

Media Release

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COLES RACES PAST \$3 MILLION FOR LITTLE ATHLETICS

The Coles Little Athletics Community Fund has hit a major milestone, racing past \$3 million awarded to grassroots clubs and centres since 2018.

The milestone was reached in the latest round of funding with 82 Little Athletics Centres sharing in \$285,000 to purchase new sports equipment, as thousands of kids hit the track for the 2026/27 season.

The announcement of the 2026 Coles Little Athletics Community Fund recipients coincides with the start of the Little Athletics Banana A-Peel, with five cents from every kilogram of Cavendish bananas sold at Coles from 7 to 20 October to be donated to Little Athletics, up to a maximum donation of \$150,000. Funds raised in this year's appeal will help even more clubs and centres purchase new equipment in the next round of funding.

Interest in Athletics continues to soar with Aussie athletes inspiring the next generation with world-beating performances. Australia topped the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games' Athletics medal tally less than two months ago, with former little athletes contributing 25 of Australia's 34 medals including Gold from Isaac Beacroft (Quakers Hill Little Athletics, NSW), Rose Davies (Adamstown New Lambton, NSW), Kurtis Marschall (Reynella East & Districts, SA), Eleanor Patterson (Leongatha, Vic), Jemima Montag (Brighton, Vic), Abbey Caldwell (Doncaster, Vic), Mackenzie Little (Northern Suburbs, NSW) and Rhiannon Clarke (Joondalup, WA).

Another 2026 Commonwealth Games champion and Coles ambassador Matt Denny encouraged more kids and families to get involved in Little Athletics.

"It's always so heartwarming to see kids as young as three years old giving all the track and field events a go at Little Athletics. It's such a great program for families and kids to get involved in, to learn new skills and make new friends," he said.

"I didn't have the chance to do Little Athletics growing up, but thanks to partners like Coles there are now so many more opportunities for kids to join a program, and with initiatives like the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund, there'll be new equipment at centres to support them."

The 2026/27 season marks a new era for the iconic Australian kids' sports program with Little Athletics coming under the banner of Australian Athletics after the two national sporting bodies completed their historic unification in May, strengthening the pathway from junior participation to the world stage.

Little Athletics Australia CEO Myles Foreman said the start of a new season was an exciting time for athletes, families and volunteers, made even more meaningful by the continued support of Coles.

"The start of a new season is an exciting time as children return to the track, reconnect with friends and enjoy being active," he said.

"Coles' equipment grants, along with their weekly banana donations, have played an important role in growing Little Athletics in local communities across Australia. We're also grateful for Grove Juice's support of the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund this year helping to provide volunteers with the tools and resources they need to support young athletes."

Coles General Manager External Communications & Community Engagement Jace Armstrong said reaching \$3 million was a proud milestone that reflected the enduring impact of Coles' partnership with Little Athletics.

"Reaching \$3 million through the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund is a significant milestone and shows the impact our long-term partnership is making in local clubs and centres across Australia," he said.

"For nearly a decade, Coles has provided Little Athletics with fresh Australian-grown bananas, equipment and opportunities to help thousands of children build confidence, make friends and stay healthy and active."

In addition to Little Athletics, Coles has partnerships with Football Australia for Coles MiniRoos, the AFL and AFLW with Coles Healthy Kicks to get kids moving and support local communities across Australia.

A full list of the successful centres from the 2026 Coles Little Athletics Community Fund is available on www.coles.com.au/littleathleticsfund.

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