

Industry-first refugee employment program graduates first cohort

Australia, February 2022

Leading integrated services provider Sodexo Australia (Sodexo) has graduated a class of 10 as part of its refugee employment program, the first of its kind.

The course is designed to support refugee-status Australians in learning enterprise skills to enter the workforce.

Currently, Australian refugees experience an employment rate of just 38 percent, compared to the broader Australian labour force which recorded an unemployment rate of less than 5 percent in July 2021.

Darren Hedley, Sodexo Australia Country President & CEO APAC Energy & Resources said: “Sodexo employs more than five thousand employees from a range of diverse backgrounds.

“Many refugee-status Australians experience barriers to employment such as cultural differences, limited social networks, relevant experience, language proficiency, and unconscious bias.

“Recognising the growing skills shortage, we have the responsibility as an employer to generate avenues to upskill and train people and provide equitable employment opportunities for everyone.”

Sodexo launched their refugee employment program in May 2021 in partnership with South West Metro TAFE.

The inaugural class participated in a four-week training course which covered Health Safety & Environment (HSE) processes, Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) certification, and Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) culture and life, before undergoing a ‘soft-landing’ in a seven-day FIFO roster at Sodexo’s Pilbara-based sites.

All ten participants were later hired into full-time positions with Sodexo.

Daniel Tesfey, program graduate said: “It was difficult getting a job in Australia. Now, I’m really happy. In my mind I sleep well because I have a job.

“This is a new life for me, and I am so happy with Sodexo. Sodexo has accepted us, looked after us. They gave us a chance when no one else would in COVID.”

Further to the program, Sodexo engaged Community Corporate in 2021 to implement a customised DiversityWorks! program to ethically source, select and support refugee jobseekers to access genuine job opportunities within the company.

Sodexo has employed more than 40 refugees across its Australian operations to date and has increased refugee employment by 40 percent since 2020, despite COVID-19 restrictions on travel and refugee movement.

Darren Hedley, Sodexo Australia Country President & CEO APAC Energy & Resources said: “Sodexo has made the global commitment to hire two thousand refugees by 2025.

“By creating employment strategies and initiatives that engage groups that experience exclusion, we believe that we can empower a whole group of Australians who would otherwise be overlooked.”

Three of Sodexo’s clients have expressed interest in introducing the company’s program to their sites in the next 12 months, which has the potential to create opportunities for a further 50 Australian refugees.

For more information around Sodexo’s commitments to diversity and inclusion employment, visit <https://au.sodexo.com/positive-impact/responsible-community-diversity/diversity-equity-inclusion.html>

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About Sodexo Australia

Sodexo in Australia employs a diverse workforce of over 5,000 employees. Sodexo delivers a unique array of over 100 integrated services lines including: catering, facilities management, concierge services, security, asset maintenance and hospitality services in the following segments: Corporate, Healthcare & Seniors, Education, and Energy & Resources both on and offshore.

About Sodexo

Founded in Marseille in 1966 by Pierre Bellon, Sodexo is the global leader in services that improve Quality of Life, an essential factor in individual and organizational performance. Operating in 56 countries, Sodexo serves 100 million consumers each day through its unique combination of On-site Services, Benefits & Rewards Services and Personal & Home Services. Sodexo provides clients an integrated offering developed over more than 50 years of experience: from foodservices, reception, maintenance and cleaning, to facilities and equipment management; from services and programs fostering employees’ engagement to solutions that simplify and optimize their mobility and expenses management, to in-home assistance, child care centers and concierge services. Sodexo’s success and performance are founded on its independence, its sustainable business model and its ability to continuously develop and engage its 412,000 employees throughout the world.

Sodexo is included in the CAC Next 20, CAC 40 ESG, FTSE 4 Good and DJSI indices.

Key Figures

- 17.4 billion euro in Fiscal 2020 consolidated revenues
- 412,000 employees as at August 31, 2021
- 56 countries
- 100 million consumers served daily

- #1 France-based private employer worldwide
- 12 billion euro in market capitalization (as at January 5, 2022)