

Media Release

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COLES SETS NEW BAR WITH \$2 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR LITTLE ATHLETICS

More than 570 sports equipment grants distributed by Coles in three years

More than 100 Little Athletics centres across Australia will jump funding hurdles by receiving grants from Coles to fund vital sports equipment like hurdles, high jumps, discus and shotputs.

The latest round of funding brings Coles' allocation of sports equipment grants to over \$2 million in three years and come at a time when community sports clubs continue to feel the effects of COVID-19, particularly in NSW where the start of the new season has been postponed.

This year's grants have been funded through the sale of Coles' reusable community bags designed by Aussie kids and the sale of bananas sold at Coles' supermarkets on National Banana Day¹ in May.

Coles Little Athletics Australia President Andrew Pryor said the grants will help Little Athletics centres to develop the next generation of Olympians as the sport builds towards Brisbane 2032.

"We are entering a very exciting period for Little Athletics following the success of Tokyo 2020 and as we set our sights on Brisbane 2032," he said.

"Around 75 per cent of the Australian track and field team who competed in the Tokyo Olympics and a further 23 percent of para-athletes in the Paralympics, had their start in Little Athletics - that's why support like this from Coles is so important."

"The grants will help ensure little athletes of today have all the resources they need to develop into Olympians of the future, if that is the pathway they choose."

Coles CEO Steven Cain said the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund is just one way Coles is supporting local communities and helping young Australians to live healthier, happier lives.

"We know it's been a very challenging 18 months for communities across Australia who thrive on grassroots sport," he said.

"Little Athletics plays a vital role in not just producing elite athletes like our Coles ambassadors Sally Pearson and Brandon Starc, but also by encouraging kids to be active and healthy. We want to be better together with the community and we're proud to support community sport by providing over \$2 million in sports equipment grants to Little Athletics centres in three years."

Among the centres to receive a grant is Parramatta Little Athletics in NSW who has produced past and present Australian champions and Olympians such as Jana Pittman and Brandon Starc.

Parramatta Little Athletics Centre President Andrew Murray said grants from the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund have been invaluable for the centre to survive and thrive through challenging times.

¹ For every kilogram of bananas sold at Coles supermarkets on National Banana Day in May 2021, Coles donated 10 cents to the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund.

“We've been fortunate to receive over \$6,400 in grants from Coles over the past two years to buy a range of equipment like discuses, javelins, speakers and equipment trolleys to support our athletes and parent volunteers,” he said.

“Grassroots centres like ours rely on grants and fundraising to survive so that we can continue to support children of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential. This year's grant is even more important as we enter our 50th season but we'll have less opportunities to celebrate and fundraise through canteen sales, community BBQs and the like due to a delayed start and COVID restrictions.”

In addition to providing more than \$2 million in equipment grants, Coles has donated more than 3.6 million bananas to Little Athletics centres since 2017.

For details of successful recipients visit www.coles.com.au/littleathleticsfund.



Coles has provided more than \$2 million in sports grants in three years for Little Athletics Centres to buy new equipment such as collapsible hurdles.

For further information, please contact
Coles Media Line (03) 9829 5250 or media.relations@coles.com.au