

Media Release

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Aussie producers receive more than \$3.7 million from Coles Nurture Fund to drive sustainability and innovation

To mark World Environment Day, Coles announced today it has awarded grants of up to \$500,000 to nine small and medium sized businesses from across the country to implement plans to drive sustainability and innovation.

The latest grants bring the total financial support awarded through the Coles Nurture Fund to more than \$36 million across 108 businesses since the funding initiative was established in 2015.

Since 2020, Caloundra-based Indigenous family-owned business Beachtree Distilling Co. has crafted delicious small-batch gin, vodka and liqueurs with native-Australian ingredients and has been awarded \$380,000 for its Re-spirits project, which aims to scale up their innovative Re-spirits project, transforming local and Indigenous waste from jam, spreads and cheese production into flavourful spirits.

Beachtree Distilling Co. Co-Founder Kirra Daley said the Re-spirits program would have a significant impact on her business and many other local farms.

"The ethos of Beachtree Distilling Co. and our bush-to-bottle drinks are rooted in my childhood, raised on Bundjalung Country where I was taught to respect and understand land and country," she said.

"We plan on using our grant to acquire equipment to repurpose what other local businesses consider waste to create our delicious spirits, with the aim to create a more circular economy and reduce waste."

"As a small business, we have experienced many challenges over the years which is why we are so grateful for the Coles Nurture Fund, as it will provided us with the space and resources to build our business while continuing to support our local community."

Located in Manjimup, Prada Farms is an avocado farm that has been awarded \$461,000 to transition to a fully electric harvesting system that is charged by renewable energy.

Co-owner of Prada Farms, and second-generation avocado farmer Rod Duncan, grew up on avocado farms and has seen the evolution of harvesting, but is passionate about making the process more efficient and environmentally friendly.

"Our vision is to have a net zero emissions harvesting process, and the Coles Nurture Fund grant will help us move towards that vision. Prada Farms is incredibly proud to be installing an off-grid solar system to charge electric farming vehicles, electric cherry pickers, and a lithium battery powered forklift, to help harvest our

beautiful avocados. It has been a family commitment, with three generations involved – my 90-year-old Mum, and my daughter,” Rod said.

“We are hoping to secure up to six machines ready for the harvesting season in October, and together with our electric buggies and soon-to-be solar powered shed, we are well on our way to harvesting the fruit using a completely electric and low emissions system.

“This grant means a lot to our farm and our family, and we are extremely grateful to the Coles Nurture Fund for making it possible. It’s such a great message for other farmers in the area to see how being sustainable can accelerate your business.”

Coles Group Chief Commercial Officer Anna Croft said the Round 12 recipients were chosen for their industry-leading and high-impact projects, that will achieve impressive sustainability goals to reduce waste, enhance animal welfare, and reduce their carbon footprint.

“We are proud to be able to award more than \$3.7 million to nine Aussie small and medium sized businesses — located across Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia — as part of the latest round of the Coles Nurture Fund,” Anna said.

“I am excited to watch all of the recipients bring to life their incredible ideas in their respective industries – demonstrating they are leading the way when it comes to innovation and sustainability.”

Coles Ambassador and Nurture Fund judging panelist Curtis Stone said this year’s nine recipients were an impressive example of Aussie businesses who are driving positive change across a diverse range of industries.

“I am blown away by the wonderful list of applicants for Coles Nurture Fund for Round 12, and the nine successful businesses are extremely worthy recipients,” said Curtis.

“It’s so fulfilling to know Coles will be granting close to \$3.7 million to assist these amazing suppliers – to help them to make changes that drive sustainability and reduce emissions and waste at a time when many businesses are feeling the pinch.”

Other Nurture Fund recipients awarded grants in Round 12 include:

- Bulla Mushrooms in Victoria will use a grant of \$490,000 to create a zero-waste mushroom facility which will capture excess mushrooms grown on the farm and turn them into dehydrated high-quality products that would otherwise be imported from overseas. The project will also enable this small business to install a solar and small-scale wind farm to power the facility, helping to reduce emissions.
- White Cloud Farms in Victoria will use a grant of \$400,000 to create a blueberry growing system that is sustainable for both the crop and the land. By utilising a closed loop water supply, superior cropping microclimates, and modified atmosphere storage, this will extend the season of premium Eureka blueberries which are exclusive to Coles.
- Emu Hill Pastoral in Western Australia will use a grant of \$500,000 to create a highly innovative, sustainable and resilient water system by desalinating underground water. The water will be processed through a solar powered water treatment plant complementing a dam built with evaporation minimisation strategies to drive production growth in a beef cattle feedlot.
- Hillcroft Farms in Western Australia will use a grant of \$500,000 to construct a 600kW ground molded solar farm next to its feed mill and piggery site to provide energy to the only on-farm piggery feed mill. The electricity generated will fully power the feed mill and piggery during daylight hours. This will be

the largest solar installation on a piggery site in Australia which will complement a sustainable pig production system.

- Rocky Ridge Brewing Co in Western Australia will use a grant of \$400,000 to fast track their ambitious Net Zero emissions target to be the first net zero, certified sustainable brewery in the Australian and the Asia Pacific Region.
- Queensland Bottlers located in Queensland will use a grant of \$500,000 to become the first Australian spring water manufacturer to use multi-layer blow molding technology in bulk water. This will enable production of an rHDPE bottle with up to 60% recycled content, rather than using 100% virgin plastic.
- Burbury Ag in Tasmania will use a grant of \$85,821 to design and build an efficient and innovative bulk sheep handling system that is easily transportable and can attach to any sheep infrastructure. With large gaps between sheep yards, this invention will remove the need to walk flocks between locations which will drive major efficiencies on the farm, reduce risk of disease, provide better animal welfare and reduce manual handling.

Australian small businesses are encouraged to apply for the 13th round of the Coles Nurture Fund via the [website](#) when applications open again in January 2025.



L-R Kirra Daley Beachtree Operations Manager & Steven Grace Beachtree Productions Manager



Rod & Karen Duncan of Prada Farms

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For media enquiries, please contact

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