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About ASCA

The Australian Specialist Cheesemakers' Association (ASCA) represents the Australian specialist and artisan cheese industry.

Its role is to promote and accelerate excellence and bring together the best available knowledge and expertise to stimulate dialogue and provide continuing education, operational guidance, recognition and professional growth and development for its members, and to develop and promote consumer awareness and appreciation of Australian specialist and artisan cheese.

ASCA has operated since 1994 as a member-based industry association for Australia's artisan cheesemakers, members of associated industries and cheeselover, to act as a catalyst in stimulating the growth and development of the specialist and artisan cheese industry in Australia.

In the industry's relatively short history, ASCA has witnessed significant development within the specialist and artisan cheese sector and a growing consumer appreciation of the quality products being produced.

ASCA'S VISION

That Australia produces, sustainably and profitably, high quality artisanal cheeses that Australians and those in the rest of the world love and admire.

ASCA'S MISSION

To promote and accelerate excellence, engagement, appreciation and collegiality within the Australian artisanal cheese industry.

To also advance the continuing professional growth and development of members by bringing together the best available knowledge and expertise to stimulate dialogue and provide continuing education, operational guidance and recognition.

ASCA's COMMITTEE

ASCA Committee members contribute their time and expertise voluntarily. They provide ASCA with diverse expertise from a range of artisanal cheesemaking and other professional backgrounds.

CARLA MEURS, PRESIDENT

Carla, with her partner Ann-Marie Monda, is the creator and manager of Holy Goat, where she makes organic goat cheese at Sutton Grange Organic Farm. Producing the highest quality farmhouse cheese with a commitment to the ethical treatment of animals and quality organic farming principles, Carla has made an exceptional contribution to both regional Victoria and the development of Australia's artisanal and farmhouse cheese industry. Holy Goat cheeses are widely recognised as Australia's best goat cheeses, as the numerous awards they have won over many several years attest. Carla is also an experienced project manager and educator from her many years spent in the education and training fields.

PAUL WILSON, VICE PRESIDENT

Paul, with his partner Kerry, owns and operates Nimbin Valley Dairy in northern NSW, a goat and cow dairy that processes its milk into a range of goat and cow, hard and soft cheeses, as well as goat milk ice cream. Raised on a cow dairy and qualified in agricultural science, Paul worked as a consultant for many years in the cotton and citrus industries. In 2007 he won the Dairy Australia cheesemaking scholarship, which started his journey down the path to establishing Nimbin Valley Dairy. Paul's scientific background allows him to bring to ASCA a deep understanding of the science that underlies cheesemaking, to help develop and drive programs to achieve the goal of making us all better cheesemakers. Paul leads ASCA's Technical and Cheesemaker Education Committee.

MICHAEL MCNAMARA, TREASURER

Michael, with his wife Cressida, owns and runs Pecora Dairy, where Michael is the head cheesemaker. Pecora Dairy is an artisan, farmhouse cheese-making enterprise at Robertson, in the Southern Highlands of NSW, south of Sydney. In addition to his cheesemaking, Michael brings to the role of Treasurer a thorough working knowledge of corporate structures and governance, cash-flow management and clear concise financial reporting, from his many years spent "before cheese" in the corporate world, where he worked as a general manager and then executive director with various medium to large sized businesses in the media and property industries.

ALISON LANSLEY, SECRETARY

Alison is a non-executive director of various not-for-profit and government companies. She has a broad range of business, governance and legal skills gained over 30+ years, including 17 years as a partner of leading Australian law firm, Mallesons Stephen Jaques. She is currently a director of the National Broadband Network Corporation, Schools Connect Australia Limited, the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival and Melbourne Community Marketplace Limited, is President of Redkite's Victorian Regional Council, as well as

Secretary of ASCA. Alison is passionate about the quality end of the food industry, in particular cheese, and the agriculture and business activities that support it.

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NICK HADDOW

Nick has owned and operated the Bruny Island Cheese Co. since 2003, and has a reputation as one of Australia's benchmark producers of artisan cheese, having been recognised as such at both a local and national level on many occasions, including most recently as the overall winner of the 2013 Telstra Business Awards. Nick also has a successful media career that includes his role as co-star of all three series of Gourmet Farmer, which is screened in Australia and the UK. He recently co-authored The Deli Book (published by Murdoch, 2012) with his mates Matthew Evans and Ross O'Meara and has contributed to several other publications on the subject of cheese. Nick heads ASCA's Membership Sub-Committee.

KRIS LLOYD

Kris is manager and head cheesemaker of Woodside Cheese Wrights, a specialist cheesemaker of goat and cow cheeses, producing fresh, white mould and matured cheeses, based in the Adelaide Hills. Kris established the South Australian Specialist Cheese Association CheeseSA to promote specialty cheese and introduce industry driven education and training programs in South Australia, and is currently the Chair of the association. Kris is also the Director of CheeseFest, Australian Alfresco Cheese Festival, a Board member of the South Australian Tourism Commission and Chair of the Artisan Cheese Making Academy Australia. She was the national winner of the 2010 Telstra Business Woman - Innovation Award.

MIRANDA SHARP

Miranda founded and is the coordinator of the hugely successful and highly respected Melbourne Farmers' Markets, now run under the expanded not-for-profit banner of Community Food Marketplace Ltd, of which Miranda is the CEO. A retired chef, caterer and food writer, Miranda has cheerfully devoted 25 professional years to Melbourne's food industry. Farmers' markets are the culmination of her interest in Victorian producers and the edible spoils of every season. It is her quest to provide opportunities for everyone who eats to access, enjoy and afford fresh food. Miranda is also passionate about artisan cheese, and was an early member of the ASCA Committee after ASCA was established in the mid 1990s. She has extensive experience in project managing community food markets and obtaining funding for them, including government grants.

SIMONE GORDON

Simone is a food events co-ordinator extraordinaire and passionate foodie. She is currently the Co-ordinator of Daylesford Macedon Produce, Director of the Chocolate Rush Chocolate Festival and Daylesford's ChillOut Festival, Director of her own consulting, events and project management business, Long Grass Projects, and Festival Co-ordinator of the Daylesford Macedon Produce Harvest Festival. Simone heads ASCA's Events Sub-Committee.

SONIA COUSINS

Sonia is a cheese activist, cheese judge and fromager. With a background in science and technology, Sonia has over several years established herself as one of Sydney's most respected fromagers. She was instrumental in opening Sydney's first dedicated cheese and wine restaurant, the GPO Cheese & Wine Room, and has worked for most of Sydney's best cheese retailers. She now runs her own cheese and wine appreciation business and is a well-respected cheese judge, with judging credits for numerous cheese shows in Australia and around the world. She is a passionate advocate for small cheese producers, particularly in New South Wales, and has been writing a monthly blog called NSW Cheese Trail since 2010, to help raise the profile of local artisan cheeses and cheese makers.