

Media Release

coles | Value the Australian way



THURSDAY, 26 May 2022

COLES COMMITS \$10 MILLION TO HELP PROTECT THE GREAT BARRIER REEF ***Funds to support scientific programs to help mitigate impact of climate change***

[VNR and images available here](#)

Coles and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation have today announced a 10-year, \$10 million partnership to help strengthen the regeneration and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

The 'Blue Carbon Partnership' recognises the critical need to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and protect marine ecosystems across the iconic Great Barrier Reef in alignment with Coles' Together to Zero sustainability ambitions.

Through the partnership, Coles will dedicate funds towards a number of innovative projects based on 'blue carbon' – the process of capturing and storing carbon in oceanic or coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses.

They act like sponges that absorb carbon dioxide molecules from the air and have the potential to capture and store more carbon than tropical rainforests as well as hold it underground for centuries - helping in the fight against climate change.

These projects include:

- Working with farmers to reinstate a significant coastal wetland in the Great Barrier Reef catchment aimed to restore coastal habitats and serve as highly effective carbon sinks.
- Developing the first large-scale seagrass nursery in partnership with leading seagrass researchers and Traditional Owners of the Reef and a demonstration site that can unlock the science needed to support seagrass restoration at scale.

Under the partnership, Coles will also engage customers, inspire team members and work with suppliers to raise awareness of the need to protect Reef habitats and ecosystems.

Coles CEO Steven Cain said: "Unlocking Australia's blue carbon potential by investing in projects that support revegetation and regeneration of coastal ecosystems is crucial to preserving the Reef."

"Coles' partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation is all part of our ambition to become Australia's most sustainable supermarket.

"On our path to Together to Zero emissions, we must look after the sea, land and air so they may be enjoyed by generations to come. The Great Barrier Reef is arguably one of the most cherished parts of Australia's coastlines, and the investment in this partnership will unlock new learnings to further progress our Coles sustainability journey."

Australia has some of the greatest potential for storing blue carbon anywhere in the world given its coastline, climate and rich reef systems – and there is no greater example than the Great Barrier Reef.

Thinus Keeve, Chief Sustainability, Property and Export Officer said: "Coles is already making great strides in our Together to Zero emissions ambition and our partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation represents the latest phase in our commitment to show leadership on sustainability."

“Our investment in the regeneration and revegetation of coastal ecosystems will help build the resilience of the Reef and deliver projects that can make a difference at a meaningful scale,” he said.

“We all have a part to play to ensure Australians can continue to enjoy the Reef for generations to come. The partnership we are announcing today is one example of how Coles is working collaboratively with our team members, suppliers and communities to ensure generational sustainability, while helping mitigate the impacts of climate change.

“The programs we support will provide benefits that stretch far beyond the reef itself, by working with farmers and traditional landowners to restore coastal ecosystems, protecting the ocean, providing habitat for native wildlife and capturing and storing atmospheric carbon.”

Great Barrier Reef Foundation Managing Director Anna Marsden said: “The Great Barrier Reef is an irreplaceable ecosystem, home to thousands of species of marine life including more than 1600 species of fish and six of the world’s seven species of marine turtles.

“We applaud Coles’ leadership in recognising the emerging opportunities of blue carbon and the capacity to harness the desire of their customers to see the Reef survive and thrive. In supporting these innovative coastal restoration and seagrass projects, Coles is also paving the way to unlock a pipeline of blue carbon projects in the future to accelerate investment in nature-based solutions that improve the health of our Reef.”

Chief Scientist of the Great Barrier Reef Foundation Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg said: “We need the best science to develop bold, innovative ideas to protect coral reef habitats and slow the impacts of climate change, which is the biggest threat to the survival of the Great Barrier Reef.

“In addition to tackling the root cause of climate change, we must make reefs more resilient to the impacts of climate change that are already locked into the system.

“Coles’ partnership in blue carbon projects with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation is a prime example of the way we all can be working together to help the Reef and all its living diversity now and into the future. It is terrific to see one of Australia’s corporate greats generously engaging to solve one of the greatest challenges facing Australia.”

Coles’ investment will commence with two pilot projects designed to unlock the Reef’s blue carbon potential, increase biodiversity, accelerate scientific research and support communities along the Reef.

The projects are:

- **Coastal habitat restoration: Working with farmers to reinstate a significant coastal wetland in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.** It is the largest blue carbon project to date in Queensland’s Great Barrier Reef catchment and is designed to deliver benefits to the ecosystem. Restoring these wetlands will also help reintroduce highly effective carbon sinks to capture and store atmospheric carbon. Wetland restoration boosts water quality, supports biodiversity and builds the resilience of coastal habitats in the face of climate change.
- **Seagrass nurseries: Developing the first large-scale seagrass nursery in partnership with leading seagrass researchers and Traditional Owners of the Reef.** Seagrass meadows reduce the impact of catchment run-off, provide breeding grounds for fish and shellfish, as well as capturing and storing carbon. The creation of a seagrass nursery and a demonstration site will help unlock the science needed to support seagrass restoration at a scale that makes a meaningful difference. It also supports a healthier marine ecosystem, increases blue carbon capture and fosters long-term job creation.

MEDIA ALERT

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Date:	Thursday 26 May 2022
Time:	11.30am sharp
What:	Media launch – Coles invests \$10 million to protect and preserve the Great Barrier Reef
Where:	GOMA, Roof Terrace, Stanley Pl, South Brisbane QLD 4101
Photo / vision and interview opportunities:	Interview opportunities with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coles CEO Steven Cain• Coles Chief Sustainability, Property and Export Officer Thinus Keeve• GBRF Managing Director Anna Marsden• GBRF Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg

-ends-

For further information, please contact

Coles Media Line (03) 9829 5250 or media.relations@coles.com.au