

Woolworths lays out next set of sustainability ambitions

Woolworths Holdings Limited (WHL) has announced its next set of Good Business Journey sustainability goals, which focus on traceability, transparency, circularity, diversity and inclusivity as well energy and carbon emissions.



Source: Reuters/Mike Hutchings

The group states that the new goals include future-focused, measureable targets aimed at making a meaningful difference in critical social, environmental and supply chain issues.

“Sustainability is core to our business - it impacts everything that we do. It has been entrenched into the culture of our organisation and is put into action through our Good Business Journey (GBJ) programme. We believe that setting ambitious sustainability goals, such as the ones we are announcing today, not only stretches and challenges our own business to do more but also inspires others to collaborate and join the cause for good.

“Profound, sustainable impact and progress requires deliberate collaboration among all our stakeholders. Our new GBJ goals provide a relevant, revitalised platform where our business, employees, suppliers and partners can all work together to create a better future for everyone,” says WHL group CEO, Roy Bagattini.



LG aims for 100% renewable energy use by 2050

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Launched in 2007, the GBJ programme is the driving force that has already significantly reduced the business’ environmental impact and increased its social and economic impact across the entire value chain, notes WHL. The GBJ focuses on improving nine key areas of the business: energy, water, waste, sustainable farming, ethical sourcing, transformation, social development, packaging and health and wellness, with over 200 targets supporting these areas.

“For us the sustainability imperative is clear and compelling. Alongside the positive environmental and social impact, it ensures that our business is more resilient and adaptable to change. Our GBJ has had a cumulative financial impact of almost R2bn in savings since its inception and we have received global and national recognition for its ongoing meaningful

impact,” adds Bagattini.

4 primary goals

WHL’s new ambitions have three key focus areas including a commitment to the environment, a commitment to a fully transparent, traceable and ethical supply chain, and caring for people, employees, customers and communities.

In order to realise these ambitions and following the accomplishments made over the last five year goal cycle, WHL has a developed new goals for the business that will stretch and challenge the way the group operates.

The primary GBJ goals are:

1. Fully transparent and traceable supply chain by 2025
2. All private label fashion and home products designed to be reused, repaired, repurposed or recycled by 2025
3. All energy to be from renewable sources by 2030
4. Net zero carbon emissions by 2040

While these goals focus on the environmental and supply chain aspects of the group’s sustainability strategy, the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on humanitarian issues has again highlighted the widespread socioeconomic disparities in our communities and the imperative to continue to work towards real and meaningful societal change.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on humanity and we have therefore deliberately reconsidered and elevated the 'people' aspects of our sustainability strategy, for our own employees and the communities around us. We are on a journey to clearly articulate our deeper response to issues that are important to all our people and we look forward to sharing more on this soon,” says Bagattini.



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Dr Eunice Ubomba-Jaswa and Dr Nonhlanhla Kalebaila 26 Jul 2021



WHL group head of sustainability, Feroz Koor, adds, “Our new GBJ goals elevate our group into challenging, yet exciting sustainability territory which will ignite collaboration, creativity and problem-solving.

“We know that for meaningful societal change and optimum impact we can’t walk this path on our own. We need to work together with other industry leaders, our suppliers, customers, employees, government, businesses and NGO partners. It is imperative for everyone to take action for the greater good of the planet and its people,” concludes Koor.

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