

WOOLWORTHS WATER POSITIONING STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

South Africa is a water-scarce country. In addition, the quality of our water is increasingly threatened, in part by infrastructural constraints, industrial and agricultural activity. Growing public awareness regarding water use, conservation and access to clean drinking water has been driven by droughts, flooding, and concern about acid mine drainage issues and we have also seen looming price increases on the horizon that will put even more pressure on water availability. The majority of South Africa's water resources are used in farming irrigation, and Woolworths, as a major supplier of fresh produce, and also procuring over 90% of its' produce locally, has to play a role in water conservation. In line with addressing some of these national challenges, we have set out commitments throughout our key focus areas and supply chain to address these challenges.

OUR COMMITMENTS

We have committed to reducing water usage and managing waste water and water effluent across our operations (including supply chain) and through collective action, partnerships, research and [education](#).

Real Estate

The design of our property ensures that both old and new property is designed for efficient use of water and wastewater.

Our Operations

i. Direct Operations

We have installed pulse metres linked to our metering on line system in most stores to monitor water use, identify underground leaks and also ensure we are being charged correctly for water by landlords and municipalities. We are investing in rain water harvesting and water recycling projects where possible at our head office, distribution centres and stores.

ii. Supply Chain

We work across our supply chain by measuring the amount of water used by suppliers and working with them to reduce water use and improve water waste management during growing, production and manufacture.

Community Engagement

We are committed to educating our customers and employees on water conservation by providing valuable water saving [tips](#) to grow awareness. We also engage with school learners through our [Making the Difference](#) programme. We do this by providing learning resources, running competitions and also donating water tanks.

INNOVATION

[Clothing](#)

We have committed to incorporating water saving attributes to our textiles where innovation is available and we will continue to work closely with our suppliers and conduct research in order to support drive this commitment.

Farming

One of the largest areas of impact that Woolworths is making in the supply chain is through the [Farming for the Future](#) programme. Water efficiency and the management of waste water is a specific focus for the programme by encouraging farmers to only water when required. It also encourages farmers to use pesticides minimally, thereby improving the quality of waste water at the farm.

RESEARCH

Life Cycle Analysis

We have conducted research on the environmental footprint for a selection of products (such as milk and textiles) in order to gain a better understanding of resource dependencies, risks and implications in the supply chain and have used the results from the studies to improve efficiencies.

Water Stewardship

We have [partnered](#) with WWF-SA, WWF-UK, Marks and Spencer (M&S) and some of our shared fruit suppliers in order to understand the impact our operations have on water usage within our fruit supply chain. Specifically, the project focuses on implementing the [Alliance for Water Stewardship](#) standard (AWS), which helps farmers to better manage the water on their farms and identifying opportunities for water efficiency and quality.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Water balance

We have invested in the WWF-SA Water Balance Programme for a number of years. The scheme, launched in association with the Department of Water Affairs' Working for Water programme, has multiple objectives of reducing the impact of invasive alien plants on water supplies, restoring biodiversity and ecosystems function as well as creating jobs and economic empowerment. CEO Water Mandate Woolworths is also a member of the CEO Water Mandate - a unique public-private initiative designed to assist companies in the development, implementation and disclosure of water sustainability policies and practices.

TRANSPARENCY AND DISCLOSURE

Woolworths is committed to improving disclosure about the financial and material risks posed by water resources and our own usage reduction strategies. We will continue transparent public reporting of our water usage in our sustainability report and the actions we undertake to manage and protect water resources. We will also continue to build upon our research capability for both internal and supplier use. We support the activities of the CDP Water disclosure project, and have voluntarily participated in its assessment process the last four years