

Monday, 24 January 2022

AUSSIE FAMILY BUSINESS TO EXPAND RANGE OF POPULAR BISCUITS FREE FROM GLUTEN, WHEAT AND NUTS

- **\$400,000 Coles Nurture Fund grant to make "I'm Free From" sweet and savoury snacks**
 - **Coles Nurture Fund round now open for small Aussie businesses to apply**

Coles is helping the increasing number of Australians affected by food allergies and intolerances by awarding a grant of \$400,000 to a Melbourne family business dedicated to making products free from gluten, wheat and nuts.

Not A Trace, which produces delicious gluten, wheat and nut-free "Coles I'm Free From" treats like Chocolate Mint Crèmes biscuits, Scotch Fingers and Choc Chip cookies, will use the Coles Nurture Fund grant to help build an additional bakery production line dedicated to making savoury allergen-free snacks and crackers.

Australia has the highest rate of food allergies in the world and the numbers have continued to increase over the past 20 years, with food allergies occurring in approximately 10% of infants¹, up to 8% of children and up to 4% of adults².

Alongside food allergies and food intolerance, one in 70 Australians are diagnosed with coeliac disease³ – a life-long condition in which the body has an abnormal reaction to gluten, with the only treatment a strictly gluten-free diet.

At Coles, customer demand for allergen-free products has grown substantially over the past two years, including a massive 75% increase in sales of Coles I'm Free From biscuits and cookies.

Not A Trace Director Samantha O'Brien said the business was thrilled to be able to expand the range of gluten, wheat and nut-free products available nationwide.

"There's a lot of work that goes into developing these products and making them stand apart from other products that are in the market, to ensure that they taste great," Sam said.

"The Coles Nurture Fund is a wonderful initiative that supports local producers and manufacturers in Australia. The grant will enable us to expand our capabilities via a 100% dedicated gluten-free, wheat-free and nut-free savoury bakery production line. As we bring to life an array of exciting new savoury snacks and crackers, we will be generating many new local jobs and supporting other local suppliers as we bounce back from an extremely challenging year."

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA) Health Management Educator Wendy Freeman said the organisation appreciated the addition of gluten-free, wheat-free and nut-free packaged foods which are readily available on supermarket shelves.

"People who live with allergies to foods have limited options when purchasing packaged goods. It will be very reassuring for people with a food allergy to know that these products are produced in a dedicated nut-free, wheat-free and gluten-free facility. The fact that these foods are also tasty and of high quality makes this announcement even more welcome," Wendy said.

Michelin-starred chef and Coles Nurture Fund judge Curtis Stone commended Not A Trace for its innovative approach to producing great quality foods free from allergens and making them more accessible to all Australians.

¹ Source: Osborne et al. Prevalence of challenge-proven IgE-mediated food allergy using population-based sampling and predetermined challenge criteria in infants. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2011; 127: 668-676

² Source: <https://www.allergy.org.au/>

³ Source: <https://www.allergy.org.au/>

“Over the years, the Coles Nurture Fund has supported many small Aussie businesses to expand and innovate in the food sector – everything from closing the gap on garlic imports to Australia’s first quinoa processing facility, and a state-of-the-art factory to grow grass indoors for cattle feed,” Curtis said.

“As a chef myself, I know how important it is to cater to the growing number of food intolerances and allergies impacting many Australians. It’s fantastic that the Coles Nurture Fund is able to support Not A Trace to grow its business by producing a savoury range of excellent quality biscuits so that people with a strictly gluten-free diet can enjoy delicious foods without compromise.”

Coles General Manager for Grocery Leanne White said Coles was delighted to support Not A Trace to expand its production of locally made allergen-free biscuits and help cater to the growing demand for gluten-free foods at Coles.

“At Coles, we’ve seen an increasing demand for gluten-free crackers, bread, and biscuits in the past few years, coupled by customers adopting gluten-free products as a source of healthy food and a rise in consumption by growing awareness of food allergies and intolerance,” Leanne said.

“Last year, we expanded our health foods range and integrated gluten-free products like cereals, spreads and soups into their respective product aisle to make it easier for shoppers with dietary requirements or for those wanting a healthier alternative available in every single aisle.

“Not A Trace is just one example of the great innovation we have seen supported in the Grocery category from the Coles Nurture Fund, and we are now on the lookout for the next big innovation in Grocery which could be supported by the programme.”

Australian food and beverage producers can now apply for financial support from the Coles Nurture Fund of up to \$500,000 to help them drive innovation and sustainability.

Businesses with unique, innovative ideas, fewer than 50 full-time employees and turnover of less than \$25 million in annual revenue are eligible to apply.

Coles launched the \$50 million Nurture Fund in April 2015 to help Australian food and liquor producers innovate and grow. Since then, Coles has provided more than \$28 million in financial support to more than 80 small and medium-sized businesses.

To apply or for more information on the Coles Nurture Fund, visit www.coles.com.au/nurturefund. Applications close at 5pm AEST on Friday, 25 February 2022.

BACKGROUND ON NOT A TRACE

- Not a Trace is a family-owned Australian business with over 30 years of experience in gluten free manufacturing and an expert in knowledge of nutrition and special dietary foods.
- They are leaders in innovation and quality for gluten and nut free manufacturing in Australia.
- The owners of the business, specifically Barb (Head of R&D for NAT) was a pioneer of the gluten free category in the late 80s as the founder of Freedom Foods.
- The business is still family owned and run, with Sam O'Brien (Barb's daughter) the current Managing Director of the business.
- Not a Trace operates a brand new, 400m² factory that is completely gluten, wheat and nut-free. Equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, capabilities include wire cut / moulded / cream filled / chocolate enrobed biscuits and cookies, baked bars, nutritious bite size snacks and baked protein snacks and bars.
- Not a Trace also operates an in-house innovation centre to ensure they stay ahead of the game in bringing new products to the market.

For further information, please contact:

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