

Bush To Bowl

IEP Program 2023



Bush to Bowl is a 100% owned indigenous social enterprise that seeks to foster healing and connection for First Nations People, aligning them with Country and traditional foodways.



They achieve this through two primary streams:

- **Native Landscaping Business:** This arm of Bush to Bowl focuses on landscaping services that incorporate native plants and reflect traditional landscaping techniques. The intent is not only to increase the presence of native plants in urban landscapes but also to educate clients about the history and significance of the land and plants they interact with.
- **Native Product Range:** Bush to Bowl propagates and sells native ingredients, bringing the taste and health benefits of these traditional foods to a broader audience.

COMING INTO THE PROGRAM

Clarence Bruinsma, a Yaegl man, and Adam Byrne, a Garigal/Gadigal man, established Bush to Bowl in 2021 with a shared vision to create spaces where families and community members could engage with Australia's native plants and traditional Aboriginal knowledge and culture. Adam's background in landscaping and design served as the foundation for Bush to Bowl. Teaming up with Clarence, they gradually expanded their landscaping venture into a thriving nursery and wholesale produce business. Both Clarence and Adam recognised a growing necessity to honour their Elders and continue practising their culture as a way to give back to Country, their Mob and the wider community.



Despite Bush to Bowl's growing success, they identified areas of their business that needed improvement and sought assistance through the CSU Indigenous Entrepreneurship Program. They were specifically interested in enhancing operational efficiencies concerning staff productivity and customer interactions. They aimed to create a more structured sales funnel and a robust approach to business development. They also sought guidance in drafting policy documents to protect their schedule of rates and conditions for harvesting native plants. One of the main reasons for participating in the program was to broaden their business network and increase exposure for Bush to Bowl.

PROGRAM JOURNEY



Throughout the program, Bush to Bowl has seen immense growth and development. One of their most significant achievements was the expansion of their nursery site, which grew from four hundred square metres to nearly four thousand square metres. The Nursery and Farm have become places for people to learn and connect over native plants, as well as buy plants to grow at home or purchase direct produce for home cooking. In terms of online presence, Bush to Bowl migrated their website from Squarespace to Shopify, creating a separate login for their wholesale business customers. They also adopted the CRM platform HubSpot, enabling them to efficiently manage their database and design an effective sales funnel to expand their customer base. Bush to Bowl took advantage of the opportunity to present at the CSU Innovation Showcase, where they could deepen their industry connections and include their family and First Nations community in the event.

“The CSU showcase was really good and very productive. It broke down the barriers of people being shy and camera shy and talking about their business. It also gave us an opportunity to present in front of our people, the people we’ve just learnt with and the people we’ve just walked with. It also gave us the opportunity to promote what we’re about. What we’ve put together over a 4 month period in 3 minutes.”

Furthermore, they had an expo stand at the organic and wellness trade show, Naturally Good in Sydney. This exposure allowed them to meet key stakeholders across the supply chain and secure immediate buyers. Throughout the program, they have also played a supportive role, offering business guidance and contact introductions to their peers.

IMPACT

Bush to Bowl envisions a future where native foods are an integral part of mainstream diets. Recognising the superfood qualities of bush foods, they advocate for their incorporation in our diets as a healthier option and a way of connecting with Australia and Mother Earth. A fundamental part of their vision is community connection and empowerment through bush foods and gardening. Through their 'Connecting to Country' program, they are actively working with remote, local communities, preschools and primary schools to build bush tucker gardens. However, their approach goes beyond gardening, they also educate these communities on how to use and prepare the food, emphasising the cultural significance attached to it. Their vision also involves greater representation of First Nations products in mainstream grocery stores and wider community engagement in the bushfood industry. They believe there is room for everyone in this expansive field, especially in relation to wild harvesting and collection of traditional foods.



Moreover, they stress the importance of land access; the ability to propagate and harvest from the land. They also call for clearer policies regarding what Aboriginal people can do in the bushfood industry. At its core, Bush to Bowl's future lies in bringing people together through food, culture and the shared respect for Mother Earth. Their vision is one of unity, health, and cultural preservation, all centred around the sustainable and respectful use of Australia's native bush foods.

WHAT'S NEXT

A vital insight for Bush to Bowl during the program has been acknowledging that they don't have to be experts in all areas. They've recognised the abundance of services available to support their growth and are now proactively seeking help, with clear priorities in place for external assistance.

Over the next 6 to 12 months, their focus is on scaling their operations, ensuring they have the necessary infrastructure to facilitate this expansion. A primary aspect of this strategy is investing in the right team and equipping them with the necessary training. Bush to Bowl are fortunate to have a strong foundation with a burgeoning customer base, and their aim is to maintain their reputation for quality during this period of growth. To support these plans, they are also seeking funding for marketing activities and to implement proper legal policies. These policies are intended to safeguard their land, staff, and the beneficial work they carry out in their community and in the broader native foods industry.



About Food Futures Company

Food Futures supports, commercialises and invests in agile startups, entrepreneurs and disruptive technologies to be the vehicles of change for a better food system.

