



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

SUPPORTED BY

**CITY OF SYDNEY** 



# 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



Sydney2030 Green Global Connected

CITY OF SYDNEY  

## A City for All

Towards a socially just  
and resilient Sydney

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Social Sustainability Policy & Action Plan 2018-2028

*city of villages*

# 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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- Refugees
- 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.

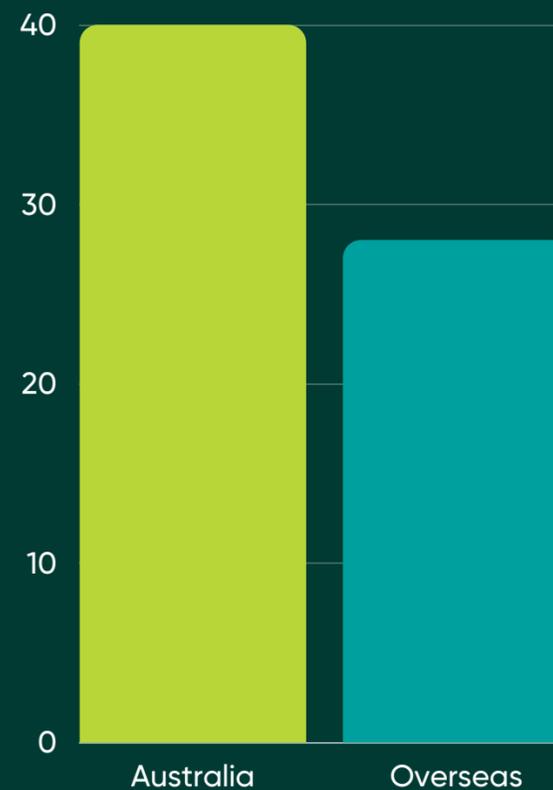
When we saw Malar on the day, she broke down crying tears of joy, saying 'today, my childhood dream came true'.



# 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](http://www.foodlabsydney.org.au)



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