



Success stories

Textured Concept Foods

Nutritional dining with dignity

Textured Concept Foods (TCF) was born from a desire to improve the meal experience for those requiring a texture modified diet, and older adults living in aged care homes.

Aligned in their mission

The key to TCF's success is the passion and drive provided by its co-owners, chef, Darren Benfell and dietician, Lisa Sossen. Working together in aged care homes over 20 years, Darren and Lisa were aligned in their mission to produce visually appealing, nutritionally sound foods that brought normality back to the meal experience.

Texture Modified diets are a safety necessity for those suffering from dysphagia (a chewing and swallowing problem). Historically, these foods are mush, slop, purees, baby-food, deeming it unrecognisable when it arrives on a plate.

Initially, TCF focused on aged care but soon found a demand in the hospital sector.



Development Opportunities

TCF have been engaged with Raj Gopal, a Growth Facilitator from the Australian Government's Entrepreneurs' Programme for the last 5 years, who provided the initial support to enable TCF to realistically assess and prioritise potential growth opportunities and assist with their implementation. Raj helped them to plan and maximise output from their current facility and commit to commence planning a new greenfield facility.

'Accessing funding and advisory support from Raj has enabled us to implement several initiatives and have a much clearer picture of the next 3 to 5 years.' **Darren Benfell, Co-owner, Textured Concept Foods**

TCF experienced growth in its main markets and doubled its output over the last 2 years through tailored advice,

connections and funding provided by the program. These initiatives enabled TCF to bring meals to the home market by:

- Developing pre-plated meals served attractively on a plate and heated easily in a steam environment for maximum nutritional and meal quality preservation
- Forging an alliance with Able Foods (founded for disability clients) to bring meals to the home market.

Gaining and building the right motivated staff was also a challenge TCF faced. The business is transitioning to a more corporate style operation, with decision making structures, quality and effective communication standards, and preparedness to continually review all business operation facets.

Innovation in a niche market

The next stage of the business' growth is to expand the range of products and expand production capacity in a state-of-the-art facility with automation and technology.