



Native Fusion

IEP Program 2023

'Native Fusion' is a unique product line that infuses beloved food items and beverages with sustainably sourced native ingredients.



The range includes native olive antipastos, native-infused coffee and cocktail mixes. Through these offerings, 'Native Fusion' serves up delicious and nutritious recipes that not only deliver exceptional taste and health benefits, but also honour the traditional custodians of the land. These high-quality products cater to the premium segment of the market, underscoring the brand's commitment to quality and authenticity. The first product set to hit the shelves under the 'Native Fusion' brand is the native olive antipasto.

COMING INTO THE PROGRAM

With decades of food service experience under her belt, Stacey has successfully run a catering company, ServeWise, that caters primarily to the funeral market. Additionally, she has owned award-winning cafes and food service products. Currently serving as a Culture and Diversity Officer at Tafe NSW, a multifaceted role that also includes training Indigenous entrepreneurs to become Tafe teachers. Stacey is a proficient multitasker who balances her full-time job with her successful catering venture.



"I always wanted retail and vision, over 10 years ago was to have a snack food that was good to go into mini-bars, airlines. Something quick, easy, gourmet but still delicious and experimenting with native flavour is out of this world."

However, Stacey's ambitions extend beyond maintaining the status quo. She wanted to find ways to integrate her passions, streamline her catering business and relaunch her food service range to incorporate Indigenous ingredients. She sought the program to use her vast experience and learnings to create a multi-faceted, sustainable business that would bring Indigenous ingredients into mainstream food service.

PROGRAM JOURNEY

Stacey began the program with a plethora of business ideas, making the initial six weeks of the program a phase of concentrated ideation. Amid an influx of collaboration offers from various food providers, she found herself juggling multiple possibilities, adding to the complexity of her initial offering. However, through many conversations and thorough analyses, Native Fusion was born.

"If you feel supported and you've got what we have in this program it just makes it phenomenal, the companionship, the help, the mentoring. It's just amazing and it's what you need in business. It's hard. It's very very hard to success in everyday business especially now so this is what you need to get moving"



Stacey developed her entrepreneurial skills throughout the four-month program, making significant progress. She created a name for her business, secured a logo design from renowned Indigenous artists and decided upon three product lines. She identified her customer segments and devised her channel strategy. She also chose to present her business at the CSU Innovation Showcase. This experience improved her confidence in presenting her ideas to an audience. Stacey also secured partnerships with a contract manufacturer for the antipasto range as well as the coffee and cocktail mix line. Currently, she's in the process of refining her recipes and sourcing packaging for the antipasto range to be ready to expo at the supply nation food expo in Sydney in August 2023.

IMPACT

As the economic value of native foods gains recognition, it's vital to acknowledge the rich culture and ancient knowledge that underpins their cultivation and use. This cultural wealth is often at risk of exploitation, and Stacey aims to counteract this through her work with Native Fusion. Stacey has a deeply personal goal to promote awareness and respect for First Nations' traditions and practices. Part of this initiative involves supporting the continuation and recognition of the ancient art of shellwork, a craft practised by her Aunt, Marilyn Russell. Stacey plans to foster understanding and appreciation for this cultural art form through education. She aims to conduct workshops teaching sustainable shell collection from permitted shorelines during the designated seasons. This will be paired with traditional knowledge instruction on the artistry of creating fishhooks and jewellery, thus preserving and passing along these skills.



WHAT'S NEXT?



In the upcoming 6-12 months, Stacey's key focus will be on understanding and managing the financial aspects and cash flows of each offering under Native Fusion. An integral part of this process is setting up an effective legal framework to facilitate successful collaborations with potential contract manufacturers. Stacey is also planning to develop a comprehensive website that seamlessly integrates all her product lines, providing customers with an interactive and efficient platform to explore and purchase Native Fusion's offerings. One of her major goals for the near future is to bring at least two of Native Fusion's products to the gourmet food market.



She anticipates seeing them on the shelves of high-end food stores within the next six months. Stacey's efforts are rooted in establishing Native Fusion as a successful, sustainable business that not only offers unique native food products but also honours and promotes the rich cultural heritage of First Nations.

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.

