GREAT SOUTH
Southland Regional Development Agency

Te Ara Toitū

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2027 -2029 (APPROVED)

Foreword from Chair of Sustainability Committee 2026, Sarah McPherson

Sustainability is central to Great South's role in supporting a thriving and resilient Southland. Through Te Ara Toitū, we are committed to leading by example by embedding sustainability into our decision-making, reducing our environmental impact, and encouraging a culture of continuous improvement. Since establishing our sustainability programme, we have achieved significant progress, including four consecutive years of EKOS Carbon Conscious certification, a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from our baseline year, improvements to energy efficiency, and the introduction of waste reduction initiatives. Over the next three years, our focus will be on further integrating sustainability into everything we do, reducing our carbon footprint, improving resource efficiency, and empowering our people to contribute to meaningful environmental outcomes. Together, these actions will strengthen our organisation and demonstrate our commitment to a sustainable future for Southland.

Great South vision

Even better lives through sustainable regional development

Great South values

Organisational values (outward facing): Kaitiakitanga, Southland proud, Sustainability, Heritage, Being real, Quality over quantity, Community support and Shareholder confidence.

Purpose

Te Ara Toitū provides Great South's sustainability framework for 2026-2029. It establishes our strategic priorities, goals and measures of success, guiding decision-making across Great South and SpaceOps. The plan supports continuous improvement in environmental performance while strengthening organisational resilience, operational efficiency and regional leadership.

Our Approach to Sustainability

Great South recognises that environmental sustainability is fundamental to the long-term prosperity of Southland. A healthy environment underpins productive industries, resilient communities and a thriving regional economy. By embedding sustainability into our operations and decision-making, we can reduce our environmental impact, improve efficiency, support innovation and demonstrate leadership for the region we serve.

Our Definition

Sustainability is the commitment to meeting Southland's present environmental, social, cultural, and economic needs without compromising the ability of future generations to thrive in this region.
It means fostering resilient communities, protecting and regenerating our natural ecosystems, honouring Te Ao Māori and local heritage, and enabling inclusive growth across industries - from agriculture to tourism to events - through innovation, collaboration, and long-term thinking.

At Great South, sustainability is a guiding principle for regional development, ensuring Southland remains a vibrant, liveable, and prosperous region.

Progress to Date

Key achievements since 2019

- Annual greenhouse gas emissions reporting since 2018/19.
- Four consecutive years of EKOS Carbon Conscious certification.
- Conversion of the Spey Street diesel boiler to electric heat pumps.
- Transition to a hybrid vehicle fleet and investigation of electric vehicle options.
- LED lighting upgrades across facilities.
- Double-glazed window installation.
- Introduction of waste auditing and staff engagement initiatives.
- Estimated operational savings exceeding $293,000 between 2022-2026.

Great South's baseline emissions (including SpaceOps) were 282.2 tCO_2e in 2018/19. Emissions reduced to 240.1tCO_2e in 2025/26 representing a 15% reduction from the baseline year. Additionally, per staff member, Great South and SpaceOps combined have an emissions intensity per Full Time Employee (FTE) of 5.92.

While organisational growth and operational changes continue to influence emissions, Great South has maintained a long-term downward trend relative to revenue and staffing levels.

Sustainability Framework

Focus Area	Outcome
Leadership & Governance	Sustainability is embedded into decision-making
Climate Action	Emissions are measured and actively reduced
Resource Efficiency	Waste and water are managed responsibly
People & Culture	Staff are empowered to contribute

Sustainability Goals

These goals relate to Great South parent organisation only and exclude any subsidiaries of Great South.
(Space Operations Limited will have their own sustainability goals in line with their Statement of Intent)

1. Integrate environmental sustainability consideration into everything we do
2. Reduce Great South's carbon footprint by 10% year-on-year
3. Reduce waste and water consumption

Goal 1. Integrate environmental sustainability consideration into everything we do

Incorporate sustainability considerations in all decision-making, policies, operations and business activities to ensure environmental impacts are considered.

Action	KPI 2026-27	KPI 2027-28	KPI 2028-29
Sustainable Procurement Develop and implement a Sustainable Procurement and Decision-Making Guideline that supports staff to consider environmental, social, and local economic impacts in all business decisions and activities.	Develop and implement a Sustainable Procurement and Decision-Making Guideline.	Review Sustainable Procurement and Decision-Making Guideline and update as necessary.	Review Sustainable Procurement and Decision-Making Guideline and update as necessary.
Sustainability Induction Induction process includes an introduction to Sustainability Committee Chair or Secretary and completion of sustainability module.	100% of new employees complete the sustainability induction module	100% of new employees complete the sustainability induction module	100% of new employees complete the sustainability induction module
Staff Awareness Deliver sustainability awareness and capability-building initiatives for staff.	Deliver four environmental awareness sessions or activities for staff Facilitate two staff visits to organisations or projects demonstrating sustainable practices each year.	Deliver four environmental awareness sessions or activities for staff Facilitate two staff visits to organisations or projects demonstrating sustainable practices each year.	Deliver four environmental awareness sessions or activities for staff Facilitate two staff visits to organisations or projects demonstrating sustainable practices each year.
Monitoring & Reporting Monitor, review, and report annually on progress against sustainability goals, highlighting achievements, challenges, and opportunities for continuous improvement.	Annual sustainability monitoring and reporting completed, including progress against goals, key achievements, and opportunities for improvement, and presented to the CEO.	Annual sustainability monitoring and reporting completed, including progress against goals, key achievements, and opportunities for improvement, and presented to the CEO.	Annual sustainability monitoring and reporting completed, including progress against goals, key achievements, and opportunities for improvement, and presented to the CEO.

Goal 2: Reduce Great South's carbon footprint by 10% year-on-year

Demonstrate climate leadership by measuring, reporting, and reducing Great South's greenhouse gas emissions. Through continual improvement initiatives, reduce organisational emissions and maintain EKOS Carbon Conscious certification.

Action	KPI 2026-27	KPI 2027-28	KPI 2028-29
Organisational Emissions Reduction Reduce Great South's overall carbon footprint through targeted emissions reduction initiatives.	Achieve a 10% reduction in total organisational emissions compared to the previous year. *Target: 73 tCO2e*	Achieve a 10% reduction in total organisational emissions compared to the previous year. *Target: 66 tCO2e*	Achieve a 10% reduction in total organisational emissions compared to the previous year. *Target: 59 tCO2e*
Carbon Footprint Reporting Measure, verify, and publicly report Great South's annual carbon footprint.	Annual carbon footprint inventory completed, independently verified, and publicly reported by September. Maintain EKOS Carbon Conscious Certification	Annual carbon footprint inventory completed, independently verified, and publicly reported by September. Maintain EKOS Carbon Conscious Certification	Annual carbon footprint inventory completed, independently verified, and publicly reported by September. Maintain EKOS Carbon Conscious Certification
Solar Feasibility Investigate opportunities to reduce emissions from electricity consumption through on-site renewable energy generation.	Assess solar options for Great South buildings and present recommendations to the CEO.	Review recommendations and implement approved actions where feasible.	Monitor outcomes and review further renewable energy opportunities.
Business Travel Reduce emissions from staff travel by minimising air travel and encouraging virtual meeting options where appropriate.	Reduce emissions from air travel by 10% compared to the previous year. *Target: 28 tCO2e*	Reduce emissions from air travel by 10% compared to the previous year. *Target: 25 tCO2e*	Reduce emissions from air travel by 10% compared to the previous year. *Target: 23 tCO2e*
Fleet Emissions Reduce emissions from fleet vehicles through vehicle replacement and travel efficiency measures.	Develop a fleet transition plan and replace vehicles with EVs or PHEVs where practical.	Continue fleet transition.	Continue fleet transition.

Goal 3. Reduce waste and water consumption

Achieving sustainable development requires that we change the way we produce and consume goods and resources.

Action	KPI 2026-27	KPI 2027-28	KPI 2028-29
Waste Auditing Conduct annual waste audits across Great South's physical sites to improve data quality and identify waste reduction opportunities.	Complete annual waste audit and identify new waste reduction opportunities.	Complete annual waste audit and identify new waste reduction opportunities.	Complete annual waste audit and identify new waste reduction opportunities.
Waste Reduction Implement initiatives to reduce waste sent to landfill and improve resource recovery outcomes, In alignment with the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP)	Achieve a 5% reduction in waste sent to landfill compared to the previous year. *Target: 7.1kg per week*	Achieve a 5% reduction in waste sent to landfill compared to the previous year. *Target: 6.8kg per week*	Achieve a 5% reduction in waste sent to landfill compared to the previous year. *Target: 6.4kg per week*
Water Efficiency Monitor water consumption and promote efficient water use practices across all sites.	No increase in water consumption compared to the previous year. *Target: 200m^3 per annum*	No increase in water consumption compared to the previous year. *Target: 200m^3 per annum*	No increase in water consumption compared to the previous year. *Target: 200m^3 per annum*

How does Great South measure its carbon footprint?

Emissions are measured in three scopes:

Scopes

- Scope 1: Direct GHG emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the company. E.g., emissions from combustion of fuel in vehicles owned or controlled by the organisation.
- Scope 2: Indirect GHG emissions from the generation of purchased energy that the organisation uses. E.g. electricity.
- Scope 3: Indirect GHG emissions that occur as a consequence of the company's activities but from sources not owned or controlled by the company. E.g. air travel, staff commute and freight.

Measuring greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions involves the following steps:

1. Define the boundaries: organisational boundaries and scopes.
2. Identify emissions sources: all direct and indirect sources of emissions.
3. Collect data: invoices, reports, staff survey etc.
4. Calculate emissions: using the Ministry for the Environment calculator and emission factors.
5. Analyse and report: Analyse the results and produce annually the Great South GHG emissions inventory report.
6. Seek independent third-party verification.

How does Great South report its carbon footprint?

Great South publicly reports its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and sustainability performance through its website, annual emissions inventory reports, Annual Report, and independent certification processes. This ensures transparency, accountability, and regular monitoring of progress towards the organisation's sustainability goals.

Great South Website

- Publish annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory reports on the sustainability section of the website.
- Outlines Great South's sustainability commitments and organisational goals.
- Shares progress on emissions reduction and sustainability initiatives.
- Provides publicly accessible reports for stakeholders, partners and the community.

Annual Report

- Includes a summary of annual greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability performance.
- Reports on progress towards organisational goals and strategic priorities.
- Demonstrates accountability to shareholders and stakeholders.

EKOS Certification

- Emissions inventories are independently reviewed by EKOS.
- Provides third-party assurance that emissions are measured using recognised methodologies and standards.
- Supports Great South's achievement and maintenance of EKOS Carbon Conscious certification.
- Helps ensure emissions reporting remains credible, transparent and consistent year to year.



Key Sustainability Goals Communicated Publicly

- Integrate sustainability considerations into all organisational decision-making.
- Reduce organisational greenhouse gas emissions by 10% year-on-year.
- Reduce waste and water consumption.
- Demonstrate regional leadership in sustainability and decarbonisation.

As a public organisation, we must ensure our communications provide a transparent and accurate account of our achievements, progress, and performance against previously established sustainability commitments, demonstrating accountability to stakeholders and the wider community.

Sustainability Committee

Membership

The Group established since 2019 represents all areas of the organisation, including at least one representative in:

- Administration, Business Services, Events, Strategic Projects, Tourism, Regional Strategy, Te Anau, a General Manager and a Board representative.

Space Operations NZ Ltd is expected to establish and maintain a separate sustainability committee however opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing between the two committees will be encouraged.

Guidelines

- Meetings will be held quarterly
- A member of the group will be appointed Chairperson
- A member of the group will be appointed as Secretary
- An annual sustainability report on KPIs will be provided to the CEO by the group

The purpose of this group is to empower Great South to take positive action towards carbon neutrality and minimise its environmental impact by:

- Providing guidance to the CEO and Senior Management on achieving sustainability targets
- Encouraging staff to consider sustainability impact when making business decisions
- Championing the principles of the Sustainability Plan - Te Ara Toitū
- Supporting initiatives that inspire Great South to operate within its baseline/reduce its emissions
- Championing change among staff
- Providing a forum for discussion on actions/initiatives designed to encourage sustainability
- Reviewing and reporting back on initiatives

Implementation Plan

The Committee will be responsible for implementing the Sustainability Plan - Te Ara Toitū. The group will develop the action plan and draft budget, assign responsibilities, and establish targets for achieving the sustainability goals.

Prioritise and Select solutions

Actions will be prioritised and assessed against the following principles:

- Reduce the organisation's direct carbon footprint first, as opposed to offsetting
- Provide the greatest benefit towards the targets over the long-term
- Are the most cost effective for the material impact they deliver
- Result in the highest staff engagement