

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 16 February 2023

### **COLES CELEBRATES \$50M FUNDRAISING MILESTONE FOR REDKITE**

Coles Group has reached its most significant community fundraising milestone - raising \$50 million in a decade for leading children's cancer support organisation, Redkite.

The \$50m fundraising milestone coincides with Coles' tenth anniversary of its partnership with Redkite which has helped thousands of Australian families and children affected by cancer.

With the support of customers and team members, the \$50 million in funding has enabled Redkite to support nearly 60 per cent more Australian families during their child's health crisis over the past ten years. Specifically, funds raised at Coles supermarkets and Coles Express stores has helped Redkite to provide:

- Support to more than 8,000 families in their time of need;
- Over 40,000 food vouchers to around 7,000 families when finances are stretched;
- Nearly 23,000 fuel vouchers to help more than 5,000 families travel to hospitals for treatment;
- Over 157,000 hours of emotional and mental health counselling sessions;
- Around 25,000 hours of music therapy to help manage the fear and pain of treatment; and
- 375 Redkite and Coles Dare to Dream Scholarships to assist young people who have or have had cancer achieve their goals and ambitions

Coles Group Chief Executive Officer Steven Cain said the milestone underpins Coles' ambition to help all Australians lead healthier, happier lives.

"For ten years, our partnership with Redkite has helped fund important financial, educational and mental health support for thousands of families facing childhood cancer," he said.

"Sadly, every day in Australia three families will receive the devastating news that their child has cancer. Supporting causes that directly impact the lives of children and families, and organisations like Redkite, create a stronger, more sustainable future for all of us."

"We're incredibly proud to reach this milestone and thank our customers and team members for their support with in-store donations and fundraising over the past decade."

Redkite CEO Monique Keighery thanked Coles and its customers, and said the partnership had enabled Redkite to grow its services to support thousands more families in need.

"In the last 10 years it is estimated that over 10,000 children and young people have been diagnosed with cancer in Australia, during which time Redkite's support for families increased by 58%," she said.

"Redkite has been able to do this thanks to the incredible contribution of Coles, their passionate team members and generous customers. Together, they have raised a staggering \$50 million for children with cancer and their families, making ours one of Australia's most successful corporate and community partnerships."

“The care, authenticity and generosity of the entire Coles team is so special and unlike anything I have ever seen.”

Coles' \$50 million fundraising milestone has been achieved through initiatives such as a five-cent donation from the sales of specially marked Coles Own Brand bread and other products, fundraising campaigns at Coles supermarkets and Coles Express stores, fun runs, quiz nights and in-store activities such as bake sales and morning teas.

Coles and Redkite celebrated the fundraising milestone and ten year anniversary with Redkite families, team members and special guests at an event in Melbourne yesterday.

Coles also recently introduced a new fundraising initiative to help Redkite support even more families through their time of need, with five cents from every pack of Coles Double Smoked Leg Ham and Coles Honey Leg Ham, both made with Australian Sow Stall Free Pork, going to support the cause.

### **PARTNERSHIP IMPACT CASE STUDY – JACKSON AND MUM BROOKE**

**In their own words:** My son Jackson was diagnosed with a Wilms' tumour in one of his kidneys in August 2021. With no paediatric oncology services in the NT to accommodate Jackson, I needed to take him interstate. We went to Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane to have his kidney removed and the tumour biopsied.

I initially thought that we would be in Brisbane for a couple of weeks, so I only packed a small bag for myself and for Jackson. Shortly after the surgery, I got the phone call from the oncologist that the tumour was cancerous and Jackson would need to start chemotherapy in a few days, which meant that we could not get home.



Jackson (centre) with his brothers Jayden and Jye

Jackson and I moved into a small unit provided by Childhood Cancer Support while he was undergoing treatment and my husband, David kept the rest of the family back in Darwin. With the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, by the end of 2021 my family was apart for months at a time, which was really hard.

David was finally able to bring the boys to Brisbane for Christmas, which was an interesting time. For the first time in two months, we were all finally able to be together. Juggling David and the kids coming and trying to plan our family Christmas while Jackson was on treatment was definitely challenging. But we were determined to make the best of Christmas this year, despite everything being so different.

An unexpected lockdown and floods at the end of 2021 meant all our plans changed at the last minute. Our apartment complex was suddenly not allowing any visitors in, so it was just Jackson and I allowed. The community room and the playground had been closed. We had to relocate our plans to a nearby relative's house on Christmas Eve with barely any warning. I remember David and I rushing around trying to hide presents and making sure Santa came for all the kids. Thankfully Redkite was there with food and fuel vouchers from Coles and Coles Express which helped us pay for everything.

Now that Jackson's treatment has finished, we still need to see the oncologist and the renal team every three months, so we've since moved the family to Toowoomba and have settled in well.

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**About Redkite:** Redkite is a lifeline for families facing childhood cancer. As Australia's leading national children's cancer charity, Redkite supports all families no matter where they live in Australia, at all stages of their child's long and uncertain journey, both in hospital and at home: [www.redkite.org.au](http://www.redkite.org.au).