

GROWING OUR REGIONAL FUTURES STRATEGY 2021 - 2023

Food and Fibre Great South Coast Inc.



FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Food and Fibre Great South Coast - ***Growing Our Regional Futures Strategy 2021 – 2023***. A commitment to grow and support our region to become Australia's most productive, innovative, and sustainable food and fibre region is at the heart of our Strategy.

To grow the value of regional food and fibre production in the Great South Coast while improving the prosperity and resilience of our local communities is the embodiment of who we are, and the only reason our organisation exists.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our partners throughout the food and fibre supply chains and regional communities who have collaborated with us over the last five years to build the foundation and shared perspectives from which we launch the *Growing Our Regional Futures Strategy 2021 – 2023*.

Our Strategy acknowledges the significant challenges we face, barriers we strive to overcome and provides a framework for targeted collaborative actions to position food and fibre, as well as the region collectively, for greater prosperity and wellbeing. We recognise our resource limitations and the excellent work being led by others at the regional, state and national levels. Our role is to foster complementary relationships, partners and occasionally lead initiatives that derive value for the Great South Coast.

I am delighted to present the Strategy to you. I look forward to increased food and fibre production and prosperity in the Great South Coast, and the ensuing economic and social benefits creating greater wellbeing for our entire community.

Georgina Gubbins
Chair





"The Growing Our Regional Futures Strategy 2021-2023 is an exciting blueprint for how Food and Fibre Great South Coast will bring the regional supply chains together in four key areas to advance our region as a whole. Food and Fibre Great South Coast's approach to create quality outcomes that target value creation in four key areas is critical to extracting and sharing value, creating long-term partnerships and shared value for the thousands of businesses that comprise the food and fibre supply chain in our region."

Alistair McCosh

Deputy Chair

Agriculture is one of the engine rooms of Victoria's economy. Our farmers, agribusinesses and surrounding communities are at the heart of this; they feed us, clothe us, and export our world-class products around the globe.

Many regional communities rely on agriculture for their economic prosperity. It creates essential jobs and supports the management of our landscapes. The Victorian Government is backing agriculture in this state and has an ambitious vision for its future.

*The recently released **'Strong, Innovative, Sustainable: A New Strategy for Agriculture In Victoria'** builds on the sector's strengths so that it can respond flexibly to emerging challenges, capture new opportunities and flourish. This state-wide strategy provides a transformative vision for the state over the next 10 years to help our agriculture sector continue to be a cornerstone of the Victorian economy and successfully adapt to long-term drivers of change. Victoria's Strategy for Agriculture is intrinsically aligned with the Food and Fibre Great South Coast, Growing Our Regional Futures Strategy.*

We share a common goal: protecting the sector and Victoria's enviable position as a leader in agriculture, while helping grow its potential.

I congratulate the Board, led by Georgina Gubbins, and Executive Officer Natalie Collard, on delivering a strategic road map that will drive a strong, sustainable and innovative food and fibre sector for the Great South Coast. I look forward to working with Food and Fibre Great South Coast to unlock opportunities to grow this region further.



The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas

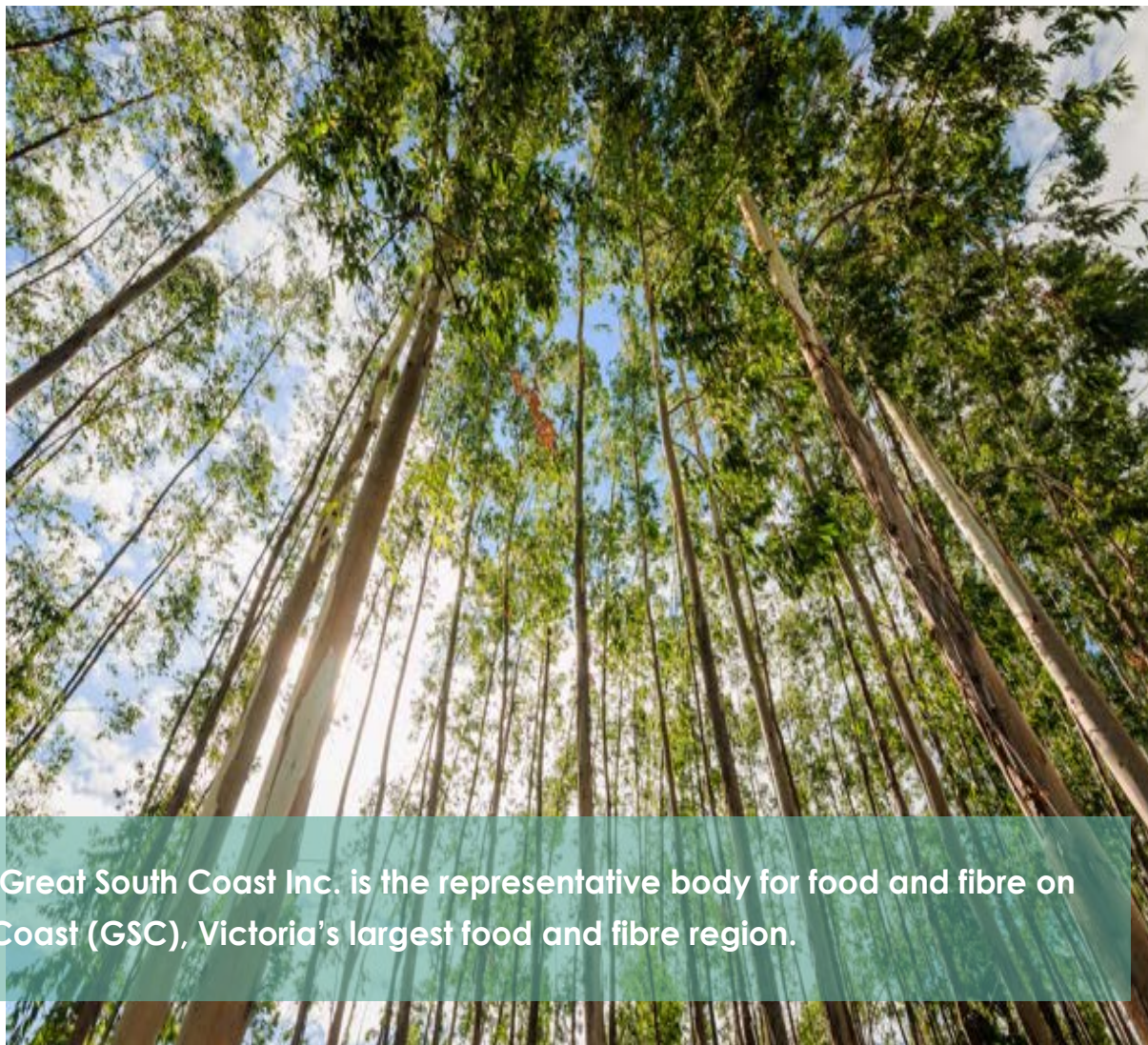
Minister for Regional Development and Agriculture

FOREWORD

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1 ABOUT US

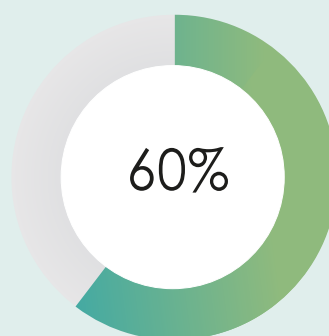


Food and Fibre - Great South Coast Inc. is the representative body for food and fibre on the Great South Coast (GSC), Victoria's largest food and fibre region.

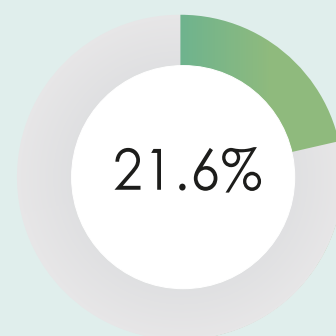
\$2.3 billion



is generated by the Great South Coast region in annual agricultural output, with enormous potential to grow further.



60%



21.6%

The food and fibre sector constitutes around 60 percent of our regional economy, accounting for 21.6 percent of jobs.



food+fibre
GREAT SOUTH COAST



OUR ROLE

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.


VISION

To grow and support the Great South Coast to be Australia's most productive, innovative, and sustainable food and fibre production region.


APPROACH

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






+100,000
(projected to grow to 131,239 by 2041)



+ 50,000 jobs
+ 11,000 businesses
5.18 % unemployment rate




23.6 C
average maximum summer temperature
13.3 C
average maximum winter temperature

2

ABOUT
OUR REGION

ECONOMY




\$5.34
billion Gross Regional Value

\$133,000
per worker

\$2.32
billion in annual agricultural output,
the highest of any regions in Victoria

\$1.1
billion of the food processing industry



21.6%
of regional workforce in agriculture, forestry,
and fishing (largest employer)

82%
of agricultural output's value is from dairy, beef,
and sheep meat

28.1%
of Victoria's beef

31%
of Victoria's dairy

33.8%
of Victoria's sheep meat

100%
sustainable fisheries valued at \$41.7 million
accounting for 14% of seafood caught in Victoria

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Two railway corridors:** Warrnambool, Geelong, Melbourne and Maroona, Portland.
- **5 major highway corridors within the region:** Princes, Hamilton, Glenelg, Henty and Hopkins.
- **Freight passenger line** between Ararat and Geelong.
- **Major highway linkages** with metropolitan Melbourne to the east, Ballarat and the Wimmera Mallee to the north and Adelaide in the west.
- **Port of Portland**, the naturally deep-water port and one of Australia's busiest ports.
- **Regional airports** located at Cobden, Warrnambool, Portland, and Hamilton; proximity to Avalon airport.
- **Wind farms** located along the coastal region.
- **Portland powerline** supplying electricity from Victoria's national grid.

EDUCATION

The region is home to a number of tertiary education providers, including:

- Deakin University (Warrnambool Campus);
- South West TAFE;
- Rural Industries Skills Training (RIST).



GET INVOLVED WITH US

Help grow Our Regional Futures by:

- *Being a Regional Ambassador;*
- *Providing a tax-deductible gift;*
- *Nominating to be a Council Member;*
- *Subscribing to our newsletter;*
- *Connecting and sharing on social media;*
- *Volunteering your time for a project or committee.*

Growing

Our Regional Futures

OUR STRATEGY

3

Food and Fibre Great South Coast Inc. is aligning for impact to further the region's enormous economic potential through food and fibre.

Our strategic direction is underpinned by the **Great South Coast Food and Fibre Action Plan** and intrinsically aligned with the **Great South Coast Economic Futures Report 2020**.

The Food and Fibre Strategy applies to the entire Great South Coast region, taking in the Grampians and south west Victorian coastal areas.

GREAT SOUTH COAST REGION



FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR



meat



dairy



poultry



wool



aquaculture



horticulture



forestry



niche industries

Despite the positive current and future opportunities, there are significant challenges for the Great South Coast community, some of which present barriers to maintaining and growing our current food and fibre productivity levels.¹ These barriers include:

- Strong jobs growth coupled with below average population growth is creating a skilled labour shortage;
- The abundant water resources are under utilised owing to limited high-value investments;
- Educational attainment lags behind the state average with around only 40 percent of our region's young people finishing secondary school.

The Food and Fibre Great South Coast Strategy plays a crucial role in this context. By collaboratively addressing these barriers, we will position the food and fibre sector, as well as the region collectively, for greater prosperity and wellbeing.

In 2020-21 and beyond, we will focus our resources on optimising our impacts and maximising the opportunities to grow the value and capacity of the Great South Coast's food and fibre industry. We will do this by concentrating on four Strategic Platforms to foster regional growth and capacity development.

Our Strategic Platforms:

1. Drive Regional Value-Add, Investment and Sustainability;
2. Realise the Water Opportunity;
3. Nurture Food and Fibre Careers;
4. Champion Food and Fibre Advocacy.

¹ For more information on the challenges facing our region, refer to Great South Coast Outcomes Roadmap 2019 released by Regional Development Victoria and Great South Coast Economic Futures 2020.

STRATEGIC PLATFORMS



DRIVE REGIONAL VALUE-ADD, INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Objectives

1. **Lift regional productivity, sustainability and prosperity** by working collaboratively to attract resources and enable business transitions to first-stage processing.
2. **Sustainably improve regional value-add and support new entrants and industries** to the sector.
3. **Support innovation** to achieve sustainable production and to protect our natural resources.



REALISE THE WATER OPPORTUNITY

Objectives

1. **Collaboratively capture the full potential of the Great South Coast's water resource** through sustainable management of ground and surface water, and effective drainage systems.
2. **Advocacy and general promotion to:**
 - Raise decision-maker and general community awareness of the regional competitive advantage in groundwater;
 - Optimise strategic opportunities for the food and fibre community to sustainably increase water productivity through strategic engagement on water rules, allocation, security and/or drainage.



NURTURE FOOD AND FIBRE CAREERS

Objectives

- Attract talented young and new people while retaining existing industry participants** in the food and fibre sector by:
- Promoting the diverse range of rewarding opportunities;
 - Outlining clearer career pathways; and
 - Supporting more integrated learning approaches.



CHAMPION FOOD AND FIBRE ADVOCACY

Objectives

1. **Grow the awareness** of the GSC's food and fibre regional importance, professionalism, and achievements.
2. **Positively influence food and fibre policy outcomes** by advocating with a unified and representative voice for the GSC food and fibre supply chains.
3. **Improve internal and external communication.**

4

2020 - 2021

ACTION PLAN

4.1.

DRIVE REGIONAL VALUE-ADD,
INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Objectives



Lift regional productivity, sustainability and prosperity by working collaboratively to attract resources and enable business transition to first-stage processing.



Sustainably improve regional value-add and support new entrants and industries to the sector.



Support innovation to achieve sustainable production and to protect our natural resources.

Strategic actions



Foster regional value-add projects:

- **Large scale projects:** aligned to the GSC Economic Futures Report, and processing, sustainability and innovation (Renewable energy, including hydrogen fuel cell (hycel) technology and biodiesel opportunities, and three-phase energy upgrades);



Foster regional value-add projects:

- **Small scale projects:** promote diversification, innovation, sustainability and profitability such as innovation courses, sustainability promotions, and connecting Great South Coast people to larger opportunities.

Integrate advocacy
into each project.

4.2.

REALISE
THE WATER OPPORTUNITY

Objectives



Collaboratively capture the full potential of the Great South Coast's water resource through sustainable management of ground and surface water, and effective drainage systems.

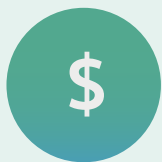


Advocacy and general promotion to:

- Raise decision-maker and general community awareness of the regional competitive advantage in groundwater;
- Optimise strategic opportunities for the food and fibre community to sustainably increase water productivity through strategic engagement on water rules, allocation, security and/or drainage.



Strategic actions



Collaborate to seek \$500k funding from the Federal Government Future Drought Fund and Natural Resource Management Drought Resilience Program.

(to identify sustainable opportunities to access regional water supplies, thus driving agricultural development, job creation and community resilience)

Planned actions include:



Locating strategically-important **agricultural lands** and **sustainable groundwater sources**;



Developing an **assessment tool** for decision-makers to understand **groundwater quality and quantity**;



Establishing greater certainty of **water supply** to **enable sustainable intensification** of production.



Target advocacy on:

- Fit for purpose **water trading rules** and **renewable leases** to utilise the unused pool of groundwater;
- The Western Water Strategy's development; and
- Rural drainage systems.



Support and promote Great South Coast water opportunities and projects via:

- Social media;
- Newsletter;
- Traditional media.



Collaborate to seek an economic feasibility study into water quality and accessibility costs of the Dilwyn aquifer.

(if not addressed by a Federal government grant project)



Integrate advocacy into each project.

4.3.

NURTURE
FOOD AND FIBRE CAREERS

Objectives



Attract talented young and new people while retaining existing industry participants in the food and fibre sector by:

- Promoting the diverse range of rewarding opportunities;
- Outlining clearer career pathways; and
- Supporting more integrated learning approaches.

Strategic actions



Develop and seek funding for project(s) championing agriculture in school-based and community projects.



Assess the need for food and fibre focused leadership courses, and if needed, develop a business case.

Integrate advocacy into each project.



4.4.

CHAMPION
FOOD AND FIBRE ADVOCACY

Objectives



Grow the **awareness** of the GSC's food and fibre regional **importance**, **professionalism** and **achievements**.



Improve **internal and external communication**.



Positively influence **food and fibre policy outcomes** by advocating with **a unified and representative voice** for the GSC food and fibre supply chains.



Strategic actions



Every committee is responsible for championing food and fibre advocacy.



Progress reports on the performance of relevant projects or activities are considered regularly at GSC F&F Council meetings.

Standing items at Council meetings to include key performance metrics:

- Partner and stakeholder engagement;
- Social media metrics; and
- Our profile in the community.



5. CONTACT

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‘Growing Our Regional Futures’ Strategy 2021 - 2023

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Affiliates

