

Tuesday 6 July 2021

COLES HELPS SHARE THE INCREDIBLE STORIES OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS THROUGH NAIDOC WEEK

Coles celebrates the history, culture, values and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Coles Magazine, Coles Health & Beauty, Coles Radio, coles&co and Instagram

Coles is celebrating NAIDOC Week by sharing the inspirational stories of Indigenous Australians through its most popular customer and team member channels including Coles Magazine, Coles Health and Beauty Magazine, Coles Radio, coles&co and Instagram.

This month's Coles Health and Beauty Magazine, available in stores from today, features a cover story on aspiring VFLW stars Freda Puruntatameri and Jamie-Lee Puautjimi, plus their mentor Courtney Ugle – all proud Indigenous women whose lives have been changed by AFL. Coles is proud to be the official partner of the Essendon Bombers' First Nations Women's Pathway Program which has helped Freda, Jamie and Courtney to realise their sporting dreams.

The story includes Freda's recollections of growing up in the Tiwi Islands, where she learned to play football with a plastic Coke bottle. She now has her eye on being drafted to the AFLW and has been focusing on her fitness to help make it happen. Jamie speaks of her time away from the Tiwi Islands, missing her daughter while training in Melbourne, but the opportunity to play for Essendon was too good to resist. Courtney's job is to help guide, support and encourage the girls. She does a lot of work with the Tiwi community and the girls' families to ensure they trust her to look after their daughters in Melbourne.

Coles is also thrilled to welcome Indigenous chef Nornie Bero as an official ambassador. This month she is a contributor to Coles Magazine, the most-read magazine in Australia. Renowned for her delicious Indigenous recipes, this month Nornie shares her love for the Indigenous ingredients she has been cooking with for most of her career. Originally from Mer Island in the Torres Strait, Nornie describes the region's food as "a smiling that never stops". She's passionate about creating native Australian cuisine and encouraging people to embrace these flavours in their everyday cooking.

We know Australians love listening to Coles Radio, it's the number one commercial digital station in the country, and we've added some additional songs by Indigenous artists to the playlist to celebrate NAIDOC Week.

A major part of Coles' Better Together Sustainability Strategy is to reflect the communities in which our team lives and works, and NAIDOC Week is an opportunity to reflect on how we are working together to form strong relationships with the Indigenous community.

Coles' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander plan, launched in 2011, outlines a commitment to develop the careers of our Indigenous team members and increase Indigenous team member representation across the Coles Group.

Robert Cole, a 72 year-old team member at Coles' Alderley supermarket, has shared his story of how as a child he lived in a corrugated iron shack near Ayr, in a town with no street lights. In a video to be shared with Coles' thousands of Instagram followers and more than 120,000 team members, he talks movingly about his bond with his twin brother and the great times they had growing up together and singing in their band The Checkmates.

Robert also speaks of the importance he places on having a voice, which inspired him to become the first Indigenous person elected to the Burdekin Shire Council, and how he loves sharing his story with customers and fellow team members, whom he considers family.

To provide more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, suppliers, customers and communities to engage with the business, Coles has committed to:

- Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team member representation to 5% of our workforce and 3% of trade and management roles by providing great careers at Coles
- Increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers to participate in our supply chain

Coles Group Chief Executive of Sustainability, Property and Exports Thinus Keeve said that all of Coles' NAIDOC week activities are tied to the theme of 'Heal Country'.

"We are excited to spread the word and share stories about the connection and impact the First Nations Peoples have throughout our land," Mr Keeve said.

"Coles has a proud history of taking action and forming strong relationships with the Indigenous community, and that commitment extends to working better together to ensure that we continue to grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team member representation in our stores and in trade and management roles, and to support Indigenous suppliers.

"During NAIDOC week and beyond, we acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, team members and community. We want to encourage people to acknowledge the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their connection to lands and cultures."

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For further information, please contact

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