

Media Release

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AUSSIE CHAMPIONS GO BANANAS FOR LITTLE ATHLETICS

Olympic medalists launch the 2024 Coles Little Athletics Banana A-Peel

With renewed interest in Little Athletics ahead of the 2024/25 summer season thanks to the inspiring efforts of our Aussie athletes in Paris, Australian athletics' latest golden girl Nina Kennedy has thrown her support behind the Coles Little Athletics Banana A-Peel.

Nina, fresh off a stellar 2024 international season which included gold in Paris, shared her journey from Little Athletics to the Olympics with over 500 aspiring athletes in Melbourne this week, alongside fellow former little athlete and London Olympic champion Sally Pearson, Paris bronze medallist Matthew Denny, Tokyo bronze medallist Kelsey-Lee Barber and triple Olympian and Australian high jump record holder Brandon Starc.

The champion athletes' visit to local Little Athletics centres coincided with the launch of the Coles Little Athletics Banana A-Peel, a one-week fundraising campaign for Little Athletics Australia starting on **National Banana Day on Wednesday 16 October and running until Tuesday 22 October**. For every kilogram of Cavendish bananas sold during the week, Coles, with the support of its Aussie banana growers, will donate 10 cents to Little Athletics Australia, to a maximum of \$150,000¹. Funds raised will go towards the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund to help grassroots clubs and centres purchase new sports equipment.

Nina encouraged customers to support the Coles Little Athletics Banana A-Peel to help nurture the next generation of Aussie athletes.

"Little Athletics has played a huge part in the development of many Australian athletes, including myself, to become Olympians and the best athlete they can be," she said.

"I remember my time in Little Athletics fondly – it was where I learnt all the skills of track and field and where I made lifelong friends and memories. I also remember how much new sports equipment was valued by athletes and parents and that's why I'm backing the Coles Little Athletics Banana A-Peel. Funds raised will help provide a safe and enjoyable experience for young athletes."

Coles Little Athletics Australia CEO Myles Foreman said there has never been a better time to support Little Athletics.

"With the success of athletes like Nina and Matthew in Paris, and with Brisbane 2032 on the horizon, there has been a surge in interest for kids to join Little Athletics programs this season," he said.

"Every four years, post Olympics, Little Athletics get a spike in registrations and this season is on track to be no different. With role models like Nina, Sally Pearson and Brandon Starc – all former little athletes themselves – and with the support of partners like Coles, we hope to maintain this momentum over the next month."

¹ Excludes Coles Express

"We hope that everyone can show their support for Little Athletics by simply buying a bunch of bananas from Coles this week to support the Coles Little Athletics Banana A-Peel."

Coles Group Corporate and Indigenous Affairs Officer Sally Fielke said the Little Athletics partnership demonstrates Coles' desire to encourage healthy lifestyles and help kids stay fit and active.

"Coles' partnership with Little Athletics has helped hundreds of grassroots clubs and centres and over 500,000 kids develop fundamental sports skills and lifelong healthy habits since 2017," she said.

"This month, we donated our five millionth banana to Little Athletics through the Coles Little Athletics banana donation program. We also surpassed \$2.5 million in equipment grants distributed to clubs and centres from the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund."

More than 480 Little Athletics centres have received sports equipment grants from the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund since 2018, including 43 centres from the most recent round of funding, also announced today. The 43 centres will share in \$150,000 to buy new equipment such as high jump mats, hurdles and discuses to support budding athletes. For a full list of successful recipients go to www.coles.com.au/littleathleticsfund.

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For media enquiries, please contact

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