



Adelaide Hills

ADELAIDE HILLS TOURISM BOARD MEMBERS

January 2021



Helen Edwards, Chair

Helen Edwards, cofounder of The Lane Vineyard an Adelaide Hills wine and tourism business, has actively contributed to economic development and tourism in the Adelaide Hills through strategic leadership in the wine and tourism sectors for the past 13 years. As Chair of Adelaide Hills Tourism since 2011 and Chair of the first South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy 2020 since 2016 Helen has been part of collaborative industry efforts aligning the latest research on visitor trends with shared priorities about marketing, experience development, events and industry capability. Her extensive board experience in the health, education, wine and tourism sectors emphasises her ability to contribute as a team member, communicate with and engage relevant stakeholders, and use creativity and courage in strategic planning. In March 2020 Helen was appointed to the Board of the South Australian Tourism Commission.



James Sellers, Deputy Chair

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 now for the past four years, 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.



Campbell Stafford, Secretary

Cam is the Director and owner of a family-owned apple orchard established in 1875. He has considerable experience on many and varied industry boards and working groups, with a national and regional focus. Cam is a strong, passionate advocate for the Adelaide Hills from a broad community and agricultural perspective, and agritourism perspective. Taking tours for our local communities to experience the history, storytelling, and natural assets of this diverse area is a high priority of Cams. He is heavily involved with the World Heritage bid for the Mount Lofty Ranges and has been from its inaugural stage. Cam is passionate about the future of tourism in the Adelaide Hills with a particular interest in preserving the amenity and character of this important region.



Trudy Dickson, Treasurer

Trudy has held Senior Executive positions within large international companies over her 30-year corporate career, and established her first business within 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 also holds a number of Board and Executive Committee roles, including Treasurer of the Hahndorf Business and Tourism Association. Her broad business experience encompasses sales and marketing, financial management, human resources and operational management across a number of industries including health, human resources, tourism and beverage manufacturing.



Marc Voortman (Funding Partner Nominee)

Marc Voortman is the General Manager Planning and Development at the Mount Barker District Council. Marc has over 15 years' experience in local government and has worked in various roles including strategic projects, strategic planning, and growth management in various management positions. During his career he has demonstrated a commitment to building positive working relationships across various sectors through a genuine interest in individuals, collaboration, partnership and desire for on ground outcomes. This approach has resulted in significant investment from the private sector in the region and contributed positively to the region. As General Manager Planning and Development Marc is responsible for Council's economic development, tourism development, strategic projects, planning, policy, environment, strategy and development assessment departments.



Damien Cooke

Damien, Chief Executive Officer and Director 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.



Melissa Bright (Funding Partner Nominee)

Melissa is the Manager Economic Development at the Adelaide Hills Council. Melissa commenced her role with Council in December 2015 and is responsible for delivering the Council's Economic Development Strategy. Recognising the importance for the Hills region to have a strong, diverse and sustainable economy, Melissa works with local industry to understand the local issues, provide networking opportunities, coordinate local economic development efforts and provide advocacy to other levels of government to enable projects and investments that will benefit the region's economy. In her spare time Melissa is an enthusiastic and contributing member of the South Australian Endurance Rider's Association.



Piers Brissenden

Piers is General Manager of the state-wide Crown Lands Program within the Department for Environment and Water and since 2005 has worked in a variety of roles. In particular Piers has a great deal of experience in the area of National Parks and Natural Resource Management in the Adelaide Hills region. He has contributed to the planning and implementation of nature-based tourism and visitor management programs in parks within the Mount Lofty Ranges and has also had senior roles in managing the state's Native Vegetation Program, Coorong and Lower Lakes Project and the State Herbarium and Biological Survey Unit. Piers relishes his close connection to the environment, and the chance to help create opportunities for people to immerse themselves in nature is something he values greatly.



Damian McArdle

Damian studied at Pedare Christian College before completing his qualifications as a heavy diesel mechanic in 2003. Damian returned to his family orchard in Paracombe in 2009 and completed his small business management certification through TAFE SA and Certificate 3 in production horticulture before taking over as CEO of Chamberlain Orchards. Damian founded Paracombe Premium Perry in 2012. He is an industry leader in agritourism with extensive experience in primary production. Since founding Paracombe Premium Perry and diversifying his family farm to be an Adelaide Hills destination with an onsite Cellar Door, Damian is achieving year on year growth of 200%. Damian was the Kersbrook Cooperative Society Vice Chairman from 2012-2015 and a member of the SA Apple & Pear Association. He is currently a Board member of Paracombe Recreational Grounds Incorporated.



Fiona LeSage

Fiona joined Adelaide Hills Wine Region Association as Executive Officer in August 2020, bringing her key account management and global sales experience specialising in media and the wine industry to this important role. Fiona is highly experienced in driving results for prestigious brands while focused on providing the ultimate strategic project management of large-scale partnerships, activations and events. She has an extensive network with key relationships across a wide variety of wine industry and private sector stakeholders. Fiona is excited to further build on the close collaboration with Adelaide Hills Tourism and the region's partners to promote and drive growth of the Adelaide Hills region.