

Looking for a Head Chef - Lead a catering kitchen that trains refugee & migrant chefs. Blend culinary excellence with social impact at FoodLab Sydney.

About FoodLab

We are a not-for-profit culinary business incubator passionate about creating an inclusive, diverse and vibrant local food business landscape in Australia.

We do three things: (1) run a food business training program to help educate refugee, migrant, low-income women, and First Nations people on food business skills like food operations, finance, costing, and marketing, (2) offer a commercial shared kitchen for businesses to scale and grow in a book and cook format, and (3) operate a corporate catering business that helps provide a practical training opportunity for participants and to subsidise (1) and (2).

Role Overview

You will lead FoodLab's thriving commercial catering business while empowering refugee, migrant, female, and First Nations entrepreneurs through hands-on training. As Head Chef, you'll drive revenue and profitability to fund life-changing programs, blending culinary excellence with social impact. Oversee kitchen operations, mentor diverse trainees, and refine systems using Lean principles—all while crafting delicious, culturally inspired menus. Your leadership will shape both a sustainable business and a supportive kitchen culture rooted in inclusivity and continuous improvement.

Key Responsibilities

Commercial & Operational Leadership

- Lead the commercial catering business, ensuring it meets annual revenue and profit targets to subsidise FoodLab's training programs.
- Oversee kitchen operations, including food prep, quality control, waste reduction, and workflow efficiency.
- Manage supplier relationships, administration, purchasing, and inventory using the Kanban ordering system to maintain optimal operational margins.
- Implement and refine Lean processes for continuous improvement in all kitchen and business systems

Training and Mentorship

- Support the Managing Director during the training program to train and mentor 8–20 participants per cohort (every 6 months) in kitchen operations, menu design, costing, and chef management skills.
- Mentor participants through the catering business as a practical component of the training program, developing systems for participant growth and feedback.
- Foster a supportive, inclusive kitchen culture that empowers entrepreneurs from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Business Development & Client Management

- Identify and grow new commercial catering opportunities to expand revenue streams.

- Build and maintain client relationships, ensuring a steady pipeline of profitable catering work.
- Handle quoting, invoicing, and customer management using CaterFlex software.

Compliance and Safety

- Ensure full compliance with food safety, WH&S, and hygiene standards across all operations.
- Train kitchen staff and participants in safe and efficient work practices.
- Support equipment maintenance and kitchen management for commercial hire.

Brand & Community Engagement

- When necessary, act as a public face of FoodLab, participating in media, workshops, and promotional activities.
- Contribute to social media content, cooking demonstrations, and educational events.

All other duties as assigned or needed. This role reports to the Managing Director.

Culture & Values

- Champion FoodLab's mission of social impact, fostering a culture of kindness, respect, and collaboration.
- Support the Managing Director in aligning kitchen operations with FoodLab's vision
- Encourage teamwork and cultural exchange among diverse participants
- Lead by example in professionalism, adaptability and continuous learning

Skills and Experience required

- 5+ years as a head chef or executive chef.
- People-oriented with strong interpersonal skills. Experience working with vulnerable people is preferred.
- An adaptable and teachable individual with the capacity to run a successful (profitable) corporate catering business.
- Skilled in food business management preferred but not required.
- Strong organisational, operational, digital, financial and management skills.

FoodLab Core Values:

- Always developing people and their capacity to solve problems
- Customer first mindset
- Continuous improvement

We'd love to hear from you. To apply, please send us your CV and a short cover video (1–2 minutes) telling us a bit about yourself, why you're interested in working at FoodLab, and what you'd bring to the Head Chef role.

No need for a fancy production — a quick video filmed in landscape on your phone is totally fine. We're just keen to get a sense of who you are and why this role speaks to you.

Please email your CV (pdf format only) and cover video (through WeTransfer) to apply@foodlabsydney.org.au by **16 May** (early applications welcomed).

Pay: \$80,000 + Bonus on performance targets. Role includes Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)

FTE: Full Time, 9-5pm role (flexible)