The Wrap-up

with
Shane Vicary
CEO

You may have noticed this edition has not one, but two covers – our way of recognising both Rob and Graham as they wrap up their time at AKD and head into retirement. With decades of service between them, it felt only right to give each of them a well-deserved moment in the spotlight.

After nearly 50 years Graham has announced his well-earned retirement. Graham's involvement with AKD began with Kilmour Investments Pty Ltd in 1973 as a director of one of the four family shareholder companies. He became directly involved as an AKD Director in 1990, serving through to 30 June 2025. Graham also chaired the Board for eight years from 2015 -2023. As he steps back, we reflect on his contribution to AKD, and his legacy of stewardship.

Graham's family has been involved in the timber industry for generations, originally as part of W.J. Inglis, one of AKD's founding shareholders in 1955. The Inglis family business name was changed to Kilmour – a name inspired by their ancestral Scottish village of Kilmaurs.

William John Inglis was Graham's grandfather, and his son Stan was one of the seven founding Directors of AKD. Graham's father, Hector Harris, replaced Stan on the AKD Board in 1973 and Graham followed in his father's footsteps in 1990. Continuing a family commitment to the AKD business of 70 years, Graham's son Andrew will succeed him on the 1st of July.

Graham from the start of his tenure on the Board supported strategic decisions that enabled multiple phases of growth, evolution and change. The decisions that stand out for Graham include the launch of SPE in the mid 1990's, building a new Sawmill in Colac in 1997, acquiring the Irrewarra Sawmill in 1999, the land acquisitions in the 2000's, and the Colac Log Sorter in 2011.

During Grahams period as Chair (2015-2023) AKD continued the growth drive that has defined AKD. The growth trajectory that occurred from 2015 followed the difficult trading period and consolidation between 2011-2014. The growth included major capital investment at Irrewarra in 2015 that secured new log contracts, the 2016 CDK investment, and the new Colac Sawline in 2017. AKD then got the "opportunity of a lifetime" in 2018 to acquire another four sawmills, expanding the business into Queensland and New South Wales.

Graham speaks with pride about AKD's resilience through both the highs and lows, and the ability to overcome adversity. In his words, *"Not all decisions have been perfect – but those who never make mistakes are those who never make decisions."* What matters most is the direction of travel – and for Graham, AKD's continued growth is evidence of courage, sound leadership, strong values, and a willingness to adapt and improve.

Graham encouraged Board succession planning during his tenure as Chair. A new Shareholders Agreement was executed, the Board recruited Independent Directors (Pat Jones and Peter Boyd), independent Company Secretary (Sam Butcher), and supported four Alternative Directors intended as nominated successors. Like investing in people and assets, the AKD Board of tomorrow has been crafted by these many steps.

Graham is extremely proud of the focus on safety that has become embedded in every part of the business. From Board-level decision-making to frontline operations, safety is now a non-negotiable priority – and that shift, he believes, is one of AKD's most meaningful achievements of the past 20 years.

AKD Board 2023 L-R: Shane Vicary, Ian Colless, John Hayden, Laurie Bennett, Graham Harris, Pat Jones and Peter Boyd.

While growth and investment were key themes of Graham's time on the Board, what stands out most in his reflections is the people. He consistently emphasises that AKD's strength lies in its people – their knowledge, energy, passion and pride in their work. He believes that although the shareholders may own the assets, it is the employees who truly own and drive the AKD story and its brand. And it's this connection, this shared pride, that he sees at the heart of the company's success.

Graham also has a deep sense of pride in the development of AKD's 13,000-hectare estate – built from the ground up over decades. For Graham, this represents more than just asset growth; it's a symbol of AKD's long-term thinking and for Graham its personal. Graham has enjoyed his time with AKD and is proud to call his fellow Directors his friends. Friendships that they have developed over the long period of time they have served as Directors.

When asked what he hopes for AKD's future, Graham doesn't hesitate. He wants to see continued reinvestment and AKD to have the courage to continue to grow. Graham is particularly excited about the Oberon acquisition, and he has been encouraged by the resilience shown by the business during the difficult times of reduced volumes. Graham individually identified examples at each site that in his view proved their ability to adapt, innovate and evolve.

Graham talked about not letting the current difficult market conditions define AKD, he identified that AKD has always bounced back better after difficult times. Historically AKD's periods of greatest growth have taken place, not after good times, but after difficult times.

As Graham steps back, he leaves with confidence – knowing the company is in strong hands and set up for future success. His parting message is simple but powerful and it's for all of us: it's all about stewardship. *"You don't own the jersey,"* he says. *"You're just looking after it – and your job is to hand it over in a better condition than when you got it."*

On behalf of the entire AKD team – past and present – we thank Graham Harris for his remarkable contribution, his considered approach, his desire for growth and investment and his unwavering belief in the future of our business.

Shane