

Media Release

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COLES TO PROVIDE 100 RECYCLED BENCHES TO SCHOOLS TO REWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Coles is rewarding sustainability in the school yard by giving primary schools across Australia the chance to win one of 100 outdoor benches made from 98% recycled plastic.

From today, primary schools can enter the *Sustainability4Schools* competition by simply explaining how they are committed to protecting the environment.

The launch of the national competition comes as Coles celebrates its 10-year anniversary with REDcycle, which collects soft plastic at Coles supermarkets so it can be recycled into products such as the outdoor benches.

Each bench will be made by Melbourne-based business Replas from approximately 8,250 pieces of plastic packaging. Replas has manufactured recycled benches for hundreds of primary schools for over 15 years.

Coles General Manager Sustainability and Property Services, Kirsty Davis, said the *Sustainability4Schools* competition was part of Coles' "Together to Zero" strategy, together to zero waste and delivering net zero greenhouse emissions by 2050.

"School kids are key to driving generational sustainability for the future so we wanted to reward and recognise primary schools across Australia which are leading the way when it comes to protecting the environment," she said.

"By giving away benches made from recycled material, we also want to help divert plastic waste from landfill and provide another practical solution to soft plastics collected in our stores."

REDcycle founder Elizabeth Kasell said primary schools were leading the way in recycling and encouraged them to enter the competition to win an outdoor bench made from recycled plastic.

"We started REDcycle with a hired trailer collecting plastic bags at schools and delivering them to local manufacturer Replas which would recycle it into useful products. Now a decade later, it's great to see schools are being rewarded for their sustainability by having a chance to win a bench made from recycled plastic," she said.

"We call the benches "buddy benches" because kids can sit together in the playground, talk and enjoy each other's company. Not only are the benches a great outcome for recycled soft plastic but they are practical and welcome additions to school playgrounds."

As part of the REDcycle program, customers can drop off their plastic bags and soft plastic packaging into REDcycle bins at the front of Coles supermarkets. The plastic is then collected and sorted by REDcycle and delivered to manufacturers which recycle it into products such as outdoor furniture, road materials, fencing and garden beds.

Since the REDcycle program began in 2011, over 1.5 billion pieces of plastic have been diverted from landfill, with more than 360 million pieces of plastic being collected from Coles stores in FY20 alone.

The *Sustainability4Schools* competition launches today and will run until 5pm AEST on Friday 4 June.

More information on the competition can be found at coles.com.au/sustainability4schools.

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