

# Woolworths Foods CEO Zyda Rylands officially retires, Sam Ngumeni takes the lead



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Woolworths has confirmed that the CEO of Woolworths Foods, Zyda Rylands, will officially be retiring at the end of August, and will be replaced by group chief operating officer (COO) Sam Ngumeni later this year.



Zyda Rylands, Woolworths CEO and executive director of Woolworths Holdings Limited retires in August 2024. Source: [www.bizcommunity.com](http://www.bizcommunity.com)

According to a statement issued, *"the Board wishes to advise that Zyda Rylands, CEO: Woolworths Foods, will be retiring at the end of August 2024. The Board extends its appreciation to Zyda for her contribution and commitment to the Woolworths Group over the past 29 years, and for the significant role she has played in growing and positioning Woolworths Foods as an industry-leading, food retailer."*

Rylands joined Woolworths South Africa in 1996 working in the finance and store operations teams until her appointment as the people and transformation director in 2005, followed by her appointment as chief operating officer: support services in 2008 and chief executive officer of Woolworths South Africa in September 2015. She was appointed to the Woolworths Holdings Ltd Board in August 2006.

In 2021, it was announced that Rylands would step down as Woolworths CEO and as executive director of Woolworths Holdings Limited, due to "personal circumstances" and to pursue early retirement, but had agreed to remain with the company until August 2024.



Woolworths CEO Zyda Rylands to step down

23 Aug 2021



As part of the Group's planned succession process, effective 1 July 2024, Sam Ngumeni, group chief operating officer, will

be taking over from Rylands, as CEO of Woolworths Foods.



Sam Ngumeni, group chief operating officer, will be taking over from Zyda Rylands, as CEO of Woolworths Foods effective July 2024. Source: [www.businesslive.co.za](http://www.businesslive.co.za)

Ngumeni has been with the WHL Group for 26 years, primarily in financial services, and has more than 17 years retail credit experience. He was appointed as the group chief operating officer in March 2012. He was previously the chief operating officer of Woolworths South Africa and chief executive officer of Woolworths Financial Services, where he spearheaded the successful joint venture between Woolworths and ABSA Limited. He was appointed to the WHL Board in 2014.

The Board congratulates Ngumeni on his appointment and looks forward to the contribution he will make to the foods business.

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