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COLES INVESTING TO SUPPORT QUEENSLAND BANANA GROWERS
New ripening technology debuts at \$43 million-dollar Melbourne facility

Coles has invested \$43 million in a state-of-the-art ripening facility in Melbourne that will support banana, avocado and mango growers in North Queensland and provide customers with top-quality fresh fruit all year round.

The brand-new facility in Melbourne's west was built as part of a five-year agreement between Coles and growers collective Mackays Marketing and has the capacity to ripen 350 million pieces of fruit every year.

Coles will use this facility to ripen fruit from farmers across Australia, including the North Queensland growing regions, like Tully, Lakeland, Innisfail and Mareeba before being sold in more than 270 supermarkets across Victoria and South Australia.

Using best in class new reversible air flow ripening technology, the 7,280sqm facility is 70 per cent more energy efficient than traditional 'tarpred' ripening systems, producing fruit that has been ripened as it is needed, improving shelf life for customers and reducing waste.

Mackays Marketing CEO Richard Clayton said the partnership with Coles would be instrumental in encouraging greater consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables to create a healthier nation.

"This project has bought best practice ripening technology to Coles and this will help us continue to regularly provide the very best quality bananas, avocados and mangoes to consumers," he said.

"Our farming families are proud of the produce they grow and excited to see a reduction of waste produce as we extend the shelf life of the fruit.

"Australians need to keep their immune systems strong and there's no better way to do this than a regular diet of fresh fruit and vegetables."

The 5-star Green Star facility incorporates a number of sustainability measures, including rainwater tanks with a combined capacity of 100,000 litres and more than 1,790 solar panels -- capable of generating electricity equivalent to the annual usage of more than 86 average Australian homes¹.

Coles Group Chief Commercial Officer Greg Davis said the ripening facility would help drive generational sustainability for Coles and Australian farmers.

"We're delighted to be supporting horticulture jobs across Queensland and other growing regions by replacing old technology with more sustainable alternatives," Mr Davis said.

"Bananas are one of the most popular products in our supermarkets, and by partnering with key growers and investing in sustainability throughout our supply chain we can continue to offer top-quality Australian fruit to our customers."

¹ [4670.0 - Household Energy Consumption Survey, Australia: Summary of Results, 2012](#)
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About Mackays Marketing:

Mackays Marketing represents a collective of growers from Far North Queensland that together supply bananas and avocados to Coles and other retailers. Key growing partners for this facility so far are the Mackay (Tully and Bundaberg), Howe (Atherton Tablelands), Buchanan (Innisfail) and Oberthur (Mareeba) families. The families are proud multigenerational farmers and grow a variety of fresh produce.

The original Mackay farm was established in Tully, Far North Queensland by Stanley MacKay in 1945. His great grandchildren, the fourth generation, continue to operate the farm as part of The MacKay Farming Group (MFG), which employs more than 500 people across seven farms to produce around 3 million cartons of bananas every year.

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