

CASE STUDY: SHOWCASING NATIVE AG + FOOD INDUSTRY TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Central Coast NSW



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Food FuturesCompany has developed the Indigenous Women in Entrepreneurship & STEM PathwaysProgram to facilitate increased participation by First Nations people in the native ag+food sector. Implementation of the program includes initiatives developed and delivered via five Regional Hubs across Australia, including one on the Central Coast of NSW which has established collaborative networks and a track record of connecting education, community, and industry to deliver educational outcomes, particularly at the secondary school level.

In this project, multiple stakeholders combined to create a program that would encourage young Indigenous women to consider the role they can play in developing the Native Ag+Food industry, the food industry more broadly, and at the same time, deepening their connection to country.

The project also focused on the application of STEM and entrepreneurial capabilities as key enablers of future careers.



KEY OBJECTIVES

Australia's Native Ag+Food industry is enjoying increasing success but despite being fundamental to Indigenous culture and identity, <2% of participants are Indigenous. However, there are some great examples of Indigenous women who have created successful and diverse careers through the application of STEM and entrepreneurial capabilities.

The key objectives of this schools-based project are to:

Create cultural awareness and connections

Connect the students to Aboriginal Elders who can share their knowledge of local Indigenous plants, their cultural importance, and the role they could play in building sustainable future food systems

Inspire new career aspirations

Through exposure to successful female Indigenous entrepreneurs, demonstrate the career possibilities that exist within Australia's Native Ag+Food industry.

Demonstrate value of STEM and entrepreneurship

Use role models and introductions to university lecturers and tertiary students to show how developing STEM and entrepreneurial capabilities will open up a raft of exciting career opportunities.



*"I learnt deep insight about my culture.
I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity."*

"It was a great experience because of everything we learnt."

Student participants

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A week-long industry immersion program was developed to showcase career opportunities in the Native Ag+Food industry while also creating links to local Indigenous culture. The program was aimed at year 10 students with 10 participants joining from either Wyong High School or Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College – Tumby Umbi Campus. Events throughout the week included:

- Art workshop where students gained knowledge about the appropriate use and significance of art symbol relevant to the local area. This knowledge was put into practice with the students creating a design to represent the project.
- Guided tour led by Aunty Bronwyn Chambers where local Indigenous bushfoods were identified and their cultural significance explained.
- Inspiring presentations from women in STEM including both students and staff from the University of Newcastle's Food Science & Nutrition Faculty.
- Presentations by female Indigenous role models including Aunty Dale Chapman founder of My Dilly Bag and Aunty Pat Torress founder of Mayi Harvests.
- Visit to Indigenous owned native plant nursery IndigiGrow in La Perouse, Sydney.
- Communication, leadership and empowerment activities facilitated by career advisors from Wyong High, Timbi Umbi Campus, Wollotuka Institute and Holly Hoad, Food Futures Program Co-ordinator.

The students used workbooks to track their reflections and learnings throughout the week. It was clear from the student feedback that they found this initial experience very rewarding and enjoyable. They have built lasting relationships and the opportunity to network outside of school that will create connections with Indigenous female leaders that will be invaluable as they build their future careers.

Next steps for the project will include:

- Further cultural learning and mentorship with Indigenous leaders such as Aunty Bronwyn and Wollotuka
- Deeper immersion into STEM tertiary pathways with University of Newcastle students and staff
- Future workshops with local entrepreneurs including potential for work placements
- Native ag+food and entrepreneurial capability building to be embedded into curriculum across a range of subjects



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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.