



GREAT SOUTH COAST Sustainable Water Statement

Water is fundamental to our communities. In the Great South Coast we recognise that safe, affordable and reliable water services are essential for people, jobs and the economy. We support the effective management of water for a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and thriving communities, now and into the future.

Water is vital to a range of industries, including agriculture, aquaculture, manufacturing and processing. The production of food and fibre is both the largest water user and the largest employer in the Great South Coast, accounting for over 21.6% of all jobs and more than 60% of the economy. The value of Great South Coast's food and fibre production is roughly \$12.6 billion per year (2013-14).

We recognise that water is a precious, limited resource that must be used wisely in order to benefit the community and environment. For example, our Great South Coast water resources are vital for Traditional Owners and provide community value through recreation and supporting the beauty and liveability of our region. We are committed to understanding how to equitably share water for the greatest benefit to the region.

The Great South Coast is in the enviable position of having relatively consistent rainfall and abundant groundwater resources. However, we are mindful that this does not make us immune to the impacts of climate change and population growth in regional communities like ours.

We are planning a future where water use is carefully managed and planned, where sustainability and community wellbeing and prosperity come first. To do this, we need to make smarter decisions about where and how water is used and establish frameworks that can respond and adapt to changes in demand and the environment. New technologies and a better understanding of ecological systems will allow us to use water more efficiently and effectively.

We urge all in our region and beyond who care about sustainable communities, sustainable regions and a sustainable planet to join us in valuing and appropriately managing our precious water resources so we can achieve a healthy environment, prosperous economy and thriving communities in the Great South Coast now and in the future.



Food and Fibre Great South Coast represents Victoria's largest agricultural producing area by value, and Australia's third largest agricultural-producing region. We are the means by which the six local government authorities of the Great South Coast and our water organisations work cooperatively towards our regional food and fibre priorities.



Westpac is proud to be the presenting partner of the Great South Coast Sustainable Water Statement. We recognise that a changing climate is one of the most significant issues that will impact the long-term prosperity of the global economy and our way of life. The agribusiness sector has an important role in providing food and other essential goods, driving economic growth, and supporting livelihoods and communities – and sustainable water management is a critical part of that. We aim to continue supporting farming and agribusiness customers, while managing our business in alignment with the Paris Agreement, supporting the transition to a net zero economy by 2050. For more information on Westpac's sustainability commitments and actions please visit westpac.com.au/about-westpac/sustainability/.