



*food+fibre*  
GREAT SOUTH COAST



# Annual Highlights

FY 2021 - 2022  
August 2022





# Chair's Report

## Georgina Gubbins

### Chair Food and Fibre Great South Coast

This year, the Great South Coast became Australia's number one agricultural production region with the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealing that our region was responsible for at least \$4.6 billion in food and fibre output in 2020/21.

We achieved this incredible result at a time when producers were stepping up to protect essential supply chains under some of the toughest conditions we've ever faced. While this result is certainly something to celebrate, I know the toll this has taken on all of us against a backdrop of labour shortages and rising input costs. Don't forget – we need to be proactive in supporting each other and asking for help when we need it. Sometimes, a phone call is all it takes.

Food and Fibre Great South Coast exists to collaboratively uplift the entire Great South Coast region through its largest sector – food and fibre – and our united approach that brings together cross-commodity producers, value-chain participants and professionals makes the difference.

Working together gets more wins than working alone, and the expansion of our activities, growing organisational profile and network of volunteers, supporters and sector participants is proof. While our financial position remains unstable and the sustainability of our organisation is not guaranteed, we are proud and energised to be building on our value proposition to attract the funding we need to survive. We have also launched a tax deductible giving program, which allows members of our food and fibre community to contribute financially to Food and Fibre Great South Coast.

**If you can, I would encourage you to set up a regular, tax-deductible donation to Food and Fibre Great South Coast. You can select which strategic priority to direct your donation or choose to fund our organisation as a whole. We need local support to continue our vital work and are grateful for your help in growing the future of our region.**

I am delighted to present this Food and Fibre Great South Coast 2021/22 Annual Highlights report; an update on our organisation's strategic priorities, activities and ambitions. With deep gratitude, I recognise the service of our extraordinary volunteer Board, whose generosity in performing their roles gives our organisation its strength. Finally, it's our food and fibre family that underpins our purpose. Thank you to our partners, networks, colleagues and friends for joining us on this journey, and I look forward to seeing you at the next Food and Fibre Great South Coast event.



# CEO's Report

**Natalie Collard**

**CEO  
Food and Fibre  
Great South Coast**

FY 21-22 has been a successful year for food and fibre in the Great South Coast as we continue to advance our strategic priorities and honour our responsibilities to stakeholders. We thank the five local government areas comprising SouthWest Victoria Alliance for their ongoing support, which is the key enabler of our work in the region.

Over FY 21-22, we've turned ideas into realities. We've hosted premium and engaging events like Leadership for All Seasons and the Sustainable Energy Forum. We've advanced exciting projects like the Careers Advisory Panel and our region-building 18-Point Plan for water policy reform is recognised as agenda-setting across the state. We've nurtured a culture of teamwork, fairness and strategic vision that sees us as a key player in 'Team South West Victoria', which is leading the economic and social development of our region together.

As a low-resource, high-output organisation, FFGSC leans heavily on the goodwill and expertise of industry participants within our network. The FFGSC Board of Directors, led by Chair Georgina Gubbins, features a group of food and fibre participants with both the passion and skill to lead and determine our strategic activities at a level that would command significant fees in a commercial or government context. Our whole region benefits from their contributions.

We have also strengthened relationships with outstanding partners and sponsors. Whether these be local and state government bodies, community, statutory or commercial entities, financial or in-kind partnerships – they are all built on aligned values and the belief that our region and its people deserve to realise our full potential. We appreciate the genuine collaboration of our partners and supporters, whether it's financial or in-kind. Even in an act as small as sharing a social media post we recognise the teamwork we strive to promote.

Personally, I extend my hearty congratulations to every South West Victorian food and fibre business for achieving the top agricultural production region status across Australia. We know this didn't happen by accident – it's because you are focused and hardworking people united by shared goals and common challenges. You truly deserve this recognition, and it has been my privilege to share this achievement far and wide.

I look forward to the next year of working together to take advantage of our region's significant prosperity, opportunities and bountiful natural resources. I humbly request your support of our organisation and our activities – whether that be through a financial contribution, volunteerism or partnership.



# Contents

<b>Chair's Report</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CEO's Report</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>About Food and Fibre Great South Coast</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment and Sustainability</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Realise the Water Opportunity</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Nurture Food and Fibre Careers</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy</b>	<b>27</b>



We respectfully acknowledge the Elders, past, present and emerging, of the Gunditjmara and Eastern Marr People, and all traditional custodians of the lands and hinterlands in which we live and work. In our food and fibre pursuits, we are committed to continuing the 32,000 years-plus of sustainable custodianship of the Great South Coast's natural resources.



## Who we are

Food and Fibre Great South Coast is the representative body for food and fibre production businesses and their vast supply-chains in beautiful South West Victoria.

South West Victoria is Australia's top agricultural production region, delivering over \$4.6 billion in output annually. The food and fibre sector is also the region's largest, contributing 60% of the region's GRP and 21.6% of all jobs.

## Our purpose

To grow the value of regional food and fibre production to improve the prosperity and resilience of our local communities.

We do this by collaborating to drive regional value-add, investment and sustainability; to realise the untapped water opportunity; to nurture food and fibre careers' and to champion a positive industry image.

## Strategic priorities

- Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment and Sustainability
- Realise the Water Opportunity
- Nurture Food and Fibre Careers
- Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## Our approach

We strive to grow our collective regional future through:

- Open-minded collaboration
- Passionate Advocacy
- Innovative and lean operations
- Transparency and integrity



## Board of Directors



Georgina Gubbins  
*Chair*



Alistair McCosh  
*D/ Chair*  
*Chair, Nurture Food and Fibre Careers*



Rhonda Henry GAICD  
*Treasurer*  
*Chair, Finance and Risk*



Jack Luxford



Jonathan Jenkin



Marie Thornton



Martin Clark



Carlie Barry



Ralph Cotter  
*Agriculture Victoria*



Oonagh Kilpatrick



Bill Millard  
*SouthWest Victoria Alliance*  
*Resigned May 2022*



Brett Davis  
*SouthWest Victoria Alliance*  
*Joined June 2022*

**Food and Fibre Great South Coast acknowledges the significant contribution of our Board members departing at the FY 21-22 Annual General Meeting: Alistair McCosh, Bill Millard, Marie Thornton and Carlie Barry. In particular, we acknowledge longstanding Deputy Chair, Alistair McCosh, for his leadership, strategic insights and guidance over his years of service. We also thank outgoing Finance and Risk Committee member Sarah-Jane Walsh for her participation in supporting FFGSC over the last two years.**

## With thanks to our FY 21-22 sponsors and partners



**Moyne Shire Council**



**Powercor**



**Warrnambool City Council**



**Deakin University**



**Corangamite Shire Council**



**ABC Heywire**



**Southern Grampians Shire Council**



**Westpac**



**DemoDAIRY Foundation**



**Glenelg Shire Council**



**REDEI**



**SouthWest Victoria Alliance**



**SEAM**



**Southern Rural Water**



**Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority**



**Wannon Water**

**The John Gall Foundation**



# Donate to Food and Fibre Great South Coast

## Invest in regional futures

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Everywhere we go, we hear about the value our community is seeing from Food and Fibre Great South Coast's work. We're proud to work hard for our sector, but there's always more to do, and our people are already stretched. What you see at FFGSC events, in the media and as value to the region is made possible on a shoestring budget with a small business approach, aiming to maximise the value of every dollar we earn. However, we depend on council funding and small community grants to continue our work.

We're asking our food and fibre community to keep their tax dollars local by making a regular, tax-deductible commitment to our organisation either as a whole or in specific priority areas. Our goal is 1000 contributions of \$200 or more per year, and with continued support from our Council partners, this outcome would make us sustainable and ensure we achieve greater impact into the future.

With your support, we can move from a year-to-year proposition towards an ongoing organisation focused on growing regional prosperity and wellbeing long-term.



**Georgina Gubbins**  
Chair, Food and Fibre Great South Coast

Ready to  
make a tax-  
deductible  
donation?  
Scan here:







# Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment & Sustainability

This year, the Great South Coast was recognised as Australia's largest agricultural production region by value – responsible for over \$4.6 billion in output over the 2020-2021 period. The economic multiplier effect of major food and fibre industries for other sectors in the Great South Coast is 1.84, and 6.06 for job creation, meaning when food and fibre thrives, the whole region thrives.

Our focus on encouraging value-add, investment and sustainability in the region has contributed to food and fibre's ongoing growth, and through meaningful advocacy and strategic policy development, we remain committed to building on these powerful enablers for our sector.

## Committee



Dr Karensa Menzies  
*Chair*



Carlie Barry



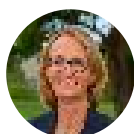
Rhonda Henry



Jonathan Jenkin



Oonagh Kilpatrick



Georgina Gubbins  
*Observer*

# Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment & Sustainability



## Sustainable Energy Forum

**13 July 2022**  
**Warrnambool**

The Great South Coast Sustainable Energy Forum, held 13 July at Deakin University Warrnambool, was devised and planned throughout the third and fourth quarter of FY 21-22. The Forum brought together over 115 stakeholders to hear how energy businesses, authorities and researchers are optimising infrastructure and technology to bring our region into the 21st century.

The Sustainable Energy Forum's Platinum Partner, regional energy distribution business Powercor, demonstrated their Lidar equipped helicopter and Muster Truck; technology that proves energy security and equity are within our reach. Powercor General Manager Corporate Affairs, Joanne Pafumi, also presented on Powercor's engagement with customers and our community to inform emergency response and infrastructure upgrade opportunities going forward.



The Forum's hefty program demonstrated innovations including leading-edge hydrogen applications for food and fibre, food security through machine learning, energy access and the transition to clean energy technology.

The Great South Coast is a leader in renewable energy, with our region set to host renewable energy projects worth around \$2 billion. We are building on our early adoption of renewable energy with a purposeful intent to embrace renewable technology adoption because we understand its vast potential, both economic and environmental.

At the Forum, reports on the decarbonisation of sectors such as dairy, meat and water were shared, celebrating the leadership of producers for their work towards sustainability. Food and fibre stakeholders were firm in their position that the renewable energy transition is something we are all actively working towards, but that it must be managed with agricultural communities. Sustainability means reducing emissions and generating clean energy in ways that respect regional people, properties, businesses and return genuinely meaningful community value.

Forum speakers included SEAM, REDEI Enterprises, Moyne Shire, VicGrid, the Victorian Farmers' Federation, Midway Forestry, Wannon Water, Hycel Technology Hub, Brolga Co, Countrywide Renewable Hydrogen, Dairy Australia, and Meat and Livestock Australia who shared their sustainable energy priorities and actions.

FFGSC thanks Platinum Partner Powercor, along with Moyne Shire Council, SEAM and REDEI Enterprises for their generosity in supporting the event and their important contributions to the program.



**"It's been fantastic to see everyone come from across the region to look at how we're going to be able to make sure we've got sustainable energy sources to power our wonderful industries we've got, particularly the dairy industry. South West Victoria is going to lead the way in this area.**

**Hon Dan Tehan MP  
Federal Member for Wannon**



**"Events like the Sustainable Energy Forum are really important, because the reality is it's going to take a collective effort by everybody to help define a sustainable future for the region. There's not one business who's responsible - it's a collective responsibility of everybody who operates in this region."**

**Joanne Pafumi  
General Manager Corporate Affairs  
Powercor**

**The south-west is vitally important to our plans for a more sustainable Victoria. And our work in this region continues to build on the vision we laid out in the Barwon South-West Renewable Energy Roadmap, which we released in 2020."**

**Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP  
Minister for Energy, Environment  
and Climate Change**







## Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment & Sustainability

### Hydrogen and dairy opportunities

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FFGSC played an instrumental role in supporting Hycel to attract a \$50,000 Council of Latin America and Australia Relations (COALAR) federal grant in 2020 to research Hydrogen and Dairy Opportunities in Uruguay and Australia. We understand this is Australia's first research project focused purely on hydrogen opportunities for agriculture.

Hycel at Deakin University Warrnambool and Brolga Co. conducted the report and found that both Australia and Uruguay are motivated to develop both their domestic and export hydrogen industry. In particular, the Australian dairy industry is motivated by sustainable practice, which is demonstrated by the Australian Dairy Industry Sustainability Framework and the support of global Pathways to Dairy Net Zero.

With the study determining that integrating hydrogen technology into dairy transport can feasibly contribute to decarbonising the food and fibre supply chain, the next steps for FFGSC involve encouraging support from producers to embark on pilot programs to test and optimise this technology.



**Bruce Knowles**  
Dairy Farmer, Tyrendarra

"FFGSC are cutting through and advocating for genuine and realistic outcomes that will actually contribute to South West economies and communities. Their targeted, effective and unbiased actions need to be supported by those they benefit."



# Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment & Sustainability



## Three-phase power

South West Victoria holds some of Australia's most rural and remote communities, which are home to some of Australia's most productive agriculture businesses. However, federal regulations that disadvantage regional Australia are getting in the way of much needed three-phase power upgrades, leaving over \$2 million in additional economic value on the table.

1130 customers in Tyrendarra, Strathdownie, Cape Bridgewater and Gorae West experience unreliable, insecure and inadequate power supply because of their connection to less than 100 kilometres of single-wire earth return lines. Without access to reliable, high-quality three-phase power, rural businesses are at a competitive disadvantage in the global high-tech market, schools cannot run efficient air conditioning and sports grounds cannot guarantee basic safety amenities like night-game lighting.

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) framework, which controls federal investment in energy infrastructure upgrades, only considers a town's population density to determine eligibility for 21st century energy access. The smallest communities in Australia can never meet those benchmarks, despite needing the energy just as much as everyone else.

This framework has denied South West Victorian communities a much-needed three-phase power upgrade, despite over eight years of advocacy. In FY 21-22, we have advanced our approach to tackling this inequity by raising awareness of the need for regulatory reform through coordinated, strategic government engagement, bolstering collaborative efforts with commercial partners like Powercor and exploring individual solutions like solar and storage technology with Social Enterprises Asset Management (SEAM) and clean technology innovators REDEI.

Upgrading the 100km of outdated single-wire-earth return line in South West Victorian towns is an urgent priority. Research shows the value of enabling business and communities in South-West Victoria to benefit from reliable, high-quality energy access is about \$2 million per year, at an initial capital investment of \$11 million.

It's time for governments to revisit the AER's framework to address the disadvantage entrenched within the way it makes decisions and unlock the economic potential of competitive, growing and high-tech regions.

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## Three-step plan

Food and Fibre Great South Coast, together with the SouthWest Victoria Alliance, Powercor and backed by a growing number of community members, has a three step plan to fix the AER's framework:

- 1 | Ensure a minimum threshold for energy service quality, regardless of where you live**
- 2 | Account for social and economic context during all infrastructure proposal evaluations**
- 3 | Give regional Australia a voice on the AER Consumer Challenge Panel, which advocates within the regulator for better reforms from a customer point of view**

**On board?**  
**Scan here to stand up for regional energy fairness**





# Realise the Water Opportunity

The Great South Coast receives reliable rainfall for consistent growing seasons and has access to abundant groundwater supplies. These groundwater assets represent significant potential to grow the value of the food and fibre sector through a smarter approach to agricultural water use. Our aim is to capture the full potential of the Great South Coast's water resources through sustainable management of ground and surface water, fit-for-purpose licensing arrangements and more effective draining systems.

FFGSC has been building community, social licence and consensus on water policy matters since our founding. Our policy positions are endorsed by water stakeholders across the region and research shows they could result in over \$40m of additional value spread evenly across the regional economy.







## Realise the Water Opportunity

### Committee



Basil Ryan  
*Chair*



Jack Luxford



Hugh Christie



Bryce Morden



Ralph Cotter



Bruce Vallance



Peter Delahunty



Georgina Gubbins  
*Observer*



Andrew Jeffers



Roma Britnell MP  
Member for South West Coast

**"Agriculture is so important for South West Coast, and it's vital that FFGSC continues to identify opportunities for future growth across the sector."**



# Realise the Water Opportunity

## Economic Analysis: Smarter water use

**Food and fibre drives prosperity in the Great South Coast, and smarter agricultural water use represents incredible opportunity for our region to grow.**

Research commissioned by Food and Fibre Great South Coast in December 2021, made possible through funding support from Corangamite Shire Council, Deakin University, Warrnambool City Council, Moyne Shire Council, Southern Grampians Shire Council and Wannon Water and carried out by BDO EconSearch, identified that a 10% increase to the Great South Coast's productive agricultural water use would see benefits across our whole regional community.

### +395 full-time jobs

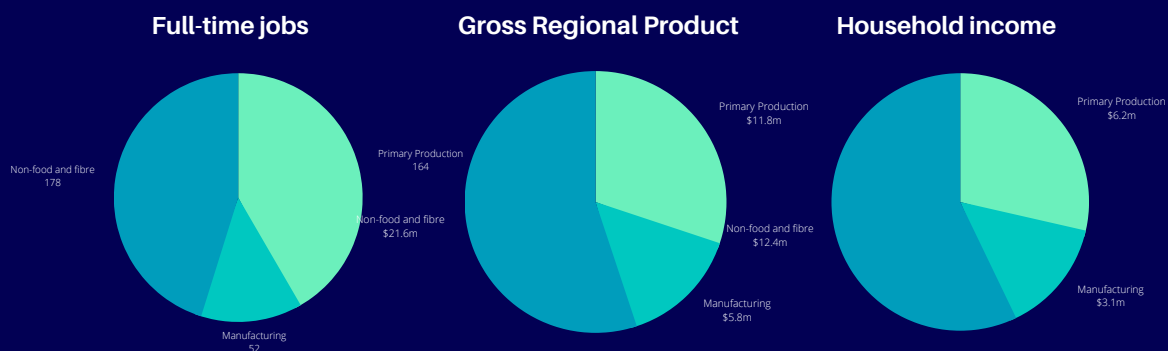
164 in primary production  
52 in manufacturing  
178 in non-food and fibre sectors

### + \$39.6 million to GRP

\$11.8m in primary production  
\$5.8m in manufacturing  
\$21.6m in non-food and fibre sectors

### + \$21.7 million to households

\$6.2m in primary production  
\$3.1m in manufacturing  
\$12.4m in non-food and fibre sectors



**Read the report:** [www.southcoastfoodfibre.com.au/economic-analysis/](http://www.southcoastfoodfibre.com.au/economic-analysis/)



## Realise the Water Opportunity

Deakin University was pleased to collaborate with other stakeholders in the region to support the preparation of this report as Food and Fibre is a such a key sector in the region.

The report not only validates this importance but also highlights the significant opportunities for future, ongoing growth of this sector which then benefits other sectors across the local economy. Deakin is keen to play its role in achieving this success for the region."



**Grant Sutherland**  
**CEO Deakin University South West Victoria**



"Food and Fibre is critical for Moyne Shire Council, with more than 37 per cent of our residents employed in the sector. This research shows that by making better use of water resources in a responsible way, we can create hundreds of new jobs and unlock tens of millions of dollars' worth of economic activity while still ensuring sustainability of the water supply.

Moyne Shire Council strongly supports changes to make better use of water, to create jobs and provide an economic boost for the entire region.

**Bill Millard**  
**CEO Moyne Shire Council**  
**to March 2022**





## Realise the Water Opportunity

### 18 Point Plan for Water Policy Reform

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Guided by the evidence revealed in the BDO EconSearch report *Economic Analysis of Food + Fibre in the Great South Coast*, Food and Fibre Great South Coast developed a pioneering 18-Point-Plan for Water Policy Reform calling for water use and licensing arrangements driven by data, productivity and sustainability. The Plan would, if implemented strategically, achieve the 10 per cent increase in productive agricultural water benchmark featured in the report, unlocking the region's water opportunity.

To develop this plan, we consulted widely with water users, authorities and experts, ensuring we achieve consensus among stakeholders and social licence from food and fibre producers. The Plan was launched at our Sustainable Water Forum to an audience of over 70 stakeholders including Parliamentary Secretary for Water Harriet Singh MP and presented to the Victorian Minister for Water for response.

**Scan to view  
the full plan:**





## Realise the Water Opportunity

### Sustainable Water Statement

Food and Fibre Great South Coast, together with water authorities and stakeholders, have finalised South West Victoria's first Sustainable Water Statement. This Statement, signed by Southern Rural Water, Wannon Water and Glenelg Hopkins CMA will act as a guiding principle for water matters going forward, emphasising the sustainability, utility and efficiency of our region's significant water assets.

The statement represents over 12 months of concerted development between partners to identify shared priorities and opportunities to secure the Great South Coast as Australia's top agricultural producer and advance our goals to become Australia's most sustainable agricultural production region.

### Water Roundtable Discussions

In FY 21-22, FFGSC continued our formal dialogue with the Victorian Department of Land, Water, Environment and Planning through formal roundtable discussions on water policy issues convened by Parliamentary Secretary for Water Harriet Shing MP.

Access to authorities at senior decision-making levels has allowed our organisation and key regional stakeholders to advance our priorities in meaningful ways, as well as confidently go about our research and policy development processes. We thank the Department and water stakeholders Southern Rural Water, Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Wannon Water for their continued engagement in this important area.



**Liz McKinnon**  
Executive General Manager  
Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub

**"The Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub is proud to work in collaboration with Food and Fibre Great South Coast to strengthen the profile and understanding of the significant contribution both economically and socially that our Primary Production commodity groups play in the region."**

# Realise the Water Opportunity



## Sustainable Water Forum

**13 February 2022**  
**Hamilton**

The Great South Coast Sustainable Water Forum, held in February 2022, was an opportunity for regional stakeholders to come together for the first time to both reveal FFGSC's ground-breaking research into the untapped potential of our region's groundwater and launch the 18-Point Plan for Water Policy Reform which aims to realise this potential.

Joined by then-Parliamentary Secretary and now-Minister for Water, Hon Harriet Shing MP and regional mayors, distribution business authorities, producers and partners, the Sustainable Water Forum was an exercise in community consultation and social licence-building, as well as to update stakeholders on our work in this space.



Event sponsors, Westpac, Southern Rural Water, Wannon Water and Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority were invited to contribute to the day, with Westpac Agribusiness Regional General Manager (Victoria & Tasmania), Roddy Brown, describing Westpac's agribusiness priorities and alignment with the Great South Coast's food and fibre community.

Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority CEO, Adam Bester, updated the community on GHCMA's sustainable irrigation program, involving irrigation development and monitoring of irrigated land use trends with a view to maximising efficiency, minimising runoff, matching water use strategies to soils and crops while preventing the loss of native vegetation.



Wannon Water CEO, Andrew Jeffers, presented Wannon Water's strategic direction toward a more sustainable water management system and told of the Great South Coast's 'Two Water Stories' – towns and cities with access to urban water and sewerage and agricultural production regions that rely heavily on groundwater.

Southern Rural Water General Manager, Cameron Fitzgerald, detailed the organisation's commitment to realising opportunities in our region including supporting enhancements to water trading rules in keeping with our 18-Point-Plan, improving access for individual enterprises to the Dilwyn aquifer and encouraging consistency of water management rules in the Border Zone between Victoria and South Australia.

The Sustainable Water Forum was a significant moment of consensus for our community who have long known that water policy could be more equitable, sustainable and profitable for producers. With work still to do, the Forum produced a roadmap, an engaged group of stakeholders and strong relationships with decision makers all driving this advocacy forward together.





# Nurture Food & Fibre Careers

Research shows that food and fibre's employment market in the Great South Coast will grow 30% by the year 2035. A large share of these careers will be accessible through on the job training, while about 39% will require a vocational qualification and only 19% a university degree. However, a poor industry public image, misunderstandings about the range of opportunities in food and fibre and lower-than-average education outcomes in our region continue to challenge food and fibre businesses.

Our aim is to attract new workers and retain talent in the Great South Coast's food and fibre sector. We do this by enthusiastically promoting and outlining pathways to the diverse range of career and lifestyle opportunities in our sector while supporting integrated learning approaches designed to increase food and fibre workforce participation to levels that meet our needs.





# Nurture Food and Fibre Careers

## Committee



Alistair McCosh  
*Chair*



Oonagh Kilpatrick



Martin Clark



Daker Pern



David Clift



Marie Thornton



Daniel Flinn



Andrea Vallance



John Flett



Georgina Gubbins  
*Observer*



Jonathan Jenkin

"We've thoroughly enjoyed working with FFGSC to show students all the careers available to them. The Ambassadors we've worked with are professional, enthusiastic and always willing to share their vast knowledge.



**Matt Porter**  
Director, Neil Porter  
Legacy

# Nurture Food and Fibre Careers



## Careers Advisory Panel Launch Event

**1 December 2021  
Camperdown**

Food and fibre's employment market is growing rapidly while a nationwide agricultural and value-chain skills shortage persists. To address this challenge, Food and Fibre Great South Coast developed the Careers Advisory Panel – an innovative program designed to build food and fibre careers literacy in job seekers and educators throughout the Great South Coast.

The Careers Advisory Panel is made up of food and fibre industry champions – we call them Ambassadors - from a diverse range of backgrounds who are keen to share their inspiring food and fibre career stories.

Since its launch event in December 2021, where Ambassadors were introduced to the community and presented with communications and leadership training, the Careers Advisory Panel has accessed over 400 young people and potential new entrants into the food and fibre sector, and its impact is starting to be felt.

Over FY 21-22, Careers Advisory Panel Ambassadors visited classrooms, job fairs and engaged directly with job seekers. With the help of the Neil Porter Legacy foundation, Ambassadors have also visited schools to discuss careers opportunities with students and their careers advisors. We've also put together and shared blog posts about each of our CAP Ambassadors to highlight their career journeys, lifestyles and perspectives about what's possible in food and fibre.



In FY 22-23, FFGSC is seeking to expand the Careers Advisory Panel to further highlight the diversity of individuals and opportunities in our sector.



**Andrea Vallance**  
Chair, DemoDAIRY  
Foundation

**"The DemoDAIRY Foundation is proud to support the FFGSC Careers Advisory Panel to raise the food and fibre sector's profile and showcase the range of career opportunities available in dairy and agribusinesses in our region."**







# Careers Advisory Panel

## Volunteer Ambassadors



**Jonathan Jenkin**

**Chair**

Senior NRM Planner,  
Sustainable  
Agriculture - Glenelg  
Catchment  
Management  
Authority

Mixed farm manager

**Lucy Collins**

**Deputy Chair**

Veterinarian  
  
Dairy farmer

**Karensa Menzies**

Principal - Karensa  
Menzies Advisory  
(AgriFood Consulting)

**Bethany Lewis**

Business and Events  
Officer - Moynes Shire  
  
Marketing Manager,  
Social Media - Tribe

**Rowan Ault**

Field Service  
Manager, SW Vic & SA  
- Saputo Dairy  
Australia

**Kym Mathew**

Milk Supply  
Manager (SA) -  
UDC Milk

**Carlie Barry**

Organic dairy and  
regenerative  
farm owner



**Martin Clark**

Operations  
Manager GT -  
Australian  
Bluegum  
Plantation

**Marie Thornton**

Farmer and  
business  
manager

**Kelsey Johnson**

Environmental  
Forester - PF  
Olsen Australia

**Victoria Stack**

Forester -  
PF Olsen  
Australia

**Courtney Pink**

Technical Manager,  
Forestry - SFM  
Environmental  
Solutions

**Bronte Gorrige**

AgriBusiness  
Banker

**Rachael James**

AgriBusiness  
Manager

**Ralph Cotter**

Regional Leader,  
Barwon South  
West - Agriculture  
Victoria

**With thanks to program sponsors:**







# Nurture Food and Fibre Careers

## The Big Connect

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At the beginning of FY 21-22, FFGSC was successful in entering a formal partnership with the Big Connect by VicHealth – a new investment to create over 100,000 opportunities for Victoria's young people. FFGSC's in-kind partnership will support an 18-months skills and mental health outreach program for young people aged between 15 and 25 living in rural South West Victoria through skills training and stronger community connections.

Isolation, poor education outcomes and a perceived lack of opportunity all contribute to disadvantage, and our contribution to the Big Connect aims to provide opportunities for social connection through place-based programs and hands on learning. To do this, we'll deploy local food and fibre industry expertise through our Careers Advisory Panel Ambassadors and regional community service partners to break down barriers preventing people from social participation and boost the food and fibre workforce at the same time.

The project will be delivered in Glenelg, Southern Grampians and Moyne Shires with a view to expanding across the region in the future.

Our partnership with the Big Connect resulted from continually monitoring government programs and investment to find opportunities to help. We're looking forward to future partnerships that advance our region's prosperity and build on the capacity of our food and fibre sector.

FFGSC's participation in the Big Connect is fully reliant on the generosity of our volunteers, because we aren't in receipt of any funds from the project. We encourage people in our sector who want to help young people choose a food and fibre future through volunteering to get in touch.



**Dr John Flett**  
Director Strategy and Research  
South West TAFE

**"The work done by Food & Fibre Great South Coast highlights how the food and fibre sector is a key part of our identity as South Western Victorians. South West TAFE is proud work with FFGSC on a range of educational initiatives for the sector."**





# Nurture Food and Fibre Careers

## Warrnambool Jobs Fair

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In May 2021, Food and Fibre Great South Coast representatives and Careers Advisory Panel Ambassadors set up shop at the Warrnambool Jobs Fair. This allowed us to meet job seekers where they are, with over 170 young people, graduates and career changers present at the event.

Our presence was well-received, with some great conversations between FFGSC and job seekers sparking inspiration on a range of fronts. Comments from attendees confirmed that our broad range of experiences, genders, supply chain perspectives provided real insight into the sector, and our strategy to activate the space with generously donated flavoured milks from Saputo Dairy and cinnamon buns from Jane Dough Warrnambool were definitely a highlight!



**The whole team Food and Fibre Great South Coast invited to have a presence at the Warrnambool Jobs Fair were fantastic for our community, job seekers and students who attended.**

**We look forward to driving career promotion, awareness and opportunities further in the South Coast of Victoria using strategic and engaging ways, in consultation with business and community stakeholders."**



**Angela Hewett**  
**Employment Facilitator,**  
**SW Coast**  
**Local Jobs Program**

## Food and Fibre Careers Resources

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Food and Fibre Great South Coast has compiled and hosted on our website up-to-date, curriculum-aligned and free careers education resources to suit primary and secondary school settings. These resources have been designed and produced externally, but don't typically make it into the Great South Coast region.

Research by Food and Fibre Great South Coast in FY 21-22 revealed that most Year 9s and 10s at our largest regional high school say they don't know enough about food and fibre to consider a career in the sector. At the same time, educators are telling us they don't know where to look for food and fibre educational resources.

By compiling these resources for students and teachers, we're supporting them to develop food and fibre industry literacy and go on to promote interest in its career opportunities.

# Nurture Food and Fibre Careers



## Leadership For All Seasons

**24 March 2022**  
**Warrnambool**

Food and Fibre Great South Coast and our event partner, Westpac Agribusiness, welcomed leaders from across the region to celebrate International Women's Day at Deakin University, Warrnambool, with its first ever contemporary leadership forum: Leadership for All Seasons.

Leadership for All Seasons was an event designed to support food and fibre businesses to grow by showcasing leadership skills like resilience, empathy, collaboration, and respect that are integral to bringing people together around common goals.

Following a Welcome to Gunditjmara Country from Uncle Robbie Lowe, our four speakers, Dr Andrea North-Samardzic, Dr Nollaig Heffernan, Dr Prue Francis and Food and Fibre Great South Coast's Chair, Georgina Gubbins, delivered presentations that busted myths, showed the value of winding paths, and encouraged us to challenge our perceptions of what makes a good leader.



Deakin University leadership expert Dr Andrea North-Samardzic shared that too often, women are seen as a homogenous group with one management style. Instead, we should remember that gender is only one part of our identity and women can, and do, encompass a breadth of leadership styles.

International management consultant, Dr Nollaig Heffernan, grew up on a dairy farm in Ireland. She encouraged us to lead and succeed using our own voice and according to who we are, not who we think we should be.



Dr Prue Francis, marine scientist and educator, took us out of a boardroom and into the field. Wearing her jellyfish-print dress and through the anecdotes of her alter-ego, Professor Seaweed, Prue positioned passion as power and showed us how leadership comes from champions

Georgina Gubbins showcased the toughness, determination, intelligence and vision that allowed her to overcome the structural barriers to women's participation in primary production. Georgina shared the value of teamwork, collaboration and camaraderie among women in helping to achieve change, even under the most challenging of circumstances.



As FFGSC Deputy Chair, Alistair McCosh said, Leadership for All Seasons means in the good times and the bad. "It's about breaking down barriers and making sure they never get put back up. It means putting perceptions to one side, leading through the here-and-now, working with what we know, and making no assumptions."

FFGSC looks forward to continuing our program of diverse and compelling events throughout FY22-23.





# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

The food and fibre sector is undoubtedly a leader in economic value creation, sustainability, diversity and community building. Despite our sector's demonstrated leadership in these areas, food and fibre industries suffer outdated public perceptions, inhibiting our capacity to attract investment, talent and the growth they enable.

In advocating for a contemporary and diverse sector governed by agile and functional policy settings, our objectives are to share the importance of our Great South Coast food and fibre sector, positively influence food and fibre policy outcomes by advocating with a unified and representative voice and prioritise transparent and accessible stakeholder communications.





# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## Public Affairs Report

### The new federal government

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- FFGSC has started establishing relationships within the new Federal government by making representations to the new ministers for Agriculture, Regional Development, Resources, Climate Change, Environment & Water and Communications. In welcoming new ministers to their portfolio, we've introduced them to our organisation and policy priorities while highlighting our past relationships with government and specific regional policy agenda including three-phase power upgrades, water policy reform, and investment in grassroots careers programs.

### Local representation

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- We've maintained productive relationships with The Hon Dan Tehan MP and his electorate office, advancing policy priorities in energy, water, hydrogen technology, the Careers Advisory Panel as well as FFGSC's future funding. Mr Tehan attended our Sustainable Energy Forum in 2022 and facilitated an engaging panel on regional hydrogen innovations.
- Engagement with Roma Britnell MP and her team has seen our agenda commended by Ms Britnell in the Legislative Assembly and secured added political support for three-phase power and water policy reform within the state parliament.

### State government engagement

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- Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Water Harriet Singh MP attended our Sustainable Water Forum and delivered a keynote address. Minister Shing has also convened ongoing water roundtable discussions between FFGSC, water stakeholders and public servants within her department.
- FFGSC was engaged with former Victorian Minister for Agriculture Maryanne Thomas MP, who provided a video address to our Leadership for All Seasons event. The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP has since taken over the Agriculture and Regional Development portfolios. We have been in touch with Ms Tierney's office to introduce ourselves and welcome her to these important policy areas.
- FFGSC regularly meets with Victorian Minister for Energy Lily D'Ambrosio MP's office. Senior departmental officers have been encouraging in relation to energy policy reform, and the Minister provided a video address to our Sustainable Energy Forum.

### The hydrogen opportunity

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In late 2021, we submitted letters to the Agriculture and Resource Ministers representing the significant opportunities for Australian agriculture through hydrogen technology. We also shared the hydrogen and dairy opportunities report from our partnership with Hycel at Deakin University which was funded by the Federal government's Council on Australian and Latin American Relations.



# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## Policy Submissions

In addition to our flagship advocacy programs in water and energy policy, FFGSC delivered four ad hoc submissions to government in response to calls for consultation over FY21-22.

### Primary Production Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

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In 2021, the Victorian Government opened consultation on its Primary Production Climate Adaptation Action Plan 21-26 to identify opportunities for new innovations, research and development that mitigates and adapts to climate change.

FFGSC submitted that the food and fibre sector is already a leader in climate change adaptation, highlighting the need for governments to centre producers every step of the way. We argued that genuine engagement with producers that fosters social licence and buy-in is the best and fairest way to realise the extraordinary opportunities for clean energy and technology integration in Australian regions. We also advocated for an increase in upskilling and training programs that enables new technology integration at farms and value chain businesses.

### Agriculture Training Review

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In 2022, the Victorian Government opened consultation with business, industry groups and education institutions to examine the delivery of training and other factors to ensure agriculture courses meet the needs of both students and employers.

Noting that we were pleased the government has been proactive in seeking this advice, FFGSC submitted that agriculture training courses desperately need stronger links to industry and employers, through programs like FFGSC's Careers Advisory Panel, so that skills can be consolidated and applied as soon as is practical. We also argued that more funding and expanded access to micro-credentials for upskilling and retraining should be treated as an urgent priority for existing industry participants and those just starting out. Further, we advocated for the removal of red tape and complexities to promote uptake.





# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## VET Delivered to Secondary Schools Review

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In 2021, the Victorian Government proposed a suite of changes to its Vocational Education and Training (VET) program, including how it is delivered in secondary school.

FFGSC identified that the changes would see fewer opportunities for young people in urban locations to discover the exciting and diverse range of careers in food and fibre. We encouraged the government to consider expanding 'Agriculture and Environment' VET programs to urban schools. We also argued that grassroots initiatives such as FFGSC Careers Advisory Panels should be properly funded and effectively leveraged to support VET programs because of their capacity to inspire and connect students to real life food and fibre careers.

## Regional Telecommunications Review

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In 2021 the Australian Government conducted its Regional Telecommunications Review to identify obstacles, opportunities and understand the importance of reliable telecommunications to regional communities.

FFGSC noted that poor or unreliable telecommunications in regional areas is both a safety hazard and an economic inhibitor, and that current measures of connectivity misrepresent experiences on the ground. We advocated for a significant upgrade to communications and energy infrastructure that support reliable and resilient connectivity. Our position is that in a modern, digital Australian society, fair access to the communications services we rely on is simply non-negotiable.



**"Congratulations to FFGSC and the work that they do. Food and fibre are the backbone of the southwest, and the entire state, for that matter."**

**Stuart Grimley MLC  
Member for Western  
Victoria**





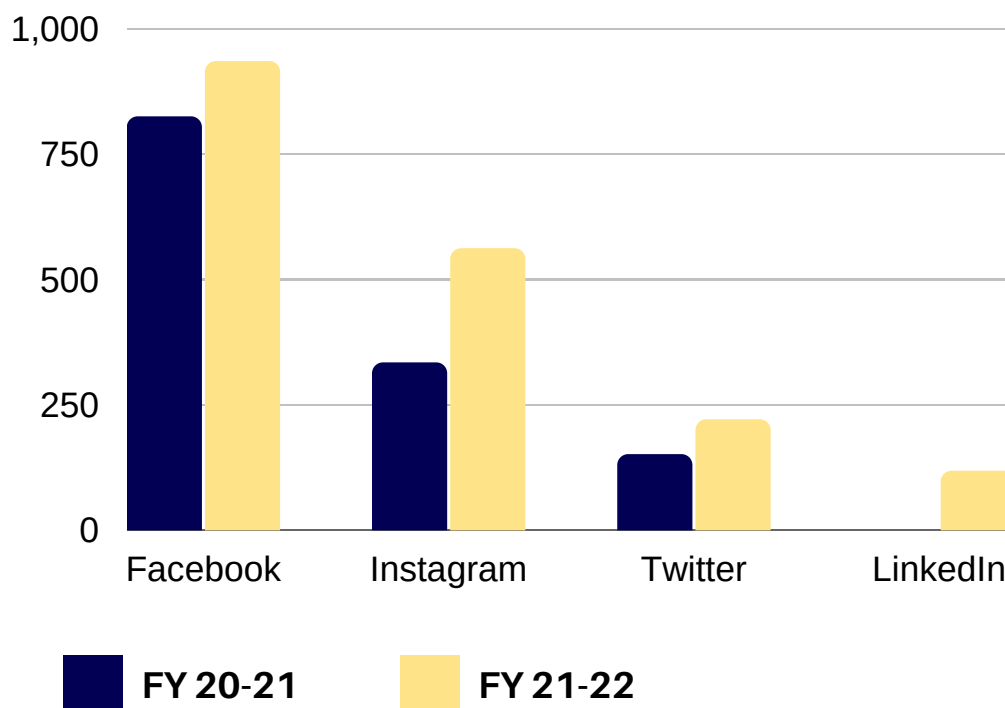
# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## Social Media Strategy

Social media continues to be an important way for FFGSC to communicate with stakeholders and make our success visible to the community. In addition to growing our audience organically, In FY 21-22, FFGSC worked with university students as their 'client' to develop ideas and strategies for social media campaigns. As a result, we have increased video content, adopted more conversational tone and set a more targeted focus on our organisation's significant regional value-add.

FFGSC has also reactivated our presence on LinkedIn, which offers opportunities to champion business and employment stories as told through our organisation and community.

**Follower growth over FY 21-22**





# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## Careers Advisory Panel Ambassadors

Sharing the career stories of our CAP Ambassadors with a sustained approach to social media content delivery.

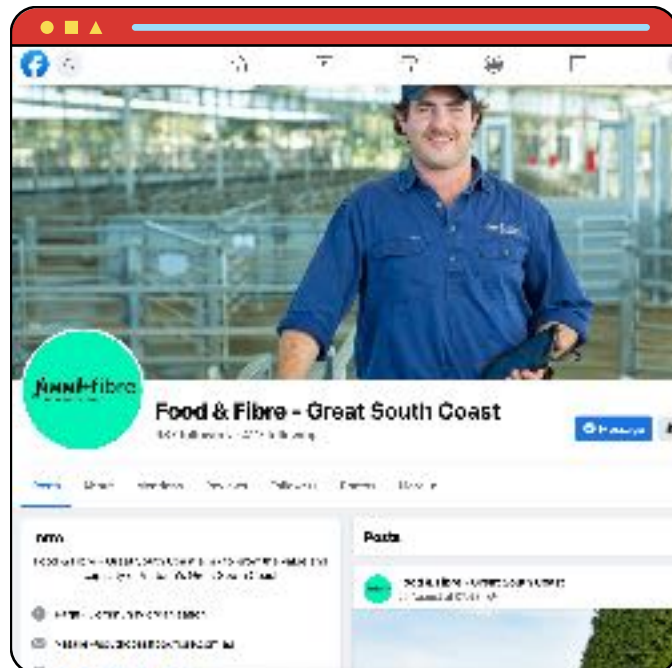


## Celebrate Rural Women!

Highlighting the enormous contribution of women in food and fibre businesses across our region and beyond through blog posts and social media collateral on International Rural Women's Day 2022.

## #GSC4WaterSustainability

Encouraging stakeholders to show their support for our Sustainable Water Statement by posing for a selfie with the words #GSC4WaterSustainability resulting in over XX submissions.



## Hycl & FFGSC Partnership

Sharing video media about our research into hydrogen technology for dairy transport.





# Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy

## Follow Food and Fibre Great South Coast



@food.fibre.great.south.coast



/greatsouthcoastvictoria



@greatfibre



/company/food-fibre-great-south-coast-inc/

## Food and Fibre Great South Coast In The Media

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### Radio

- Top agricultural production region – The Country Hour, ABC Radio (June 22)

### Television

- Three-phase Power, ABC News

### Print

- Warrnambool Standard: Skills Shortage in Focus (December 21)
- Farm Online: Food and Fibre Great South Coast targets \$40m a year boost from smarter water use in south-west Victoria (17 Feb 22)
- Stock & Land: Infrastructure Victoria backs improved south-west power supply (23 Aug 21)



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