**Industry experts address supplier and retailer collaboration amid economic pressures in Australia’s food & grocery sector**

***Six Degrees Executive recently hosted two highly successful Food & Grocery Industry Outlook events in Melbourne and Sydney, drawing over 200 of Australia’s leading food and grocery professionals focusing on collaboration and resilience.***

With macroeconomic pressures such as inflation and supply chain challenges dominating the agenda Tanya Barden OAM, CEO of the Australian Food and Grocery Council, alongside industry leaders Peter Findlay, CEO of Bega Group, Peter Schulte, Head of Global Sales at SunRice and Suzanne Harman, Senior Director of Supply Chain & Fulfilment at Simplot in Melbourne, as well as our Sydney panellists Paul Foster, CEO of George Weston Foods, Alexia Horley, General Manager of Foods at PepsiCo and Glen Wojcinski, Supply Chain Director of Kellanova discussed how suppliers are taking a balanced approach to maintain strong retailer relationships and foster long-term resilience in the face of market fluctuations.

“As our industry faces heightened public scrutiny and economic pressures, maintaining strong, balanced relationships between suppliers and retailers is critical. We operate within an interconnected ecosystem, where collaboration is essential to navigating challenges and sustaining growth” Tanya touched on during the event.

**Retailer relationships essential for growth despite external pressures**

At the core of the discussion was the essential role of suppliers in ensuring product reach to consumers. Leaders emphasised the importance of maintaining a strategic and balanced relationship with retailers, despite rising costs and economic uncertainties.

As Alexia Horley, General Manager - Australia for PepsiCo Foods noted, “We don’t have shop fronts, so we rely on the major retailers to get our products to consumers. A balanced and collaborative approach with our retail partners is critical to ensuring both growth and sustainability.”

These insights came amidst ongoing public scrutiny of the sector, with government bodies and consumers increasingly focused on cost, pricing, and sustainability. Speakers stressed the cyclical nature of economic pressures and highlighted that a long-term view is needed to navigate these challenges, rather than short-term reactive measures.

**Supply chain resilience and sustainability remain key concerns**

Amid ongoing supply chain disruptions, industry leaders emphasised the need for companies to invest in local production, diversify sourcing, and enhance supply chain agility. Long-term investments in domestic capacity were noted as critical strategies for building resilience, particularly in the face of climate-related risks. Sustainability also emerged as a significant focus, with businesses exploring innovative ways to meet consumer demand for eco-friendly products while managing cost pressures. As Suzanne Harman highlighted, “Connecting the end-to-end supply chain - from logistics to customer service - is essential to delivering for customers. True success comes from collaboration, not just with customers, but with suppliers and service providers across the board.”

**Six Degrees Executive’s role in fostering industry growth and collaboration**

For over 20 years, Six Degrees Executive has been at the forefront of Australia’s food and grocery sector, connecting leaders and decision-makers with top talent. The success of these events underscores the company’s dedication to fostering opportunities for clients and candidates to network, learn, and grow.

“At Six Degrees Executive, we’re committed to supporting the food and grocery sector as it navigates complex market conditions. These events are part of our broader mission to promote this sector as a vibrant career choice, connecting industry leaders and helping to grow a robust talent pipeline for the future,” said Nick Hindhaugh, Co-Founder of Six Degrees Executive.

The Food & Grocery Industry Outlook events offered valuable insights into the market and created a forum for strategic discussions that will help suppliers, retailers, and stakeholders navigate future challenges.

**About Six Degrees Executive**

Six Degrees Executive is one of Australia’s leading specialist and executive search agencies. Founded in 2004, it remains proudly Australian-owned and operated with nationwide capability and candidate reach, including offices in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. Our candidates, clients and industry partners choose us for our knowledge and expertise in our areas of specialisation, the depth of our networks, our personalised approach, and our dedication to delivering high quality outcomes. Our specialist disciplines include Sales, Marketing, Digital, Supply Chain, Operations, Procurement, Accounting & Finance and Technology for permanent, fixed-term and contract positions.

Go to <https://www.sixdegreesexecutive.com.au> to find out more information.

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