



Victorian
Forest
Products
Association

VFPA Media Kit

Executives and Governing Council

2024



Governing Council

Our chairman

Rob Hescock, HVP Plantations

Rob Hescock represents the softwood plantation sector having worked in the industry across Victoria for many years. Currently he is the Chief Operating Officer for HVP Plantations. Although based in Melbourne, he spends most of his time in the three regions that encompass the northeast and western areas of the state as well the large softwood region in Gippsland.

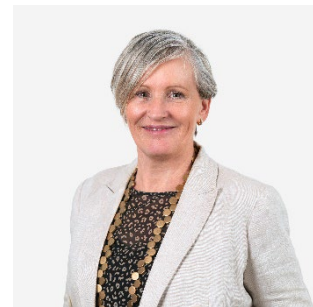


Stewardship of the environment and maintaining viable domestic contractors and processing facilities are key areas of interest. Along with his partner and family he also operates a farming enterprise with a strong focus on environmental enhancement.

Our CEO

Deborah Kerr

Deb Kerr brings to the inaugural CEO role extensive experience in the primary industries sector, having worked in various industry representative roles, and most recently as a senior executive with Australian Pork Limited. That wealth of experience gives Deb the skills to represent Victoria's forest products industry with the State Government and in the wider Victorian community. Deb is excited about showcasing the vital role the forestry products sector plays as a sustainably operated employer and producer, providing the renewable products used by Australians every day in more ways than they probable realise.



Phil Mason

Deputy Chair; New Forests

Phil Mason is an experienced forester responsible for the operational management of assets in Australia, with primary responsibility for the New Forests' first Australia New Zealand Forest Fund, which consists of approximately AUD 3 billion of assets comprising approximately 120,000 hectares of hardwood plantations, 85,000 hectares of softwood plantations, and softwood sawmilling assets.

Phil's forestry career includes more than 20 years' experience in operational forestry and consulting with diverse experience throughout Australia, the Pacific, Asia, and South Africa.



Darren Shelden

Treasurer; Australian Bluegum Plantations

Darren Shelden has been extensively involved in Australia's plantation forestry industry for over 20 years, across all facets from land procurement to export. Darren has a Bachelor of Forest Science from the University of Melbourne and is a Fellow of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.

Darren is an Ambassador for the Great South Coast Food and Fibre Council and is a Director of Timber Training Creswick. Darren was also a Director for the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI) until its closure at the end of 2020.



Mike Lawson

SFM Asset Management

Mike Lawson is the General Manager of SFM Asset Management (SFM), the mainland branch of parent company SFM Environmental Solutions based in Southern Tasmania. SFM manage softwood and hardwood plantation forest assets for a variety of clients in Victoria, WA, SA, and Tasmania.

Mike has 23 years' experience in the forest industry, predominantly in Tasmania followed closely by the Green Triangle region of Victoria and South Australia. Mike has held a variety of roles across the sector ranging from operational roles through to senior management.



Stephen Allan

Pentarch Forestry

Stephen Allan is the General Manager – Operations for Pentarch Forestry, joining the Pentarch Group in 2002. Steve has worked in numerous areas of the Pentarch Forestry business over the past 21 years.

As General Manager of Operations Steve has overall responsibility for Pentarch Forestry's solid log and chip export operations, Ports and facility management, Pallet manufacturing, forests, and forest management functions.



Andrew Matheson

PF Olsen Australia

Andrew Matheson brings nearly 30 years of experience in all facets of plantation forestry operations, with a number of companies. Andrew is the Regional Manager – Green Triangle for PF Olsen Australia, managing plantation hardwood and softwood assets across Victoria, and in South Australia and Tasmania for a variety of clients. Andrew has a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) from Australian National University.



Sarah Harvie

Opal ANZ

Sarah Harvie brings over 20 years' experience as a senior communications practitioner across a broad range of industries. She has worked in private, public, and consulting sectors and has experience across external and internal communications, stakeholder and government relations, and media and issues management.



Vince Hurley

Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH)

Vince Hurley commenced with Australian Sustainable Hardwoods Pty Ltd (ASH) in 1992 when the business was Neville Smith Timber Industries. Prior to this, Vince worked as a forester and has a long family association with hardwood sawmilling. He has a Bachelor Forest Science (Hons) 1985 from the University of Melbourne. Vince is a member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Daniel Pote

Powelltown Sawmill

For the past 5 years, Dan has been involved with Powelltown Sawmills where he currently is the CEO. Previously, he held key commercial roles across various industries including FMCGs, sports and entertainment in renowned organisations such as Unilever, Mattel, Etihad Stadium, AFL & Disney. Dan's career has seen him hold senior leadership/director roles, leadership of large teams, member of executive teams and participation in strategic acquisitions and negotiations.



Hamish Little

Midway Ltd

Hamish Little is General Manager Plantations and Carbon, Midway Ltd . Midway is a publicly listed vertically integrated carbon, forestry and wood fibre processor and exporter with operations in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory. He has 14 years of experience working in the private forestry and timber processing sector.

Hamish has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management from The University of Adelaide and a Diploma in Forestry Management from the University of Melbourne. Hamish has recently returned from the mining sector, after spending 10 years managing various mines across Australia.





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VFPA is the peak industry body representing the forestry products value chain in Victoria from those growing, managing and harvesting our sustainable plantations and multiple use natural forests to the primary and secondary processing of timber, the manufacture of pulp and paper, and the value-added timber and pulp and paper products supply chains.