

Thursday 16 September 2021

COLES DONATES 3000 GROCERY CARE PACKS TO REMOTE NSW INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Coles will be sending seven semi-trailers' worth of donated groceries from Adelaide to remote New South Wales communities which have been hit hard by COVID-19.

Team members at Coles' Adelaide distribution centre are rolling up their sleeves to pack more than 160 pallets of non-perishable goods including food and sanitary items, to be sent to 12 regional and remote communities including Menindee, Tibooburra, Enngonia, Ivanhoe, Balranald, and Broken Hill.

The pallets will be divided into 3000 individual care packs which will help provide urgent support for vulnerable people in these communities who are in isolation and unable to leave their homes to buy food. Each pack will contain about 22kg of food and other essentials, including pasta, fresh produce, cereals, shampoo and toilet paper.

Coles Chief Sustainability, Property and Export Officer Thinus Keeve said: "A concerning COVID-19 outbreak in these remote towns has left thousands in isolation, which has led to a large number of food security requests in these areas."

"Team members at our Adelaide distribution centre will be working tirelessly to ensure the 3000 parcels of food will be delivered to people in communities who are in urgent need of essential food and grocery items," he said.

"Some of these care packs will take as long as 15 hours to make the 1300km journey from our distribution centre in Edinburgh Park in South Australia to where they are needed in regional NSW."

Once the care packages arrive at their destination, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSW ALC) will be coordinating the on-the-ground distribution effort through its network of Local Aboriginal Land Councils. Uniting, Salvation Army and Bourke Rural Fire Service will also be assisting with delivering care packs in their local communities.

NSW ALC Chairperson Anne Dennis said: "The NSW Aboriginal Land Council would like to thank Coles for its generous offer of support during this challenging time for our communities."

"The provision of food assistance will help those communities in lockdown in the North West and Far West of New South Wales to continue isolating safely. It will also provide a much-needed food supply for communities impacted by product shortages and will help those communities coming out of lockdown to take a step towards recovery," she said.

Coles has partnered with The Big Issue's Women's Workforce to assist with packing the care packages. The Women's Workforce is a social enterprise that employs women experiencing homelessness and disadvantage to complete third-party work for various organisations.

The Big Issue CEO Chris Enright said enlisting the help of the Women's Workforce to pack hampers would provide women in South Australia experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage meaningful work and income during a very uncertain time.

"The Women's operates in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. Women work in a safe, female-friendly environment and gain valuable skills, experience and mentoring with each project they complete," she said.

"As we all navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Big Issue is excited and thankful to be part of this excellent initiative from Coles, helping those living on the margins to make positive changes in their lives."

As part of Coles' Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander plan and commitment to deepen connections with the broader Indigenous community, last year Coles also teamed up with 10 Aboriginal corporations and local charities to deliver and donate more than 80 pallets – the equivalent of 50 tonnes - of food and grocery essentials to Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory. The effort has been coordinated by Coles' Indigenous Affairs team.

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For further information, please contact

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