

Furntech-AFRDI Staff

Bob Panitzki B Sc, Dip App Sci, MRACI
Chief Executive Officer



Bob graduated from the University of Tasmania with a BSc in chemistry. After commencing work in the automotive industry Bob completed a diploma in secondary metallurgy.

Bob spent 32 years in the automotive components industry working in the areas of quality assurance and technical management.

More recently, he was in operations and general management before taking up his present position in 2003.

Ian Burton B E (Mech) Hons, B A (Politics), NZCE
Technical Manager

Ian graduated from the University of Auckland with an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Studies.

He spent a number of years working as a design/project engineer for a structural timber jointing company and had several machine designs patented during this period.

More recently, he has worked in design and project management roles for the sheet metal manufacturing and primary timber processing industries. Ian commenced work at Furntech-AFRDI in December 2002.



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Jill Stancombe ***Administration Officer***



Jill has worked in administration positions most of her working life with a few years running a rural property. She has been at Furntech- AFRDI since May 1995 and carries out secretarial duties for all staff.

Dr Paul Semmens PhD, B Comp (Hons), B AppComp ***Program Coordinator & IT Support Officer***

Paul graduated with a doctorate from the University of Tasmania's School of Computing in December 2007.

Paul commenced work at Furntech-AFRDI in December 2005. His role initially covered all the IT aspects of the Institute including development and maintenance of Furntech's Web site, computer systems, servers and network architecture.



In May 2007 his role was expanded to include coordinating the AFRDI 146 leather program, and then again in May 2009 to include AFRDI 150 sustainability assessments. Paul is currently a certified Green Star Associate of the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA).

Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute

An independent, not-for-profit technical organisation serving buyers and sellers of furniture in Australia and New Zealand - PO Box 2042 Launceston Tasmania 7250,
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Lee Bowkett B App Sc (Hons)
Team Leader



Lee has recently submitted his PhD thesis. The topic of his doctorate deals with the epiphytic relations of the Soft Tree Fern *Dicksonia antarctica*. Amongst other things, he is endeavouring to discover whether the fern acts as a nursery species for other plant species.

Lee has worked on a part time basis for Furntech-AFRDI since

August 1999 and is experienced in testing to a wide range of furniture standards. Lee is a member of AFRDI's Sustainability assessment team and is currently a certified Green Star Associate of the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA).

Richard Levett B Ed (Industrial Technology)
Team Leader

Richard graduated as an Industrial Technology teacher in 1991 and has 10 years experience teaching at various schools and colleges in NSW and Tasmania. He also has 6 years experience in the furniture industry as a manufacturer and technical representative.



As a manufacturer he trained 5 apprentices in Cabinet making. He was the winner of the 'CES employer of the year 1995'

(Central Coast NSW) and was nominated for the 'Prime Ministers employer of the year 1995'. He was a member of the FIAA from 1994 to 1997. He is currently in his first year of a Bachelor of Environmental Design specialising in Furniture. Richard joined the Institute in June 2009.

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Eric Paul Adv Dip Eng
Team Leader



Eric spent 22 years as a Technical Officer with the Institute of TAFE Tasmania in the Engineering, Science and Electrical departments. While at TAFE Eric completed an advanced diploma in Engineering. He also worked in the NATA registered mechanical testing laboratory attached to TAFE for a number of years, testing concrete and steel.

Eric also spent a number of years working in a NATA registered testing laboratory in a civil engineering consultancy business. Eric joined Furntech-AFRDI in April 2005.

Peter Wilson
Team Leader

Peter has spent 41 years in the automotive component manufacturing industry and is trade qualified in Fitting and Machining. He has experience in tool engineering and machine design. He has also worked in a metrology laboratory and extensively in Production Engineering and Toolroom management. Peter joined Furntech-AFRDI in October 2005.



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Robert Johnston Dip App Sci, MIMEA, CPEng (1991-2007)
Standards Officer



Robert has a Diploma of Applied Science (Secondary Metallurgy) from the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education and has worked for many years in the manufacture of metal components for the automotive and other industries.

His experience includes the specification, manufacture, and testing of metal components and associated problem investigations and the supervision of engineering design, quality assurance and metallurgical laboratory departments. Robert joined the Institute in September 2005.

John Brock
Testing Officer

John has spent more than 25 years in the furniture industry, offering products to the Tasmanian manufacturing and upholstery sectors. During this time he has developed a broad range of skills in foam products, leather, fabrics and components. John took an innovative approach, introducing a number of new products into the Tasmanian furniture manufacturing and upholstery trade.



Previously he worked in the weighing machine industry for 13 years as a service technician, covering aspects ranging from laboratory scales to industrial weighbridges and batch weighers specialising in electronic applications. John joined the Institute in May 2010.

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John Court BSc (Hons)
Testing Officer



John graduated with an honours degree in physics from the University of NSW in 1989. He then worked on electromagnetic radiation research at the Defence Science and Technology Organisation before moving to the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Eye Research and Technology. At the CRC, he was responsible for investigating the

mechanical and material properties of polymers being developed for the contact lens industry.

John has also worked as a maths and science teacher, as well as researching the flow of ice sheets at the University of Tasmania. He joined Furntech-AFRDI as a testing officer in May 2011.

Jai Larkman BNEWS
Testing Officer (Sustainability)

Jai completed his degree in Natural Environment and Wilderness Studies (BNEWS) at the University of Tasmania in 2006. During and post-study, he worked in the field of Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Data Management. Jai has completed various contract positions for the Launceston City Council, Tamar Natural Resource Management and SFM Environmental Solutions.



Prior to study Jai worked as a technical support officer for Internet Service Provider 'TasAccess'. Jai joined Furntech-AFRDI's Sustainability team as a testing officer in February 2011.

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Guy Manley B IndDes
Projects/Testing Officer



Guy holds a Bachelor of Industrial Design and is a CAD specialist who has worked in the motion picture, television, manufacturing and education industries. He has also consulted in the field of virtual reality with organisations such as C.S.I.R.O, Powerhouse Museum Sydney and the A.N.U. Dept. of Computer Science.

Currently he spends any spare time as a designer/maker of fine furniture, working with Tasmania's beautiful and unique timbers. Guy joined the Institute in April 2010.

Brian Spencer
Testing Officer

Brian has spent 30 years working in the marine, woollen mill and abattoir industries as a machinist and maintenance fitter. He is a qualified Fitter and Turner and Tool Fitter.

Brian shares his time between his own business and his Furntech-AFRDI duties, where he has worked since January 2008.



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Phil Steers Assoc Dip Eng
Testing Officer



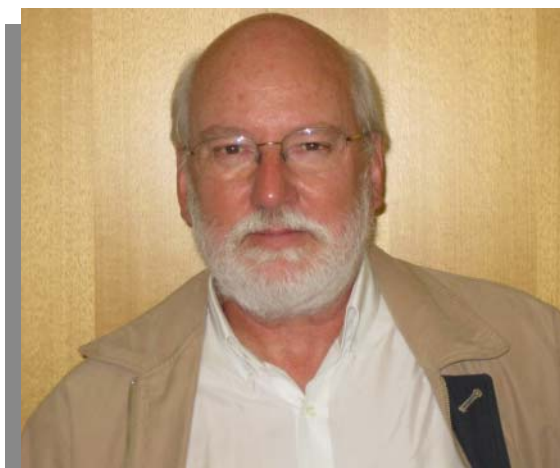
Phil was previously employed by the Department of Defence (Army) in a variety of roles within the maintenance and manufacturing arena for over 22 years. During this time, he gained formal training and extensive experience in the production of formal reports, both technical and administrative.

Phil has been involved in the testing, assessment and modification of an extensive range of equipment, ranging from small items of tooling through to major weaponry and vehicles. He joined Furntech-AFRDI as a testing officer in August 2010.

Julian Ridgers B EnvDes
Marketing & Membership Officer

Julian has worked as a reporter with ABC TV and Radio. He has worked with Ogilvie & Mather on various marketing activities and consulted to hospital and local government sectors. He has completed a Bachelor of Environmental Design and is studying a Masters in Architecture.

Julian joined Furntech-AFRDI in the role of Marketing and Membership Officer in June 2008.



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Stacey Saunders ***Consumer Concerns Officer***



Stacey has previously worked in reception and multiple customer service roles for close to a decade.

She joined Furntech-AFRDI in the role of Consumer Concerns Officer in September 2007.

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