

Friday, 24 April 2020

## **RELIEF ON THE WAY FOR REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

***Coles donates 50 tonnes of essential items to more than 2,200 community members***

Coles has teamed up with 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 this week.

Coles and organisations such as the Northern Land Council, St Vincent's De Paul Society, Larrakia Nation in Darwin and the Central Land Council, Tangentyere Council and Purple House in Alice Springs will deliver truckloads of care packages to more than 2,200 community members impacted by the COVID-19 crisis across the Territory.

Coles NT team members have prepared the care packages which will include fresh and tinned produce, pasta, rice, biscuits and breakfast cereals. Ten thousand litres of spring water plus toilet paper, infant nappies and sanitary items will also be delivered.

The deliveries will provide relief to more than 2,200 residents across Darwin, Alice Springs and to many remote communities such as Santa Teresa, Beswick and Elliott which is 735 km away from a Coles store.

Coles Regional Manager Daniel Clegg said his team was passionate about supporting remote Indigenous communities who were severely impacted by COVID-19.

"The current situation in remote parts of the Northern Territory is critical and we wanted to do everything we could to provide some relief and support to those lacking access to essential supplies. Unfortunately, we know that many in the communities have been unable to leave their homes to access essential food and groceries at these times," he said.

"By working with organisations such as the Central and Northern Land Councils, Larrakia Nation, and the National Indigenous Australian Agency, we will be able to deliver food donations to people who need it most, across many parts of the Territory, particularly in remote Indigenous areas."

Daniel said Toll Logistics, Blackwoods and Colemans Printing at Alice Springs were also instrumental in supporting the initiative.

Northern Land Council CEO Marion Scrymgour said the organisation was proud to work with Coles to bring these essential items to communities at Beswick (Wugularr) and Elliott.

"Making sure residents of Aboriginal communities stay on country and don't have to leave biosecurity areas to shop in regional centres has been a priority for the NLC. This action by Coles is exactly the right kind of corporate support for our remote communities and the NLC applauds Coles and its staff for this initiative," she said.

Central Land Council CEO Joe Martin-Jard also welcomed the donations.

“We congratulate Coles for their leadership during very difficult times. The donation of food boxes will make a significant difference and is most welcome. The CLC will pass on the donated food boxes to Aboriginal organisations working with those most in need in remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia,” he said.

Larrakia Nation CEO Robert Cooper said the donation would benefit many of their families and clients.

“Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation has been heavily involved in keeping our people and our clients safe, healthy and secure since the outbreak commenced. We thank Coles for stepping up and assisting with this supply of essential items when so many of our families are under stress and otherwise unable to access many of these items. This will bring smiles to a lot of faces,” he said.

Purple House CEO Sarah Brown welcomed the support for their patients and families.

“We are all so grateful to Coles for this generous support. With road closures food security has become a significant issue for people out bush. This donation of healthy food and cleaning products will take pressure off families, service providers and community stores and allow remote residents to stay home, stay safe and hopefully stay COVID free,” she said.

St Vincent de Paul Society NT CEO Fran Avon said: “St Vincent de Paul Society has experienced growing demand that has stretched our resources. We are very grateful to Coles for their support of the community and for our vital services.”

Organisations receiving care packages from Coles will include Central Land Council, Tangentyere Council, Ingkerreke Outstations Resource Services, Atyenhenge-Atherre Aboriginal Corporation, Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation, Purple House, Wugularr, Northern Land Council, Larrakia Nation and St Vincent de Paul Society.

During COVID-19, Coles is also donating extra food and groceries to the retail value of \$1 million each week to national food relief organisations, Foodbank and SecondBite, so they can support up to 3800 community-based charities across Australia.

An integral part of Coles' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan is its focus on building mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

Coles is also recognised as the largest corporate sector employer of Indigenous Australian's and has recruited 430 Indigenous team members in the last three weeks. The new hires take Coles' total Indigenous workforce to more than 4,800 and mark a significant step towards the company's target of increasing Indigenous team member representation to 5 per cent of the total workforce by 2023.

Further information can be found in Coles' [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement document](#).

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