

ANNUAL REPORT ARTICLE

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Respect | Inclusion | Choice

Telstra teams with Minda's Envirocare

With thousands of Telstra exchanges and network sites across the country, keeping them all well maintained and clean is no easy job. So the telecommunications company is teaming up with Minda and other organisations around the country to do the job, creating employment opportunities for people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

Dubbed Telstra's 'Supported Workforce model' seven community organisations have been contracted to clean and maintain Telstra sites around Australia. It's a decision that is firmly grounded in business principles, and also reaps great benefits for the community.

For more than 110 years, Adelaide's leading disability service provider, Minda, has provided support to South Australian people with intellectual disability.

Minda's Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Miller said Telstra's Supported Workforce program had created an exciting new partnership between two Australian icons.

"The partnership between Telstra and Minda involves regular maintenance of Telstra sites around south-west Adelaide and provides Minda's supported employees with an opportunity to broaden their experience in the commercial sector, learn new skills and increase confidence and self esteem, all in a supportive and positive environment," said Ms Miller.

Minda's Envirocare Manager, Shane Hunt said Minda's supported employees are excited to be working on the Telstra contract.

"The Envirocare teams are doing a great job cleaning inside the exchanges. Our teams are also taking care general grounds maintenance including mowing, whipper-snipping and some rubbish removal at the exchanges, as well as other Telstra installations around the metropolitan area of Adelaide – and accolades received from Telstra management have been really positive," said Mr Hunt.

"The opportunity for our supported employees to go out and work in the community gives them a chance to develop self esteem and independence – which is made possible through partnerships like the one between Minda and Telstra."

Cathy Miller agrees: "Through Minda's involvement in Telstra's 'Supported Workforce project' people with intellectual disability have the opportunity to become valued and productive members of the workforce.

"By engaging Minda, Telstra is able to support the community while accessing a great service at commercially competitive rates, while also providing an opportunity to truly enhance the lives of people with intellectual disability – and is a real win for all involved."

(360 words)

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