

# Media Release

coles | Value the Australian way

Friday 20 May 2022

## COLES PARTNERS WITH THE MUSHROOM GROUP AS FIRST NATIONS PATHWAY PROGRAM EXTENDS INTO MUSIC



From left: Coles Ambassador and mentor for the AFL Coles First Nations Pathway program, Eddie Betts, Mushroom Group Chief Executive, Matt Gudinski and Coles Chief Marketing Officer Lisa Ronson.

**Coles** has extended its **First Nations Pathway Program** into music by forming a new partnership with the **Mushroom Group** and its creative agency, **Mushroom Creative House**. The program, designed and facilitated by Mushroom, has been built to help young Indigenous aspiring musicians gain valuable music experience and mentorship.

The multi-year partnership will build on the existing Coles First Nations Pathway Programs which currently focus on sport. This extension will now provide opportunities and education to aspiring Indigenous artists in musical fields. The program will provide young Indigenous talent with an immersive educational experience of the music industry, in addition to mentoring and future employment opportunities. Coles Radio will also expand its support of the Australian music industry with the mentors in the First Nations Pathway Program to host dedicated segments on one of Australia's most listened to digital radio stations.

Continuing with the legacy built by Mushroom Group founder Michael Gudinski; Mushroom's Chief Executive Matt Gudinski proudly supports the Coles First Nations Pathway Program. Mushroom has long been an advocate for Australia's Indigenous music community and continually sought opportunities to showcase a wide range of Indigenous artists. Michael is remembered for opening doors for many First Nations artists, and to this day the Mushroom Group is affiliated with Indigenous artists such as Dan Sultan, Emily Wurramara, Troy Cassar-Daley, Baker Boy and many more.

Mushroom Group Chief Executive, **Matt Gudinski** said "This partnership with Coles sees the Mushroom team draw on our wealth of knowledge from the music industry and create a program that will nurture and develop the next wave of many talented First Nations artists. Mushroom has been a long-time champion of First Nations artists, representing icons such as Archie Roach and Yothu Yindi. Through this partnership, Mushroom and Coles establishes a platform that's invaluable for evolving up and coming creatives."

Coles Chief Marketing Officer **Lisa Ronson** said Coles is excited to be working with the Mushroom Group to extend the First Nations Pathway Program to help young Indigenous musicians.

"We will support by sharing the stories and music of these talented musicians through our own network like Coles Radio and our instore magazines so we can raise more awareness of the talents of young artists," Lisa said.

"We have absolutely loved to see how the First Nations Pathway Program has developed the confidence, talent and life skills of young Indigenous athletes involved in AFL, AFLW and NRL and we're thrilled that we can now expand this experience to include young musicians who have dreams of performing on stage and sharing their wonderful talents with the world."

The program will feature an intensive four-day music masterclass with industry experts including Masterclass Facilitator and Cultural Advisor **Scott Darlow**, to help develop the aspiring artists and provide invaluable experience and insight into the music industry. Artist mentors will work with the artists throughout the year with a variety of one-on-one mentoring sessions.

The music arm of the First Nations Pathway Program is designed to celebrate First Nations music and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent. Mushroom Creative House have created the Program through their intimate knowledge of the music industry and have designed and facilitated a program for Coles that provides First Nations artists with a foothold in the music industry.

Lead by Pathway Program mentors **Emily Wurramara** and **Nooky**, the Program will feature participants from all around Australia, across a mix of musical genres, including pop, electro and rap. Participants include **Jay Gonsalves** (VIC), **Angus (Aya J)** (QLD), **HARTCOLE** (WA), **Bumpy** (VIC), **dameeeela** (NSW), **Hylander** (NSW), **Tyler (The Terrifying Lows)** (VIC) and **GLVES** (QLD).

Mushroom Creative House were also thrilled to commission contemporary Aboriginal artist **Rachael Sarra** from Goreng Goreng Country, to design an artwork for use throughout the Program. Rachael uses art as a powerful tool in storytelling to educate and share Aboriginal culture and its evolution.



Coles Ambassador and mentor for the AFL Coles First Nations Pathway program, **Eddie Betts** said he is thrilled to be involved in the First Pathway program to support the talented musicians.

"As a young kid, growing up in community, I faced many struggles to achieve my dream to become an AFL player. It taught me so much about family, resilience, strength and self-belief and I'm looking forward to passing on my own experiences to help these young musicians understand they can be anyone they want to be in this world if they believe in themselves and their talents," Eddie said.

"Whether performing on a stage or a football field, I am so proud to be an ambassador for Coles and support

*the Mushroom Group who are passionate about forming strong bonds and giving opportunities to our young people"*

Coles Group is one of the largest private sector employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia and has had an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander plan since 2009 focusing on Employment, Supply Chain, Community Partnerships and Cultural Learning. The First Nations Pathway Music program will run throughout 2022 and will take on a new cohort of upcoming talent and home grown mentors in 2023.

### **About the Mushroom Group**

Mushroom is Australia's largest and most successful independent music and entertainment group.

Since the Group's inception in '72 when a young Michael Gudinski formed Mushroom Records and Mushroom Music Publishing, Mushroom has grown to become a collective of near two dozen specialist brands who are each leaders in their own right across the music and entertainment industry. Incorporating international and domestic touring, booking agencies, record labels, merchandising, music publishing, creative and marketing services, venues, exhibition and events production, film and television production; there is almost no end to what the Mushroom Group is involved in and can offer.

### **About Mushroom Creative House**

Mushroom Creative House is a creative agency and production house; one of 25 companies that make up the Mushroom Group. Originally created to service the wider Mushroom Group companies, Mushroom Creative House began its life as two designers in a small room off a corridor creating band artwork and tour posters. Thanks to the wider group connections and its standard and consistency of output, Mushroom Creative House grew quickly, and now delivers output from music videos (The Avalanches) to live events (concepting and creative directing the entertainment for the AFL Grand Final) to broadcast TV (The Sound) to festivals (Sugar Mountain), to strategic partnerships (AAMI, Telstra, Qantas), to documentaries (in development), to experiential and branded content (Bonds, Bacardi, Spotify, lululemon, Menulog).

### **About Coles**

For more than 100 years Coles (ASX:COL) has been dedicated to delivering quality, value and service to Australian families. Coles Group is a leading Australian retailer with more than 2,400 stores, employing over 120,000 people across our supermarkets, liquor stores, convenience outlets and also offering Coles Online shopping and financial services. We process more than 21 million customer transactions each week, providing our customers with products from thousands of Australian farmers and suppliers. Coles has an ambition to become Australia's most sustainable supermarket and we are passionate about supporting the communities we serve through partnerships, sponsorships and fundraising.

To learn more about Coles Group visit [www.colesgroup.com.au](http://www.colesgroup.com.au)

**-ends-**

**For media enquiries, please contact:**

Coles Media Relations on (03) 9829 5250 or [media.relations@coles.com.au](mailto:media.relations@coles.com.au)  
Mushroom Group: Melbourne: +61 3 9690 3399 | Sydney: +61 2 9360 6255 |  
[tess.whitford@mushroomgroup.com](mailto:tess.whitford@mushroomgroup.com)