

Media Release

Friday, 8 August 2025

GIANTS & COLES KICK OFF JOB-READY PROGRAM FOR FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS

Coles has teamed up with the GIANTS to help First Nations youth in western Sydney score their first job by launching an education program designed to provide career-focused life skills.

The GIANT Steps program will run across 20 local high schools and deliver hands-on workshops that will empower students with the positive habits that define a GIANTS player. From personal goal setting to mastering time management, students will learn the importance of developing employment skills and how to kick-start their career with Coles.

Home to one of the largest urban populations of First Nations people in Australia, Greater Western Sydney saw a more than 30% increase in Aboriginal residents between 2016 and 2021¹.

With more than 54,000 people in the region identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander—the greatest number of whom are under the age of 15—early access to skills and employment pathways is more important than ever².

GIANTS will make appearances throughout the program, visiting the high schools to share advice, wisdom and practical tips to inspire the next generation of goal-kickers as they enter the workforce for the first time.

Indigenous players Toby Bedford, Harry Rowston, Aliesha Newman and Clare Ransom are passionate supporters of the initiative and have played key roles in shaping the program's curriculum.

GIANTS Executive General Manager of Community and Inclusion, Ali Faraj said the program will blend practical training with cultural connection and mentorship.

“GIANT Steps is about opening doors and showing young First Nations people that opportunity is within reach. The program will use AFL and its strong connection to community as a catalyst to drive meaningful outcomes for young Indigenous people in the Greater Western Sydney region.

“We're providing students with tools they can use straight away, like how to build habits, health

¹ Butler, L. (2022). *The Indigenous population of Greater Western Sydney: 2021 Census topic paper*. WESTIR Ltd. <https://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/community/fairfield-conversations-2021/westir-2022-the-indigenous-population-of-greater-western-sydney-2021-census-topic-paper.pdf>

² Butler, L. (2022). *The Indigenous population of Greater Western Sydney: 2021 Census topic paper*. WESTIR Ltd. <https://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/community/fairfield-conversations-2021/westir-2022-the-indigenous-population-of-greater-western-sydney-2021-census-topic-paper.pdf>

and wellbeing strategies and how to get job ready. But more than that, we're helping them feel confident in who they are and where they're going."

Coles employs over 115,000 team members, with 3.6% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, making it one of Australia's largest private-sector employers of First Nations people. Through its Reconciliation Action Plan, Coles is focused on providing more opportunities for First Nations peoples and communities to connect and engage with its business.

Coles Head of Indigenous Affairs, Sara Stuart and proud Kamilaroi woman said the program reflected Coles' commitment to creating employment opportunities for First Nations Australians.

"We know how powerful that first job can be as a step towards independence, confidence and enabling long-term economic empowerment. Just like the GIANTS we are committed to nurturing homegrown talent and supporting a pipeline of First Nations young people to enter the workforce for the first time with Coles," Sara said.

"GIANT Steps is in direct response to the growing demand for employment opportunities in western Sydney, with the program facilitating a direct pathway from the classroom through to securing employment in one of our stores in the area.

"This program is about investing in the next generation and helping them see a future with Coles and beyond."

-ends-

For media enquiries, please contact

Coles Media Line (03) 9829 5250 or media.relations@coles.com.au