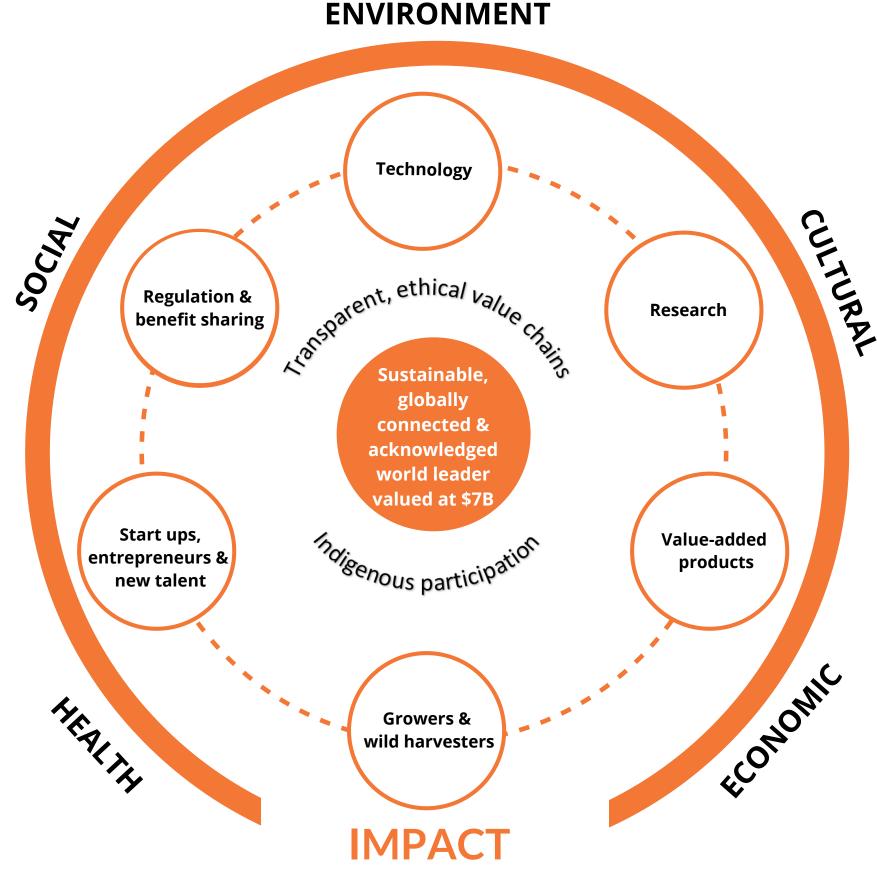
#### Opportunities exist to create:

- Value added food products that resonate with global market opportunities such as plant-based proteins
- Functional ingredients in food and cosmetics that address health and wellness needs
- Bioceuticals with medicinal applications

However, to-date the sector has struggled to capitalise on these opportunities. Our *Theory of Change* is that sector growth requires a systems-based approach which addresses:

- Whole of value chain design and integration
- Attracting new talent and building a critical mass of entrepreneurial capability that will be required to commercialise value-added products and business model innovations
- Adoption of modern agrifood science and tech solutions that complement ancient wisdom and technologies
- Engaging investors and attracting capital

Of fundamental importance is the need to address the appropriate treatment of traditional knowledge and the development of access and benefit sharing protocols that ensure that native ag+food value chains are constructed based on ethical principles. Increased participation and engagement of Australia's First Nations people in all areas of the sector's growth will be key to its future.



## **OUR INITIATIVES**

TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF THE NATIVE AG+FOOD SECTOR, FOOD FUTURES COMPANY HAS LAUNCHED A SUITE OF INITIATIVES THAT ADDRESS GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT THE SYSTEMS LEVEL.

#### **IDEAS2BUSINESS**

The Ideas2Business early-stage accelerator program is aimed at creating a pipeline of entrepreneurial businesses that will become the 'engine' of commercialisation of value-added products and business model innovations. This program was launched in 2020 and is the first accelerator in Australia to specifically target this sector. Our focus is on ensuring these businesses make a positive contribution to building integrated value chains that are ethical, sustainable and commercially viable. This report provides an overview of the outcomes of the first Ideas2Business program.

#### **SCALE-UP INCUBATOR**

The 6-9 month Scale-Up Incubator initiative supports more mature businesses to build capacity, refine their business models and to get ready for the next stage of growth in domestic and international markets. While the Scale-Up Incubator is broader than Native Ag+Food it is anticipated that several graduates from the Ideas2Business program will be invited to participate.

#### NATIVE AG+FOOD TECH CHALLENGE

Assisted by a grant from AgriFutures, we are identifying key gaps and opportunities in value chain capabilities and enabling technologies. The Native Ag+Food Tech Challenge is aimed at attracting agtech and foodtech developers to the sector and to support adoption by value chain participants. This initiative is intended to complement traditional knowledge and ancient technological innovations.

#### NATIVE AG+FOOD INVESTMENT ADVISORY GROUP

A key barrier to accelerating sector growth has been the relatively low levels of commercial investment. Food Futures Company has established a Native Ag+Food Investment Advisory Group to assist in the development of strategies and initiatives to overcome this barrier.

#### **GROWERS2MARKETS**

We have identified a need for growers and wild harvesters to be connected more closely to market opportunities and for value chains to be constructed to ensure that value can be captured.

The Growers2Markets initiative will launch in early 2021. We have also formed a partnership with Enterprise Learning Projects to assist with their 2021 Incubator program which targets emerging businesses in remote Indigenous communities in NT.

## INDIGENOUS INNOVATORS + ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This targeted program will seek to attract young Indigenous talent into the sector from multiple disciplines: agriculture; engineering; food and culinary science; and business and marketing. In partnership with ANFAB; Charles Sturt University and the Girls Academy we have developed a project to increase participation by Indigenous Girls and Women in the Native Ag+Food sector.



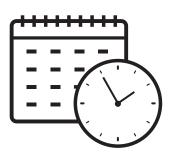
## **IDEAS2BUSINESS OVERVIEW**

THE IDEAS2BUSINESS PROGRAM IS A THREE-MONTH EARLY-STAGE ACCELERATOR FOR INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS START-UPS AND ENTREPRENEURS OPERATING IN THE NATIVE AG+FOOD SECTOR

#### **STRUCTURE**

- 5 x half-day workshop sessions at important milestone stages
- Program delivered fully virtually due to COVID restrictions (face to face elements reintroduced in 2021)
- Fortnightly 1:1 business support coaching with FFCo coaches and mentors
- Fortnightly group content with mentors and coaches
- Expert masterclasses covering a range of topics: Appropriate benefit sharing protocols, branding + social media, entrepreneurial mindset, food safety/quality, regulations and claims
- Pitch practice and opportunity to present to a external audience
- Social events to enhance peer-to-peer connections
- Online community and access to resources, program content and broader ecosystem networks
- Extensive PR and social media exposure exposure

### **PROGRAM BENEFITS**



Map out a 12 month plan of growth



Become proficient at pitching



Validate idea with consumers



Identify a viable business model and revenue stream



Expand your network



Improve your understanding of best practice



We saw direct growth in our business through the learnings we applied from the Ideas2Business program and couldn't be happier with everything we learned.

HAYDEN MARKS, MELBOURNE BUSHFOODS



## MEET THE COHORT

FROM AQUAPONIC FARMS TO UNIQUE VALUE-ADDED FOOD PRODUCTS SOURCED THROUGH ETHICAL VALUE CHAINS, OUR COHORT IS COMPRISED OF TEAMS MAKING AN IMPACT IN THE INDIGENOUS AG+FOOD SECTOR.



**Jida Gulpilil** 



Niyoka Bundle
Pawa Catering and Events



Hayden Marks Melbourne Bushfoods



**Doug & Tracey Goebel Native Oz Bushfoods** 



Araluen Hagan 14K Brewery



Scott Triana SOTA



Eddie Nye SOTA



Rachel McMillan McMillan & Drew



**Dominic Smith Edible Reconciliation** 



**Andrew Fielke Edible Reconciliation** 



**Leeanne Barlow**The Origin Food Co.



I have developed rewarding and long-lasting relationships with cohorts and mentors. The program has enriched my passion, joy and appreciation to be working in the Native Ag+Food sector.

RACHEL MCMILLAN, MCMILLAN & DREW

## PROGRAM MENTORS

OUR SELECTION OF INDUSTRY EXPERTS AND MENTORS ACROSS THE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM BROUGHT INVALUABLE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO THE PROGRAM RESULTING IN THE TEAMS BUSINESS AND PERSONAL GROWTH.



Hayley Blieden Co-founder The Superfood Co.



Juraj Durco Co-founder FAPIC Global



Dale Tilbrook
Native Food Specialist & Director
ANFAB



Joshua Gilbert
Indigenous Consultant
PWC Indigenous Consulting



Sharon Natoli
Director
Food & Nutrition Australia



Tim Wearne COO Keeping Company



Ryan Miller CEO Keeping Company



James Preuss
Managing Director
Concierge Genetics



Dr Emma Beckett
Food Science & Human Nutrition
University of Newcastle



Michael Fox Co-founder & CEO Fable Food Co.



Suzanne Thompson Chair ANFAB



Craig North

Managing Director
Indigenous Impact Pty Ltd



Ricky Chau Founder & CEO Taste Studio



Fiona Flemming

Managing Director

FJ Flemming Food Consulting



Chris McLoghlin Co-founder & CPO Fable Food Co.



Alicia Dudek Founder Mycroreality



Thank you and look forward to working with your team in the future.

RICKY CHAU, TASTE STUDIOS



# PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

**52** 



12





NONINDIGENOUS LED
APPLICATIONS



EARLY-STAGE ENTREPRENEURS





ADVANCED FOUNDERS

50%
INDIGENOUS
FOUNDERS

42%
(NOTE: SOME TEAMS HAD TWO CO-

FEMALE FOUNDERS

135
CUSTOMER
INTERVIEWS





**UP TO 1000%** 

**INCREASED REVENUE** 



12
INTERVIEWS















140K

PRESS AUDIENCE



135

SOCIAL
MEDIA
MENTIONS &
SHARES





# CASE STUDIES



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Thank you so much for everything. This has been a phenomenal experience! I would love to help future programs in any way possible!

- SCOTT TRIANA, SOTA



# NIYOKA BUNDLE

## PAWA CATERING, FORMED 2019

Melbourne based, Indigenous entrepreneur Niyoka Bundle and her husband Vincent Manning founded Pawa Catering, a fusion of native ingredients paired with Western-style foods.

Pawa Catering achieved significant growth during it's first year, achieving \$240,000 revenue within 10 months of inception.

Niyoka entered the Ideas2Business program with a newly formed concept, DIY native themed pizza kits, a response to COVID's impact on her catering business.

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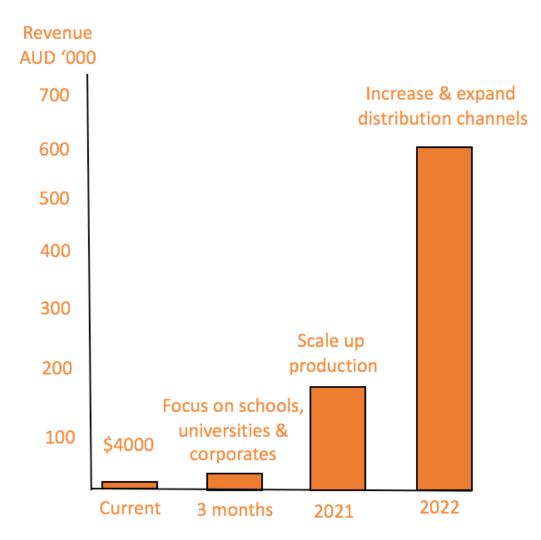
I learnt so much in the program through coaching and the mentors. They gave really great insight into the things you may have missed or should be doing.

Niyoka applied to the program to help her to refine the idea, understand her different consumer segments and work out the best way to scale the operation. Through Niyoka's customer discovery work during the program, she was able to refine her key marketing messages for different consumers whom she had not considered previously. As a result, Niyoka was able to refine the unique value proposition of her solution- ultimately leading to much stronger consumer engagement and customer acquisition.

The program has boosted Niyoka's confidence and helped her to identify and initiate strategic distribution opportunities with key delivery partners resulting in a projected \$170,000 revenue by mid-2021.



PIZZA KITS
PROJECTED GROWTH



Next, plans are to scale manufacturing capacity and production, enter new channels to market such as speciality food retailers and focus on expanding her growth nationally, resulting in a predicted increase in revenue to over \$600,000 by 2022.

Through the program, Niyoka also developed her plan to build a fully Indigenous-led value chain and is progressing conversations with potential strategic partners. Similarly, Niyoka's core catering business will resume following the lifting of COVID restrictions and is predicted to quickly regain it's previous growth trajectory.





## **HAYDEN MARKS**

## MELBOURNE BUSHFOODS, FORMED 2019

Hayden Marks, a young entrepreneur from Victoria founded Melbourne Bushfoods in September 2019 with a social mission to bring native ingredients to the forefront of Australian minds and pantries. The business grew rapidly with their unique mix of native ingredient value-added food products including chocolates, teas, spices and herbs.

Hayden entered the program to explore a new and complementary product offering of selling native plant seedlings direct to consumers and was finding it challenging to keep up with demand and the rapid scaling of his business.

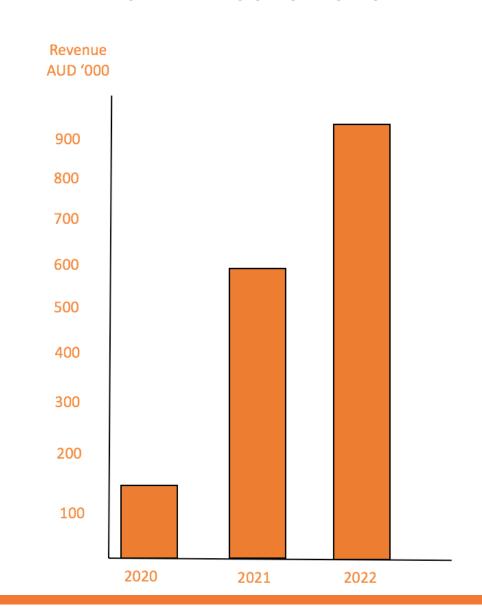
The customised Ideas2Business program recognised Hayden's need to focus on some of the key fundamentals of running a business (such as implementing correct legal structures, cash management and financial accounting, and supplier procurement strategies) paired with key considerations on how to rapidly scale a business effectively.



Since joining, I've understood my customer and have the tools to confidently validate new product ideas. We saw direct growth in our business through the learnings we applied from the Ideas2Business program and couldn't be happier with everything we learnt.



#### FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS



Through the program, Hayden identified the need to refine how to position his business within the market to ensure differentiation and reflect his impact purpose around social and financial outcomes to Indigenous communities and groups he is working in partnership with. Value chain mapping and business model design was a new concept to Hayden and since it's implementation through the program, Hayden has been able to triple his revenue month on month.



Following the program, Hayden has hired a number of team members, is scoping out new manufacturing capabilities and implementing formal arrangements with his suppliers.



# DOUG & TRACEY GOEBEL

## NATIVE OZ BUSHFOODS, FORMED 2018

Tracey Goebel and her husband Bunjalung man Doug, run a 16-hectare native farm located in Ropely, Queensland. The team create value-added native food products including salts and jams and have been developing a native education garden.

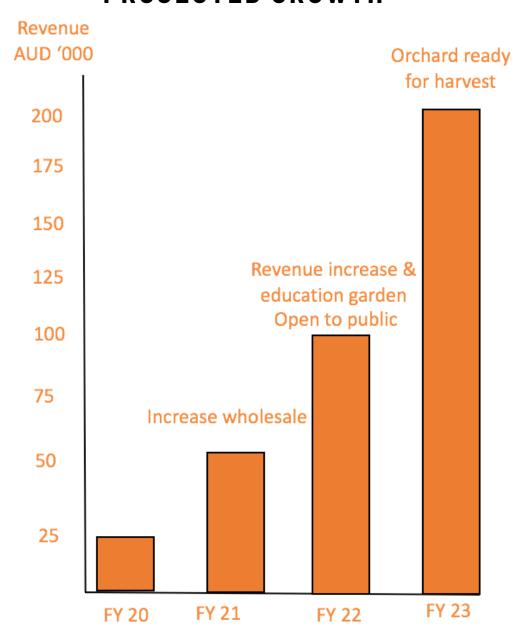
Tracey entered the Ideas2Business program with a goal to gain more confidence in running her business and to work out which direction she should focus on strategically. Through intensive customer interviewing in the first two phases of the program, Tracey was able to refine her current solution and deliver new service offerings to her consumers based on evidence of current problems they were experiencing. Tracey was able to pinpoint that there was a significant gap in knowledge in how to use native ingredients and this was creating a barrier to purchase. The program helped Tracey to develop a digital marketing plan using the offering of education in response to this discovery.



We want to teach that natives are not just a tree or a shrub, that they can be a source of sustainable living as they have been for many thousands of years, educate the community, keep our culture alive and help ignite the future generation.



PROJECTED GROWTH



During the program, Tracey doubled her quarterly revenue and is on track to double this again through increased wholesaler interest. Tracey has completed the program with confidence, new goals and expanding public interest in her products and education garden with projected revenue to be over \$250,000 by 2023.





# EDDY NYE & SCOTT TRIANA

## SOTA, FORMED 2020

Eddy Nye, a regenerative agriculturist and Scott Triana, founding member of Bailey Nelson joined the Ideas2Business program with an idea for a range of sparkling water beverages infused with native ingredients. The SOTA team identified significant growth opportunities in a global market that is currently valued at \$13B and predicted to double in the next 5 years. The success of healthier options such as Kombucha (valued at \$200M) indicated that Australian consumers (and overseas markets) were actively looking for alternatives to soft drinks and a growing demand for natural, sustainably sourced ingredients.



I think for me, it's how we do market research and proof of concept through the interview process. We had an idea of process but then to have the skills that we were on the right path which has shaped the business model moving forward.

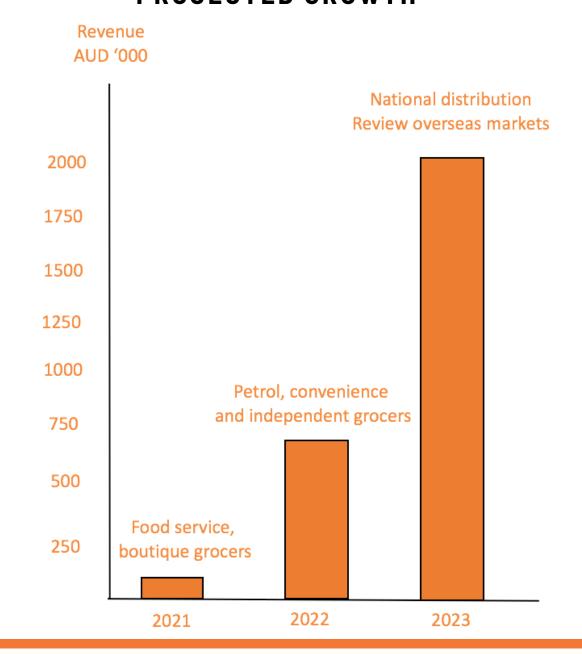
#### - SCOTT TRIANA

After diving into customer research with their target segment, the team developed deep insights into consumer purchase behaviours, consumption occasions and problems with existing solutions which indicated huge potential for an Australian brand that delivered on taste and impact.

Through the program, the team evolved their business model to focus on food service channels, identified critical strategic comanufacturing partners who could deliver on



#### PROJECTED GROWTH



the product attributes required, and developed a deeper understanding of their value chain with a clear focus on establishing partnerships with Indigenous Enterprises to promote Australian natives.

Eddy and Scott have identified their go-to-market strategy which includes the release of 3 x SKU's and a focus on brand aligned food service outlets, boutique grocers and developing strong partnerships with distributers. SOTA's growth forecasts see the team reaching \$680K in revenue by 2022 increasing to \$2M with national distribution by 2023. The team will begin to explore export markets by year 3. SOTA plans to be a leader in the flavoured sparkling water category and are currently preparing to raise their first round of seed funding.





# ARALUEN HAGAN

## 14K BREWERY, FORMED 2016

Araluen Hagan co-founded 14K Brewery with her husband in Lower Chittering, Western Australia. Having identified a growing culture of non-drinkers with the market tipped to grow at 5% YoY growth to reach \$1.5B by 2025, Araluen entered the program wanting to explore several alcohol-free alternatives.

Using the lean canvas and customer discovery process delivered in the program, Araluen was able to establish a more strategic plan and identify which business direction to focus on moving forward. Shrubs is a uniquely Australian, non-alcoholic beverage which deliver on consumer expectations for healthier, more natural options and respond to the desire for more premium and sophisticated offerings.

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I think that the shrubs we are making are a great way to unleash the flavour of Australia to the world. My next step is continuing what I am doing and also expanding and educating people on native plants.

Shrubs are infused with native ingredients, that not only add great flavour, they support Araluen's desire to drive awareness of Australia's native foods and create real consumer interest. Mentored by Indigenous elder, Dale Tilbrook, Araluen will continue to promote the role native foods play in supporting biodiversity that creates positive impact on people and the planet.



Armed with an increased understanding of the consumer, Araluen has been able to range her product in an increasing number of local stores 14k Brewery sales increasing by 230%.

Scale up is the next step for Araluen as she continues rolling out her business plan developed in the program. Araluen and her husband are raising funds to increase their production capacity and open a public venue on their property.





## RACHEL MCMILLAN

## MCMILLAN & DREW, FORMED 2020

Rachel McMillan, co-founder of McMillan & Drew, specialist growers and garden designers, is a landscape designer and horticulturist. Rachel entered the program to increase the production side of her business and was looking to expand her network in the native food industry. During the program, Rachel saw an opportunity to increase the number of edible native gardens for restaurants, cafes and homes.

During phase three of the program, value chains and benefit-sharing protocols, alongside 1:1 coaching, Rachel began to understand the financial outcomes possible by maximising cashflow through the production side of her business.

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The importance of deeply understanding my customer, knowing my value chain, and having connections with our local Indigenous community have helped shape a clear vision.

Rachel now has a clear vision and has the tools to move forward with her business. One of the main outcomes for Rachel was being able to clearly package up her edible garden design solutions for different customer segments to streamline her business and maximise value. She will continue to test and refine these solutions and will work towards scaling up this aspect of the business at a national level.



Recently teaming up with Chalkhill Collective and Never Never Gin Company, McMillan & Drew has been tasked to develop the grounds into an interactive and productive garden including a bush trail concentrated on botanicals. This will be one of the first tests of her packaged up design solutions.





# DOMINIC SMITH & ANDREW FIELKE

## EDIBLE RECONCILIATION, FORMED 2020

Edible Reconciliation was formed as a joint venture between native food grower and Yuin man, Dominic Smith (Pundi Produce) and well-known South Australian native food chef Andrew Fielke (Creative Native Foods).

Pundi Produce is Supply Nation accredited, and Dom has developed a wealth of knowledge about growing native products. Hi innovative aquaponics system uses less water, land and labour than traditional agriculture. In fact, it works so well that he doesn't need to use chemical fertilisers, pesticides or insecticides.

Dom refers to his unique growing system as 'nature in a box'.

Dom wants to create more opportunities for indigenous people to become involved in the native ag+food sector through employment and potentially owning their own farms. He plans to share his knowledge and expertise through training and mentoring programs.

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To have a native food industry without Indigenous participation is unthinkable. We are committed to working and walking together as a tangible act of edible reconciliation.

The idea behind 'Edible Reconciliation' is quite simple. By introducing native Australian foods into our diet we not only benefit from the incredibly diverse flavours and health



benefits they bring, we also have the opportunity to engage deeply with Indigenous Australians to develop sustainable and equitable business relationships.

Andrew has been at the forefront of modern Native Australian Cuisine for decades and has been supplying unique ingredients and value-added products to the hospitality, food service, retail and tourism sectors. He is also passionate about educating Australians through his cook books and his education initiative targeting schools Australia wide.



Dom and Andrew have plans to develop a range of value-added products for distribution via the Edible Reconciliation brand and to use the platform to build awareness of the significant cultural, social, environmental and economic benefits that native ag+food can deliver.

Edible Reconciliation is currently seeking new growing partners (particularly Indigenous groups) and investors to further expand their supply base.

## LEEANNE BARLOW

### THE ORIGIN FOOD CO. FORMED 2020

Leeanne Barlow, founder of The Origin Food Co. joined the Ideas2Business program with an idea to incorporate native ingredients into everyday ready-to-eat meals that would address consumer requirements for healthy, convenient options.

Leeanne identified significant growth opportunities in a market that is currently valued at \$4.5M in Australia with YoY growth projections of 26.9% and Australian consumers already demonstrating acceptance of the product category. Her customer research also indicated a growing interest in native ingredients with consumers looking to explore these new flavours but wanting greater accessibility.

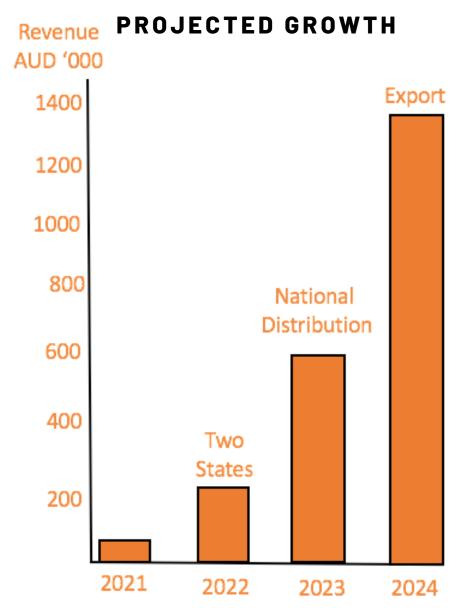


My customer discovery sessions were eye-openers to me. It's straightforward to come up with an idea; family and friends tell you it's a good idea. Then you talk to the real world, and they open your eyes to what they actually want. It was a game-changer.

During the program Leeanne refined her business model, registered her business, increased her product development efforts and established a digital presence to validate consumer interest in her value proposition.

She has developed her go-to-market strategy which includes 8 x SKU's and both online direct-to-consumer and retail channels (farmers markets, boutique grocers and artisan butchers).





Her growth forecasts see her reaching \$200K in revenue by 2022 increasing to \$1.4M with national coverage within 3 years. The Origin Food Company will begin to explore export markets in the Asia Pacific region by 2024 where the ready meals market is predicted to grow to \$55B by 2023.



Leeanne plans to be a leader in the ready-toeat meal category and is confident that her unique value proposition will see her company achieve her growth targets. She is currently seeking a business partner interested in joining her as an equity partner.





## CONCLUSIONS

While this was the first Native Ag+Food Ideas2Business program, there is clear demonstration that with the right support, early stage entrepreneurs and business founders are able to achieve considerable progress. In a relatively short space of time we saw:

- Clear evidence of customer traction both B2C and B2B
- Revenue growth in one case by > 1000%
- Increased clarity around business model, goto-market strategy, and capital/fund raising
- High quality pitch decks
- Understanding of importance of creating impact including benefit sharing and increasing Indigenous participation along the value chain

The program demonstrated that it is possible to build capable and well-performing value-added businesses that will in turn support broader industry growth via their impact on:

- Increasing customer understanding and demand
- Developing higher value products that deliver greater returns along the value chain
- Providing clearer market signals to growers and wild harvesters and in many cases playing an active role in building the supply side

Food Futures Company will expand our engagement in the native ag+food sector in 2021. Our aim is to continue to build capability and performance of the sector and to create a critical mass of high-performing integrated value chains. We believe this will create the foundation for accelerating growth across the sector and will provide the confidence for increased investment along the entire value chain.





# Team



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