

Media Release

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COLES HELPS AUSSIE BUSINESSES WITH GRANTS OF UP TO \$500,000 *Applications now open for Coles Nurture Fund to grow innovation and sustainability*

Australian food and drink producers seeking financial support can now apply for grants of up to \$500,000 to help them transform their business, deliver market-leading products and drive sustainable operations.

The Coles Nurture Fund has helped more than 100 Aussie farmers and food and drink producers to be at the forefront of innovation and sustainability, with \$36 million already awarded on projects including closing the gap on fruit and veg imports, developing a zero-waste organic mushrooms farm and a net-zero battery-powered brewery.

Coles Chief Commercial and Sustainability Officer Anna Croft said Coles was proud to help cultivate lasting change within the industry for the benefit of Aussie businesses and customers.

"Many of our producers are small to medium family-owned businesses that take great pride in delivering outstanding products for our customers, and they might have a great idea but not the financial support to get it off the ground, which is why we want to support them through the Coles Nurture Fund," she said.

"We welcome any ideas that help transform infrastructure, reduce waste, become more energy efficient and install new equipment to support greater volumes of Aussie produce."

WHAT YOU NEED TO APPLY:

Coles is encouraging applications from all businesses that meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of whether they are a current Coles supplier. To be eligible for a grant of up to \$500,000:

- Businesses must demonstrate that they are seeking funding for a project which is unique, drives innovation and provides outstanding sustainability benefits.
- Applicants must generate less than \$25 million in annual revenue and employ 50 or fewer full-time employees.

Applications close at 5pm AEDT on Friday, 14 February 2025.

Recent recipients include Victorian-based blueberry grower, White Cloud Farms, who was awarded \$400,000 last year to extend the supply of popular Eureka blueberries for longer in the year by creating a growing system that uses a closed loop water reserve, superior cropping microclimates and modified atmosphere storage, supporting both the crop and the land.

White Cloud Farms Owner Scott Carter said he was excited about what being a Coles Nurture Fund recipient meant for the supply of his berries, his farm and his family.

"There are three parts to our vision for White Cloud Farms. The first and most important is the installation of a Priva Irrigation and Climate System which is a world-class system to ensure smarter water usage. This includes a new drainage system which will allow us to capture nutrient-rich water from our plants and use it for growth in other areas on the farm," Scott said.

"The second element is a purpose-built cool room to store the berries at the ideal temperature before

transport, ensuring quality is maintained, and finally, establishing 0.75 hectares of netting and 0.25 hectares of tunnels to allow micro-climate trials which will encourage the plants to fruit later in the season.

“With the support of the Coles Nurture Fund, we can make it happen. My wife Allison and I are incredibly grateful to Coles, and we want to set an example to our girls and other farmers that biodiversity and sustainability are achievable, and hard work is the secret ingredient.”

Western Australian family-owned grain and beef producer, Emu Hill Pastoral, was also awarded last year \$500,000 to create a highly innovative and sustainable water system by desalinating underground water. The previously unusable water will be processed through a solar-powered water treatment plant, complementing a dam built with evaporation minimisation strategies to drive production growth in the farm's beef cattle feedlot.

Emu Hill Pastoral Managing Director Renee Lynch said the Coles Nurture Fund grant will have a significant impact on the growth of the family business.

“Our new water system will allow us to have continuous access to high-quality water, which really gives us confidence for our cattle feedlot. It also enables us to grow our business at a much faster rate than we would have otherwise,” she said.

“We are all about employing sustainable farming practices that protect our soil health and the natural environment around us. Perhaps most importantly, it will allow future generations to continue to work in this pristine landscape and produce high-quality food to feed the world.”

For more information or to apply to the Coles Nurture Fund, visit coles.com.au/nurturefund

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