



## **ADELAIDE HILLS TOURISM BOARD MEMBERS**

April 2024



### **James Sellers, Acting Chair**

With a strong passion for South Australia and the Hills, James had served as Deputy Chair for the Adelaide Hills Tourism Board since 2019 and was appointed Acting Chair in March 2024. James is an engaging business professional who has specialised in growing large site tourism destinations in the Adelaide Hills for more than 10 years. Business development driven early in his career, James moved to Melbourne working in the private equity sector where he was promoted to his first GM role, controlling large retail and B2B portfolios across Melbourne and Adelaide. James's passion, however, lay in tourism. Coupled with a desire to return to Adelaide he accepted the position of Manager at Cleland Wildlife Park. In this role James and his team achieved outstanding growth in revenue, visitor numbers and product development elevating Cleland's status as an iconic tourism site. As General Manager of Woodhouse Activity Centre for four years, and now as CEO for Scouts SA, James has brought commercial acumen and a resurgence of visitation to the iconic property. Well on the way to developing the site into a cherished destination for locals and visitors alike, Woodhouse continues to go from strength to strength. James enjoys time spent with family and carries out a spokesperson role for the MS Society.



### **Trudy Dickson, Treasurer**

Trudy has been a hills resident for over 40 years and is a local Tourism Operator. She held Senior Executive positions within large international companies over her 30-year corporate career and established her first business in the Human Resources sector in 2009. In 2016 she co-founded their family business, Ambleside Distillers in Hahndorf, which includes both distilling and tasting bar operations. She holds several Board and Executive Committee roles including Chair of a Risk Committee. Her broad business experience encompasses sales and marketing, financial management, governance, risk, human resources and operational management across industries including health, human resources, tourism and beverage manufacturing and she is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



### **Sarah Carlson (AHWR)**

Sarah has been the Executive Officer of Adelaide Hills Wine Region (AHWR) since January 2022. Sarah has studied and worked in the wine industry since 2005, primarily in the Adelaide Hills. Having grown up in the US and spent time working in publishing in the UK, Carlson moved to Australia in 2004 and dedicated her career to the wine industry. After beginning studies in viticulture, she obtained an MA in Wine Business at the University of Adelaide and worked with several wineries in the Adelaide Hills in marketing and communications. Passionate about sustainability, she consulted to AHWR for six years to support the roll-out of its Environmental Management Plan, before taking on a permanent role as Grower Engagement Officer in August 2019. As AHWR Executive Officer, Sarah's role encompasses grower engagement and sustainability while also having oversight over marketing, events, policy, advocacy and broader member engagement and services. Sarah has been an active resident of Ashton in the Adelaide Hills since 2007, raising two boys in this beautiful Hills community and supporting local recreation initiatives.



### **Damien Cooke (RDA)**

Damien, Chief Executive Officer for Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island is a prominent business leader. Damien has led various delegations to explore trade and investment opportunities for our region, a study to further investigate the Northern Rail Bypass and more recently exploring options for a study hub on the South Coast. Damien has been a long-term resident of the region and as a local business operator and primary producer he has a genuine understanding of the region and the potential of what the region has to offer.



### **Damian McArdle**

Damian has over a decade of experience in primary production and Agri-Tourism and is the CEO of Chamberlain Orchards Pty Ltd and the Founder/CEO of Paracombe Premium Perry Pty Ltd. Damian's leadership and business acumen has seen Chamberlain Orchards and Paracombe Premium Perry diversify into a leading Agri-Tourism operator, thriving in the Adelaide Hills, as well as transitioning their operations into a vertically integrated and certified organic orchard. Damian has extensive experience with regulation, development and repurposing on farm buildings as well as product identification, supply and development within Agri-tourism business. Damian has previously sat on multiple industry boards and local and state government advisory committees.



### **Jo Podoliak (DEW)**

Jo is currently Director of Tourism and Commercial Services for the National Parks & Wildlife Service with the Department of Environment and Water. Cleland Wildlife Park and Mount Lofty Summit, key tourism attractions of the region, are part of her remit. Jo's career has included national business experience and covered a wide range of sectors including investment facilitation, economic development, environmental management, public sector administration, tourism, and service delivery. Jo enjoys the challenge of lifelong learning and successfully implementing key strategies that make a difference in the community. A passionate hills dweller, Jo lives in Ashton and is a huge advocate of the region as a place to live, work and visit.



### **Kylie Roberts**

Kylie is a multi-award-winning business owner with 17 years' experience growing wellness brands across Australia. Marketing some of Australia's largest brands including ANZ, Coca-Cola Amatil and Wyndham Estate Wines, Kylie is a passionate brand and marketing specialist. In 2020, she co-founded Henry Street & Co. an experiential food and wine tourism hub in Woodside and is passionate about driving visitation to the region. Kylie is Founder of Aleenta Health Club, a wellness brand incorporating boutique fitness studios, e-commerce platform and instructor training. She also brought endota spa to South Australia and is an endota spa multi-unit franchisee. Kylie has held many roles within the endota business, including Marketing Manager and General Manager, endota spa skincare. With tertiary qualifications in business, marketing and public relations Kylie brings a wealth of skills and experience to the AHT Board with its focus on the growing wellness tourism sector.



### **Greg Georgopoulos (Funding Partner Nominee)**

Chief Executive Officer at Adelaide Hills Council, Greg has been involved in high-level complex leadership and major municipal and community projects within local government and private sector for over 25 years. Greg's key focus in recent years has been on executive leadership, strategic government relationships, sustainability and service delivery. In local government, Greg has had the opportunity to drive and participate in strategic thinking and planning with a focus on community benefit. He has been pivotal in the development and delivery of Council's strategic, operational, financial and master plans, and inspiring staff to achieve innovative and tangible outcomes. Greg has had significant success in positive strategic stakeholder and partnership opportunities at a federal, state and local government level on key municipal projects and community programs and has also successfully implemented corporate innovation models such as the "service excellence" program to improve productivity and best value services. Greg's key strengths are corporate innovation and strategic thinking. He is considered a leader in corporate strategy by his peers and the local government sector. Greg's tertiary qualifications include a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering, both from the University of South Australia.



### **Alison Hancock, (Funding Partner Nominee)**

Alison has been working for Hills residents for over 10 years. Currently Executive Manager of Mt Barker District Council, Alison works closely with both the Mayor and CEO on regional strategic initiatives. With years of Board experience, Alison currently sits on the Board of Bendigo Bank and is a member of the Risk and Governance subcommittee. Alison is an experienced and results oriented executive with a commercially astute and pragmatic approach across both public and private sectors. She has been a leader of multi-disciplinary teams across a range of corporate and business functions to achieve alignment of strategic and operational goals. Qualifications include a Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice (LLB), member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Law Society and Women on Boards.



### **Tanya Jarman (Executive Officer)**

Tanya was appointed as Executive Officer in March 2022. Tanya's expertise draws on 30 years of global commercial and government clients, including media relations, social media, digital and content marketing, trade and cooperative marketing and brand development. Born, bred and educated in Adelaide, Tanya left South Australia shortly after tertiary education, spending over 20 years interstate (Sydney) and offshore (UK and Thailand) in senior tourism management roles working from grassroots product development (airlines, tour operations and hotels) through to trade distribution and consumer direct marketing (Tourism Australia & Tatler magazines). On return to Adelaide in 2012, Tanya led the international and distribution arm of the South Australia Tourism Commission, including re-aligning the team to be more consumer and brand-focused, increasing the product featured in international programs and delivering the largest SA product representation at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) at the time. Upon leaving SATC, expenditure for international arrivals had nearly doubled.

Tanya's affiliation with the Hills is a strong one, having worked with many key operators through her international and partnerships background, but also has several family ties to many towns and villages throughout the region.