

Press release

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'CAMP TO COMMUNITY' PROGRAMME DELIVERS VITAL SOAP TO CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

The launch of the Camp to Community programme, a partnership between Soap Aid, Sodexo Australia and Woollahra Group, is providing critical soap and hygiene resources to help improve health outcomes for Northern Territory communities.

For communities near Alice Springs, the recent delivery of free soap and hygiene education materials is a simple but important contributor to better health outcomes.

The delivery is part of the new Camp to Community initiative, a partnership between not-for-profit organisation Soap Aid, Sodexo Australia and 100%-Indigenous-owned Woollahra Group, which aims to improve access to soap products and hygiene resources for people in remote and regional communities.

Bronwyn Silver, Programme Coordinator at Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), said financial hardship, limited transport options and competing priorities were significant barriers to communities accessing basic hygiene items like soap. As a result, Northern Territory communities experience high rates of skin infections caused by Strep A, which can lead to more serious conditions, such as rheumatic heart disease (RHD) and kidney disease. Other serious illnesses caused by compromised hygiene include pneumonia and diarrheal diseases.

"The soap deliveries are increasing access to these essential health resources while prompting conversations about the importance of handwashing, a critical, yet overlooked practice for good health," said Ms Silver.

Carol Bellew, Soap Aid General Manager Operations, said there were also growing requests for soap donations from community organisations in both regional and urban areas as cost-of-living pressures continued to mount.

"We know that when times are tough, one of the first things to be cut from shopping lists is personal hygiene products, like soap," said Ms Bellew.

“Over the past 18 months, community requests for soap have risen from 30 organisations to 140. Our partnership with Sodexo and Woollahra Group has truly transformed what is possible. Their support not only funds our Soap Aid recycling operations but allows us to recycle and distribute so many more soap bars, with hygiene education, to those who are in dire need.”

The initiative begins in Western Australia’s Pilbara region, where Sodexo collects excess soap from its network of remote mine villages. Woollahra Group transports the collected soap to Soap Aid for reprocessing into fresh, hygienic bars. The recycled soaps are then donated to organisations such as Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation (CAAC), who distribute it across their community networks in the region.

Following a successful trial, 23 mining camps managed by Sodexo in the Pilbara region are participating in the Camp to Community initiative. Since the beginning of the year the villages have collected 4606kg of soap, creating over 46,000 newly crafted soap bars. The collection programme will expand to camps in Queensland and South Australia in May.

With over 25,000 fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) residents living and working in Sodexo’s remote mining accommodation in Australia, the villages are a plentiful source of soap for recycling.

Sodexo Australia Senior Director Tech, Partnerships and Services Adrian Lorenzin said the Camp to Community initiative with Soap Aid and Woollahra Group was a practical example of how collaboration and circular practices could create real positive impact.

“By collecting and recycling a simple product like excess soap from our remote villages, this programme is helping to deliver essential hygiene products and education to vulnerable communities while also reducing product waste that would otherwise go to landfill,” said Mr Lorenzin.

Sam Smith, Woollahra Group CEO, said that as a 100% Indigenous-owned organisation, caring for country was an important core value.

“We set an ambitious goal of eradicating soap bar waste from the mining industry and turning potential waste into a life-saving initiative. The Camp to Community initiative is delivering life-changing outcomes and we are so proud of the results we are achieving together,” said Mr Smith.

About Sodexo Australia

Sodexo in Australia employs a diverse workforce of over 5,000 employees across more than 100 sites, providing services to over 25,000 Energy & Resources workers daily. Sodexo delivers a unique array of integrated services lines, including diverse Food services, as well as FM services like cleaning, aerodrome services, concierge, security, asset and building maintenance and hospitality services in the following segments: Corporate Strategic Accounts and Energy & Resources, both on and offshore.

About Soap Aid

Soap Aid is an Australian not-for-profit organisation founded in 2012 that recycles discarded soap from the accommodation, manufacturing and resources sectors into new bars distributed to vulnerable communities in Australia, New Zealand and worldwide. Partnering with community impact champions, it delivers soap alongside vital handwashing education to prevent hygiene-related diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea, and trachoma. To date, Soap Aid has diverted over 400 tonnes of soap from landfill, distributed more than 4 million bars globally, and provided soap to 633,000+ children and adults—saving lives while cutting carbon emissions by 59% compared to virgin soap production.

About Woollahra Group

Woollahra Group is a proud 100% Indigenous-owned business dedicated to leading change through innovative procurement solutions for government, mining, civil construction, and facilities maintenance sectors. With a Perth-based team, it empowers social consciousness by helping organisations make sustainable purchasing choices that respect First Nations communities and Country. The Group's vision drives exceptional outcomes, transforming procurement for better social and environmental impact across Australia.

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