

MEDIA RELEASE

From Struggle to Success: Refugees make a fresh start at Brisbane engineering firm

13 June 2023

In an inspiring collaboration, Mercy Community's Romero Centre and Logix Engineering have partnered to provide refugees and asylum seekers with much-needed experience through a series of successful work placements.

In March 2021, the wholly Australian-owned Brisbane firm, which manufactures electrical and communications cabinets for road and rail infrastructure, was struggling to find suitable workers. They were referred to the Romero Centre which helps rebuild the lives of people who are seeking safety and asylum.

Since then, a fruitful partnership has developed with the local engineering firm recognising the untapped potential and unique perspectives brought by refugees and creating opportunities for skills development, professional growth and community integration.

Romero Centre Manager Mengistu Hailu said people seeking asylum faced complicated challenges and uncertain futures and the work placement program provided an important path to unlocking future potential and success.

"In addition to our work placement program, we also provide and connect asylum seekers living in Brisbane with practical support (like food and shelter), legal connections, English classes, medical care, trauma counselling, community events and more," he explained.

Tony Hamilton, Managing Director of Logix Engineering, said: "In the past two years we have been working closely with the Romero Centre at Dutton Park to find suitable staff for our factories."

"The Romero Centre is a pleasure to work with. They have a great and committed staff who have supported us to provide employment opportunities to refugees and asylum seekers.

"We have employed eight refugees and asylum seekers as trades assistants in our factories. Five are still with us and one is now an apprentice electrical fitter. We have had staff who were originally from Ethiopia, China, Lebanon, Iran and Sudan and they have added, in an extremely positive way, to the culture of our business.

"They have come from diverse backgrounds, engineering, economics, fabrication, textile industries so in most cases we have had to train the staff, but they are keen to learn, keen to work and we have no issues at all with them.

"Their experiences in detention have scarred them deeply, but in providing worthwhile and meaningful employment and support we see an immediate change in them.

"Those who have left have gone on to better opportunities and we wish them well. Those who are still with us we continue to support, and they continue to contribute in a positive way.

"We all read constantly that it is difficult to find staff in manufacturing and construction – Logix is fortunate to have begun a relationship with Romero Centre that is paying dividends today. We will continue to work with them to find suitable candidates for employment and we will continue to train and support our staff."

The Romero Centre, which is funded through community support and donations, was established in 2000 in response to the needs of people arriving in Australia seeking safety and human rights. It is named after passionate human rights campaigner, Archbishop Oscar Romero from El Salvador.

The Romero Centre will hold its annual Welcome Walk in Brisbane to raise vital funds for its programs on June 18. The event will be held at Davies Park, West End, and will commence at 8am. There will be stalls and inspirational speakers on the day.

If you would like to sign up for the event please go to:- <https://drct-romerocentre.prod.supporterhub.net/pages/welcome-walk-2023>. If you are unable to make it on the day you may like to donate to the Romero Centre team at:

[Welcome Walk 2023 | Mercy Community Services SEQ Ltd \(Romero Centre\) \(supporterhub.net\)](#)

To find out more about the work placement program or how you can help, visit the Romero [website](#) or call 07 3013 0100.

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Media Enquiries:

- General media enquiries should be directed to media@mercycommunity.org.au.