



**Sydney WorldPride**

Level 5, 8 Hill Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2011

[www.sydneyworldpride.com](http://www.sydneyworldpride.com)

**MEDIA RELEASE:  
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## **COLES GROUP ANNOUNCED AS PRESENTING PARTNER OF SYDNEY WORLDPRIDE 2023 AND SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS**

Coles Group has entered into a three-year partnership with Sydney WorldPride 2023 and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, becoming the Presenting Partner until 2025.

This important partnership is part of Coles Groups' commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ people across its workforce and in its stores.

As one of the largest private sector employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, Coles Group will also be supporting Sydney WorldPride's First Nations Roadshow.

The First Nations Roadshow will enable Sydney WorldPride to connect with First Nations communities, to share the exciting program of festival events, and to help support them to celebrate Sydney WorldPride in 2023. The Roadshow will also provide Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras the opportunity to build ongoing relationships for the years to come.

The Roadshow will be led by Sydney WorldPride First Nations Engagement Manager, Ebony Williams, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras's First Nations and Community Engagement Officer, Matika Little, as well as Sydney WorldPride's First Nations Co-Creative Director, Ben Graetz.

In addition, Coles Group will also to be the presenting partner of Sydney WorldPride's Sustainability Program.

Kate Wickett, Chief Executive of Sydney WorldPride said she is thrilled to be partnering with Coles Group, as an Australian company that advocates for diversity and equality.

"We are extremely grateful to Coles Group for their ongoing commitment to supporting the LGBTQIA+ community and for their support of the First Nations Roadshow, which will enable us to engage with our fabulous and diverse First Nations communities all across Australia.

"It's great to see a major Australian brand taking leadership in this area and making such an important commitment to its diverse workforce and customers."

Coles Group Chief Legal and Safety Officer and Co-Chair of its Pride Steering Committee, David Brewster, said Coles is excited to be the exclusive supermarket partner.

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“We have a strong Pride network across Coles, and we’re dedicated to making it even stronger. Mardi Gras is a time for our LGBTQIA+ community and allies across Australia to unite and celebrate equal rights and respect for the queer community, and we’re excited to be making our mark on the event in 2023,” David said.

“Mardi Gras is certainly a time for celebration, but our partnership signifies so much more. Research has shown that a disproportionate number of LGBTQIA+ Australians experience poor mental health due to experiences of stigma, prejudice, discrimination and abuse on the basis of identifying as queer or gender diverse. We are confident our involvement will help to shine a spotlight on this issue, so that LGBTQIA+ Australians and their loved ones can lead happier, healthier lives.”

Albert Kruger, Chief Executive of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras said: “We’re delighted to have Coles Group sign on as a partner for Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, and can’t wait to see the outcomes achieved from our First Nations Roadshow in the months and years to come. Coles have a fantastic inclusion record and their commitment to supporting LGBTQIA+ people sends a very strong message to Australians that they are serious about championing equality and celebrating diversity.”

In a recent survey of over 90,000 Coles team members, close to 10% identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, meaning Coles employs more than 10,000 LGBTQIA+ team members and making it one of the largest private sector employers of LGBTQIA+ people in Australia.

Coles Group General Manager Transformation and Supply Chain and Co-Chair of the Pride Steering Committee, Genevieve Hawkins, said Coles is committed to doing everything it can to create a safe environment for LGBTQIA+ people.

“We want to grow and nurture our Pride network to help us enable all of our team members to be their authentic selves,” Genevieve said.

“The mental health program at Coles is an important program to support our team and has become more deeply personal for me since my involvement with our Pride Network. Having a transgender son has helped me understand all the ways we inadvertently don’t create a sense of inclusion for all, which contributes to poor mental health. Our sponsorship of World Pride and the Sydney Mardi Gras is a great way to help us amplify the conversation around the value we all get from feeling like we belong.”

Sydney WorldPride 2023 is the first WorldPride ever to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. Running across 17 days with events including [Rainbow Republic](#), [Ultra Violet](#) and a three-day [Human Rights Conference](#), the festival is expected to host up to 300 events and see over 500,000 participate. For news updates subscribe to our [mailing list](#).

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