



# CEO REPORT

FOR THE WESSA AGM

14 SEPTEMBER 2019

JT Burger



The age-old adage that change is the only constant in a tumultuous world is unequivocally true of WESSA. Buffeted by the winds of change from seemingly all directions, leaders at WESSA are rallying around the purpose of *People Caring for the Earth* and a set of values that guide the organisation's daily decision-making and long-term planning.

Sound people management is key to WESSA's success, from developing and managing the various youth initiatives, to learning and development interventions aimed at staff, and grooming our talent into leadership roles.

The theme of constant improvement, continuous innovation and deepening impact, resonates powerfully in WESSA's quest towards transformation. The establishment of a new leadership committee, the WESSA Management Committee (ManCom), is envisioned as an innovative and effective think-tank for the benefit of the CEO and ExCo, and also functions as operational support for WESSA's wide range of service offerings.

WESSA's growth is no better illustrated by the exponential expansion of its youth programmes and the number of young people it is engaged with. Human Resources currently manage six payrolls and employ 569 youth on learnerships across the Divisions of Schools, Sustainable Tourism, five Education Centres and other projects.

The WESSA International Schools Programmes invest in young people and facilitate Sustainable Development Goals by working with schools and teachers to support and improve school curricula and equip children for a sustainable future. Currently, WESSA reaches more than a million South African youth annually.

The five Education Centres offer a range of holistic action-learning processes, known as e-STEAM education programmes, pioneered by WESSA. These are linked to the South African CAPS and IEB curriculum to help prepare young South Africans for 21st century living. Last year, almost 16 000 youth were exposed to the WESSA programmes at the five Education Centres.

In 2018 WESSA opened the Sishen Education Centre in partnership with Anglo American. The centre in Sishen is offering the most up-to-date education programmes which includes high level science, engineering and robotics learning. Situated in the Sishen Nature Reserve, the learning is hands-on with access to a stunning variety of flora and fauna as well as many excellent geographical and geological features. The Sishen Education Team have built excellent relationships with schools and local communities, and we look forward to making a lasting impact in the Northern Cape region.

WESSA is mandated to implement the Youth Environmental Services Programme (YES) in the Northern Cape and the Free State, under the auspices of the Department of Environmental Affairs. The initiative exposes unemployed and disadvantaged youth to mentored work-integrated learning opportunities, accredited Environmental Practices Skills training, and non-accredited training courses to equip them for careers in the green economy.

Phase Two of the iconic Tourism Blue Flag Programme (TBF) is about to be rolled out. The three-year coastal tourism and youth development project is implemented by WESSA in partnership with the National Department of Tourism to inculcate the importance of a healthy beach ecology.

In tandem with the TBF Programme, WESSA is piloting a most promising Sustainable Tourism project, the Tourism Green Coast Programme on the Wild Coast, in the Eastern Cape. Unemployed youth from low income households are equipped with practical work skills to help drive sustainable tourism operations along the coastline and creating positive benefits for local communities.

WESSA’s first corporate-funded youth development programme, with the Balwin Foundation Learnership, will benefit 30 learners in Gauteng. The strategic partnership with the Balwin Foundation and the City of Johannesburg will enable learners studying towards the WESSA Environmental Education Training Development Practices (EETDP) at the five Environmental Education Centres of Dorothy Nyembe Centre in Soweto, Rietfontein Centre, The Wilds in Houghton, Emmarentia Science Centre, and the Johannesburg City Zoo. Learners will receive accredited and non-accredited training and mentored workplace integrated learning opportunities for careers in the green economy.

WESSA will place 11 Groen Sebenza graduates at the three KZN Education Centres and also in the Work Skills divisions. The project, in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Affairs, is managed by the HR division at WESSA. The three-year funded internship exposes candidates to accredited WESSA training and workplace learning in the environmental sector.

Social media engagement is arguably at its highest level ever, with daily postings on all social media platforms. These highlight special environmental days and provide media coverage for the many activations and events WESSA organises. They highlight significant days on the environmental calendar, including World Wildlife Day, World Environment Day, World Oceans Day, and World Biodiversity Day. The main focus of the online engagement is to provide constant communication with the youth, and to encourage them to become involved in the work of WESSA.

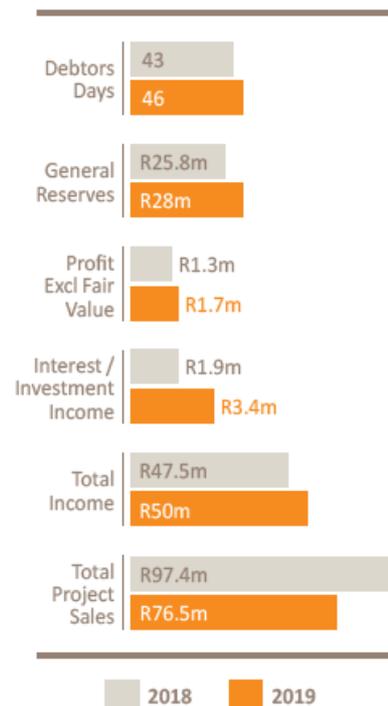
The new membership model, where each region would be allocated a portion of the membership reserve and is responsible for the administration and the sustainability of membership, was approved. The new model is crucial for the success of membership in the future. National office will work closely with the membership division and its regions to ensure the success of the model.

What can be described as the worst downward business phase in the South African economy over the past five years, has had significant impact on funding opportunities. However, the WESSA Group has again delivered another resilient performance in tough economic times, by contributing positively to the long-term objective of financial sustainability. During the course of the year, immense focus was put on optimising assets.

On a year-on-year comparison, some significant changes are evident:

- Project sales has decreased by 21%;
- Income increased by 5%; and
- WESSA Group Reserves has increased from R 25.8 million to R 28 million.

### FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2018 vs 2019



A R5.1 million reduction in market value of the WESSA share portfolio has impacted severely on the Statement of Comprehensive Income. However, this year's fair value adjustment downward is lower than the previous year's R 9 million. Project funding in advance has decreased with a similar drop in bank and cash.

WESSA is committed to being a 21st century organisation in its various engagements with stakeholders. We are deeply grateful to individuals and organisation who, with WESSA, are passionate about *Caring for the Earth*.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'JT Burger'.

**JT BURGER**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**