

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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NEW CHAIR OF VICFORESTS BOARD APPOINTED

The Victorian Government has appointed a new Chair of the VicForests Board to lead the organisation and support the community as the native timber industry transitions.

From 31 May 2022, Ben Hubbard will take on the roles of Director and Chair of the VicForests board to replace outgoing Chair Chris Lovell.

Mr Hubbard is an experienced executive and non-executive director with a strong record in public policy, governance, strategy and disaster recovery.

Mr Hubbard is the former CEO of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority and showed strong leadership as he worked with affected individuals and communities as they recovered from the Black Saturday bushfires. He also undertook the previous government's review of long-term bushfire recovery in 2014.

He was previously Chief Strategy Officer at a national law firm and Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Julia Gillard. He is the current National Chair of the YMCA and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

He will support VicForests through its next phase of transition, ahead of the 2024 step-down, as the organisation delivers on the Government's timber commitments under the Victorian Forestry Plan, concentrating on contracting, harvesting and regeneration.

Mr Hubbard's extensive career in the public and private sector demonstrates he is an excellent candidate to lead VicForests through a period of change and transition in the industry.

VicForests is a state-owned business with a Board of Directors and is accountable to the Victorian Government through the Treasurer and Minister for Agriculture.

The Victorian Forestry Plan was created to transition the native forest industry to a range of new opportunities by 2030, moving towards plantation-based supply.

The Plan ensures critical supply chains that rely on native timber will have enough time to adjust ahead of the phase out in 2030, while supporting workers and communities through the 2024 step-down and beyond.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Ben Hubbard has extensive senior leadership experience, which will support the transition of VicForests and its operations to deliver the Victorian Forestry Plan."

"We thank the outgoing Chair of VicForests Chris Lovell for his many years of hard work and for leading the organisation through the first phase of the Victorian Forestry Plan."