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FUNDING RELIEF TO HELP BAYSIDE AND INNER SOUTH'S LITTLE ATHLETES STAY ON TRACK

Four Little Athletics Centres in Bayside, Glen Eira and South Melbourne have been given a funding boost for the upcoming season thanks to grants totalling more than \$12,000 from Coles.

South Melbourne District, Caulfield, Sandringham and Brighton Little Athletics centres were four of 158 grassroots sports club across Australia to share in \$521,000 for sports equipment from the latest round of the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund.

It is the single largest round of grants distributed to Little Athletics centres since the Fund was established two years ago to support little athletes hoping to follow in the footsteps of champions like Sally Pearson and Brandon Starc.

The grants come amid research from the Australian Sports Foundation in July which estimated that over 16,000 local sports clubs were at risk of closing due to reduced revenues and increased costs arising from COVID-19¹.

The local centres will use the funds to buy marquees, timing gates, starting blocks and trolleys.

Commonwealth Games high jump champion and Coles ambassador Brandon Starc is among the Aussie athletes who have been affected by disruptions and restrictions caused by COVID-19. The Tokyo prospect said he hopes the funding will encourage kids to get back on track this season.

"As a former little athlete, I know how much new equipment mean to kids who are starting out their athletics careers. It gives kids a chance to compete and train at their best and reach their full potential," he said.

Coles State General Manager Mark O'Connor said Coles was pleased to continue its support of budding athletes and parent volunteers.

"We know it's been a difficult six months for everyone involved in community sport, particularly little athletes. We hope news of these grants will give their athletes, families and volunteers from across the Bayside and Inner South region a morale boost ahead of the new season," he said.



Olympic & World Champion Sally Pearson and little athletes with the Coles Community Bags that funds new sports equipment

¹ "Impact of COVID-19 on Community Sport," Australian Sports Foundation, July 2020
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“Coles is passionate about helping kids lead healthier, happier lives. That’s why we’re delighted to have raised more than \$363,000 in Victoria and \$1.68 million nationally for local sports clubs through the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund in just two years.”

Funds for the grant are raised through the sale of specially marked chiller bags designed by Aussie kids, with ten per cent of every bag sold directed to the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund. Coles has raised more than \$1.68 million to 376 Little Athletics centres across the country since November 2018.

For further information, please contact

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