

**WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2022**

## **COLES INTRODUCES GENDER AFFIRMATION LEAVE, SPONSORS PRIDE CUP**

*Ten days' paid gender affirmation leave for trans and gender-diverse team members*

As part of its commitment to build a strong Pride network and actively contribute to local LGBTQI+ communities, Coles is proud to announce that team members undergoing gender affirmation will now be entitled to up to 10 days' paid gender affirmation leave.

Coles has also signed up as an official partner of Pride Cup Australia, which promotes inclusivity and diversity in sport. The partnership aligns with Coles' focus on health and wellbeing; recognising that the ability to participate in sport without discrimination is critical to living healthy and happy lives.

Coles Chief Legal and Safety Officer and chair of the Coles Pride Steering Committee David Brewster said these announcements are an important step for Coles' commitment to Champion LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace and further into the Australian community.

"We know that we have at least 900 team members who identify as transgender or gender diverse. We need to have proper policy and education in this area so there is clear guidance around taking leave for this important transition in their life," David said.

"Our Pride network has grown significantly over the past year, and we have Pride committees in every state, driving activity and engagement at a local level. Our partnership with Pride Cup Australia will help ensure that LGBTQI+ athletes at all levels can play sport in a safe place in all communities around Australia. Our goal is for the program to reach regional and rural areas as well as in metropolitan locations."

Pride Cup Australia CEO James Lolicato said that Pride Cup Australia advocates for LGBTQI+ inclusion in sport, working across all levels of sporting organisations from national leagues to local community clubs.

"When I was growing up, homophobic comments were thrown around the field more than the ball was. I didn't feel welcome or safe to be myself in sport. To now see Pride Cup games being held in so many sports across the country is incredible. We know that sports clubs are at the very heart of so many communities; these events make real inroads for LGBTQI+ inclusion far beyond game day," James said.

"We are so delighted that Coles is supporting our organisation because as part of our partnership, Coles will help Pride Cup Australia expand their reach to over 750 clubs annually across Australia, by 2025."

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**For further information, please contact**

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