

Snack cravings no more: FIFO's first autonomous convenience store

Australia, January 2025

Australia's first autonomous retail store at a mining village is a big step towards greater convenience and amenity for thousands of FIFO (Fly-In-Fly-Out) workers in remote locations across the country.

Owned and operated by Sodexo Australia (Sodexo) and using technology by leading AI provider, [AiFi](#), the pilot store will provide a fast and convenient shopping experience for up to 800 residents and guests at the [Rio Tinto](#) Iron Ore Gudai-Darri village.

AiFi's autonomous retail uses computer vision to track customers at each point in the customer journey, allowing them to complete a purchase without the traditional checkout process.

Sodexo Australia Head of Retail, Daniel Zarew, said: "Autonomous experiences are the next evolution in retailing. Offering 24/7 access with no need to wait in lines, we can now deliver a seamless shopping experience—perfect for the varied shifts of mining residents.

"A positive resident experience in mining villages is a priority for Sodexo, and we know that quick and easy access to snacks and drinks at any time is a simple but important amenity, especially during or after a long day out in the field.

"Our survey in 2024 of more than 500 FIFO workers showed how important it is to offer a large range of products and keep popular items in stock."

Housed in a portable shipping container solution fitted out with air conditioning and built-for-purpose to offer more than 50 types of cold beverages and another 50 snacks and confectionary, the Sodexo pilot store centres on convenience. Its portable structure will allow it to move to different sites, bringing joy and convenience to new locations.

Sodexo Australia Managing Director, Keith Weston said: "Sodexo's investment into autonomous retailing demonstrates our commitment to delivering the best resident experience for FIFO workers across Australia's Energy and Resources sector.

"We're proud to lead the way with industry-first initiatives that tap into the latest technology and trends to create vibrant villages and support our clients' operations with happier, more productive workers.

"We'll take the success and learnings of this first store to explore potential opportunities for broader implementation nationwide in the future."

With roughly one camera per square metre, the autonomous store uses AI-powered technology and sensors to track purchases and calculate payment once residents leave the store.

AiFi CEO, Steve Carlin said, “We’re excited to partner with Sodexo to introduce autonomous retail experiences in the Energy and Resources sector.

“By providing convenience and comfort to a remote site, we believe in Sodexo’s commitment to innovative technologies and solutions that enhance the ‘every person’ day-to-day experience. We believe in our technology and know that it is going to bring a lot of joy to Rio Tinto’s residents.”

Officially launched in Gudai-Darri on 29 January, the store is already operating 24/7 to allow village residents to satisfy cravings for popular snacks and drinks at any time of the day or night.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore Managing Director, Port, Rail & Core Services, Richard Cohen, said: “Rio Tinto’s most technically advanced mine, Gudai-Darri, is now also home to the mining industry’s first autonomous retail store at its fly-in fly-out village.

“Providing a range of services and offerings to our workforce is important to ensure they continue to have a great experience while they are in our villages. We’re pleased to partner with Sodexo in their industry-first trial of this new retail technology.”

Nationally, Sodexo has a workforce of over 5,000 employees across more than 100 sites. Daily, the business provides services to over 20,000 Energy and Resources workers.

This industry-first retail site represents the first step in delivering more choice and convenience for residents in remote communities across Australia.

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About Autonomous Stores

Autonomous convenience stores use computer vision, sensors, and machine learning to allow customers to enter, pick up items, and leave without needing to go through a traditional checkout process.

The cameras do not use facial recognition technology but instead track body movements and scan product codes. Customers’ faces are blurred, and their visual data is not stored or saved.

The technology addresses concerns about privacy and data, with scanners focused on the goods selected and facial features completely blurred in video capture. Video recordings can be used to check purchases or confirm refunds and are deleted after a set period.

The Sodexo solution is constructed within shipping containers to create robust, functional, and transportable facilities that comply with disability access codes and cyclone ratings.

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 cleaning, catering, facilities management, 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 Sodexo

Founded in Marseille in 1966 by Pierre Bellon, Sodexo is the global leader in sustainable food and valued experiences at every moment in life: learn, work, heal and play. The Group stands out for its independence, its founding family shareholding and its responsible business model. Thanks to its two activities of Food and Facilities Management Services, Sodexo meets all the challenges of everyday life with a dual goal: to improve the quality of life of our employees and those we serve, and contribute to the economic, social and environmental progress in the communities where we operate. For Sodexo, growth and social commitment go hand in hand. Our purpose is to create a better everyday for everyone to build a better life for all.

Sodexo is included in the CAC Next 20, Bloomberg France 40, CAC 40 ESG, CAC SBT 1.5, FTSE 4 Good and DJSI indices.

Key Figures

- 23.8 billion euros in Fiscal 2024 consolidated revenues
- 423,000 employees as at August 31, 2024
- #1 France-based private employer worldwide
- 45 countries (as at August 31, 2024)
- 80 million consumers served daily
- 11.7 billion euros in market capitalisation (as at January 6, 2025)

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