



MEDIA RELEASE

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GEELONG LEADERS UNITE TO LAUNCH GAME CHANGING COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

More than 80 influential Geelong community leaders joined forces at The Pier, Geelong last night to officially launch *Unite Geelong*- a groundbreaking community initiative that will use funds raised from the sale of bottled water to implement educational platforms and community projects to engage, support and inspire vulnerable youth to be the best they can be.

As the only bottled water directly supporting the Greater Geelong community, 100 per cent of proceeds from *Unite Geelong* water sales will go towards funding local projects across four key areas including; infrastructure, education, health and sustainability. *Unite Geelong* water will be sold at City of Greater Geelong buildings and across 52 local schools and businesses. But *Unite Geelong* is calling on even more organisations across the region to stock the water and encourage the community to show support for the initiative by making *Unite Geelong* their water of choice.

High-profile guests at the launch event included City of Greater Geelong Mayor Darryn Lyons and Cotton On Group CEO Peter Johnson, who threw their support behind the initiative that aims to build a prosperous and sustainable future for the Geelong community, in particular youth from low-socio economic backgrounds or those disengaged from education.

Cotton On Group CEO Peter Johnson believes it is crucial local Geelong businesses are coming together to establish long-term partnerships that give back to the community.

“As a local business with so many friends and family in the Geelong community it is so important we are contributing and giving back to the place we call home. We believe education holds the power in creating sustainable and healthy futures for our youth and we are committed to empowering and supporting them in reaching their goals through *Unite Geelong*.”

The City of Greater Geelong is a major *Unite Geelong* partner and Mayor Darryn Lyons is very supportive of the campaign.

“Unite Geelong is a fantastic initiative developed by Cotton On Foundation and I’m excited to be working with two leading Geelong organisations,” explained Mayor Lyons. “I call on Geelong businesses to get on board the *Unite Geelong* campaign and help us in our goal to create a better Geelong.”

The Geelong Cats have thrown their support behind the initiative, with the *Unite Geelong* water now sold at Simonds Stadium and Senior Coach Chris Scott named as an official ambassador. To create greater awareness around *Unite Geelong* and encourage people to show their support, a large-scale community rally has been organised to coincide with round four of the AFL home and away season. The rally, *March on Geelong*, will see live entertainment and high profile Geelong personalities getting involved.

“On April 12 the Geelong Cats will partner with Unite Geelong to host *March On Geelong* and we invite everyone to join us at 4:30pm to march from Steampacket Gardens to Simonds Stadium. We’d love a huge turnout to demonstrate Geelong’s amazing community spirit. Get on board to unite Geelong!” Mayor Darryn Lyons said.

Six Geelong teens that are excelling in the different areas of academia, sport and the arts have also been officially named *Unite Geelong* Youth Ambassadors. The inspiring teens will build their own skills around leadership and community development and support the *Unite Geelong* campaign through its youth engagement events.

Other supporting partners include; Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board, Committee for Geelong, Deakin University, Geelong Region LLEN, G Force, Give Where You Live, Good Beginnings, Gordon TAFE, G21 Alliance, Hands on Learning, Ladder, Leisure Networks, Northern Bay College, Northern Futures and SEDA.

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