

## **WPMA Members' Update – 1 March 2021**

Dear WPMA Members,

There has certainly been plenty happening in the first part of this year and I will be updating you on these over the next few weeks. Importantly, WPMA will be meeting with the Minister for Economic Development, Hon Stuart Nash, next week to discuss where government has got to on putting in place policies to encourage much greater investment in the NZ wood processing and manufacturing sector.

### **New Director for WPMA**

I am pleased to say that we have recently elected a new Director to the WPMA Board in the Engineered Wood category. Darren Stead is Managing Director at TimberLab Solutions. Darren has worked in the timber industry the whole of his career, after graduating from Leeds Metropolitan University, UK where he studied building and construction. He enjoyed 25 years with the Howarth Timber Group, gaining experience in all facets of the industry, but predominantly in timber engineering – spending 10 years as an Operations Manager in frame, truss and I beam manufacture. Darren moved to NZ twelve years ago and took up the job as Operations Manager in frame and truss, he moved on to setting up a bespoke I-beam manufacturing line at Timberbond. Upon the merger between Timberbond and McIntosh Timber Laminates (forming TimberLab Solutions), Darren focused initially more on sales and estimating, this developed into the role of Business and Finance Manager to General Manager and his current role of Managing Director.

Darren has a great passion for timber and specifically for Engineered Wood Products, for which the future growth is really exciting. He believes that the use of digital fabrication technology, alongside NZ's abundant timber resource puts the NZ wood industry at the forefront of developing strong relationships with the construction industry and bringing sustainable, efficient, aesthetically pleasing and cost-effective solutions to market. Darren says that it is important that, as an industry we work together, to ensure that we have the best opportunity to add value to our natural resource, contributing to the economy and creating jobs for our people. TimberLab has a long history of involvement with the WPMA Board and he's delighted to have the opportunity to continue this commitment.

Welcome on-board Darren, and you join the current WPMA Board make- up of:

*Chair:*

Brian Stanley

*Vice-Chair*

John Eastwood – Xlam NZ

*Board:*

Jon Ryder – OjiFs

Mark Taylor – TenonClearwood LP

Mark Hansen – Rosvall Sawmill

Garth Mortensen – Northsawn Lumber

Alan Hartley – Niagara Sawmills  
Craig Dawson – Westco Lumber  
Brendan Smith – Juken NZ  
Tony Clifford – Pan Pac Forest Products  
Darren Stead – Timberlab Solutions

### **Supporting Investment in NZ Wood Processing and Manufacturing**

Stand by this week for the release of a new WPMA report which highlights what competitor countries are doing to support their manufacturing sectors. Trillions of dollars are being spent on bolstering manufacturing overseas and the wood industries in those countries are getting massive assistance from direct government handouts. Our report highlights policy action that needs to be taken here to drastically increase investor confidence in wood processing and our intent is to agree urgent action with the Minister for Economic Development, Hon Stuart Nash on 10 March. This report follows up on our Manufacturing Matters Report released in February 2020. The Government must take NZ manufacturing seriously and particularly the wood products sector if it is to build a thriving, zero-carbon economy by 2050. At present, when it comes to supportive industrial policy and, compared to our main competitors, it is missing-in-action. The report is released on Wednesday 3 March.

Best regards,

Jon