

# Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited

## Director Applicant Information Pack 2026

### 1. Hort Innovation & Board composition

#### 1.1 Hort Innovation

Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation (RDC) for Australia's horticulture industry.

Our role is to advance Australia's \$18.4 billion horticulture industry by investing in research and development, marketing and trade to build a prosperous and sustainable future for growers.

We partner with Australian and international co-investors including government, leading science, technology, and consumer strategy experts to anticipate future challenges and opportunities. Our role is to capture value from the investments we make to benefit all levy payers.

For more information, see the Hort Innovation Strategy 2024-2026. A new, 5-year strategy commencing in FY27 will be rolled out in July 2026.

#### 1.2 Current Board composition

Hort Innovation's Board is a skills-based board currently comprising nine (9) non-executive Directors.

#### 1.3 Rotation of Directors in 2026

In 2026, two (2) Directors must retire from the Board. The two retiring directors (Elke Cleverdon and Stephen (Steve) McCutcheon) are eligible to re-apply. Both have indicated that they will be re-applying.

### 2. The Director Nomination Committee

Pursuant to Article 11.2 of Hort Innovation's Constitution, the nomination of candidates for election, re-election and appointment of Directors must be undertaken exclusively by a Director Nomination Committee (DNC) comprised of four (4) individuals:

- The Chair of Hort Innovation, except where the Chair is a candidate for re-election as a Director, in which case the other Directors must appoint one of the other Directors as member and chairperson of the DNC;
- The Secretary of the Department (or his or her nominee);
- A Levy Payer (that is not a Director) selected by the Secretary of the Department (or his or her nominee); and
- An independent eminent person selected by the Board and appointed for up to three years.

The members of the 2026 DNC are as follows:

- Julie Bird, Chair of the Board of Hort Innovation;
- Joanna Stanion, First Assistant Secretary, Middle East Regional Conflict Taskforce Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the nominee of the Secretary of DAFF;
- Matthew Young, the Levy Payer selected by the Secretary (or his nominee) of DAFF; and
- The Hon. Niall Blair, the independent eminent person selected the Hort Innovation Board.

### **3. What positions are available in 2026?**

As set out above, the Hort Innovation Board is a skills-based Board. Following analysis of the skills and experience across the Board as currently constituted, and the coverage across these skills without the two directors retiring in 2026, the Director Nomination Committee (DNC) has determined that the skills being sought for the two roles becoming vacant in 2026 are as follows:

- Finance, Accounting & Audit; and
- Public Policy & Administration.

Demonstrated expertise and experience in other areas (please see section 7.3 below) is also highly desirable.

### **4. Time commitment required of Hort Innovation Board Directors**

An indicative annual time commitment would be approximately 25 days per annum, usually comprising of 7–8 board/strategy meetings and associated preparation. Board meetings are often held in Sydney at Hort Innovation’s Head Office in North Sydney, with a number of meetings held each year at locations around Australia.

In addition to the general Board meetings, a director will also sit on at least one of the following Board Committees that will meet, on average, 4–5 times per year:

- Audit & Risk Committee
- Investment Committee
- People and Performance Committee

Additionally, Hort Innovation Directors may attend associated industry events and meetings (e.g. industry forums). These events and meetings will often be held outside the Sydney area.

### **5. Hort Innovation’s commitment to diversity**

Hort Innovation is committed to providing an environment that respects and promotes diversity.

Hort Innovation is critically aware of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and embraces the significant benefit that it brings, and this will be an essential element in the recruitment process.

As members of the Hort Innovation team, Hort Innovation Directors need to have a strong commitment to values-led leadership, fostering a culture of respect, integrity and transparency.

### **6. Eligibility to apply**

The Hort Innovation Constitution provides<sup>1</sup> that the following people are not eligible for nomination or appointment- as a Director in 2026:

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<sup>1</sup> Article 11.1(d)

- A current officer or employee of an Industry Representative Body\*\*
- A current officer or employee of an entity that is not eligible under Article 6.1(b) or (c) of the Constitution to be a Member of the Company; or a Related Body Corporate such an entity.

An example of a person or entity that would be ineligible under those provisions is a person or entity that derives the majority of its income from Hort Innovation (or body corporate related to that entity).

*\*\* It is important to note that current officers or employees of an Industry Representative Body may apply to become a Director of Hort Innovation. However, a condition of candidature (should their application be successful), is that before their nomination to stand as a Director is made known to members, they are required to provide a written commitment to immediately stand down from their role as an officer or employee of an Industry Representative Body.*

(The definition of Industry Representative Body in the Hort Innovation Constitution includes 'peak industry bodies', and bodies who carry out agri-political activities on behalf of the whole or part of the Australian horticulture industry. For the full definition, please refer to the definition in the Hort Innovation Constitution available at [www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au).)

## 7. The Director recruitment process

### 7.1 Recruitment

The Hort Innovation Board has engaged Rimfire Resources to support the Director recruitment process. Rimfire Resources is a specialist agribusiness search and recruitment business and has again been appointed in 2026 to assist Hort Innovation source candidates for election to the Hort Innovation Board and manage the selection process. As part of this process, national advertisements are placed in print and online media seeking applications, and a targeted search process occurs simultaneously. Applications are received via an online application and applicants will receive an automatically generated response to confirm receipt of their application.

Following the conclusion of the advertisement and search processes, the DNC will meet to agree on a shortlist of candidates for interviews, with **interviews to be held in Sydney on Wednesday 9 September and Thursday 10 September 2026**. All applicants should diarise these dates so as to be available if included on the short list. You should expect to hear about the progress of your application no earlier than early August. Should the location of interviews change, you will be notified.

### 7.2 Interview Format

Interviews will be approximately 45 minutes to one (1) hour in duration and will be a panel interview with the full DNC. During the interview, candidates will be expected to present their credentials for inclusion on the Board (how they meet the criteria and how they can contribute to the Board, their ideas on Hort Innovation's contribution to the horticulture industry, their thoughts on industry issues, etc.) and the Committee will ask a series of questions. There will also be an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions.

### 7.3 Board Skills Matrix 2026

The skills and experience sought year to year in director candidates are determined by the skills requirements of the Board. The Board of Hort Innovation has formulated its current skills requirements for the Board in the form of a Board Skills Matrix (Matrix) (see Attachment A).

As set out above, following analysis of the coverage of the current Board against the 2026 Board Skills Matrix, and also without the two directors retiring in 2026, the DNC has determined that the skills and experience required of the two vacant roles are as follows:

### **Finance, Accounting & Audit**

- Senior level experience in auditing or accounting, with expertise in financial reporting and corporate finance.
- Formal qualifications in finance/accounting (including CPA/CA membership) and experience as Chair of an Audit & Risk Committee will be highly regarded.
- Ability to understand corporate accounts, financial materials and financial reporting requirements and their implications for risks and opportunities.

### **Public Policy & Administration**

- Understanding of Australian public policy, policy making and the drivers of governmental decision making.

### **Desirable Skills & Experience**

- Demonstrated expertise and experience in the following areas is also highly desirable:
- Governance, Risk & Compliance
- Strategy, Leadership & Business Management
- Horticulture Production/Supply Chain
- Research & Development & Applied Innovation
- Investment Evaluation & Funds Management
- Promotion, Marketing & Market Access
- Stakeholder Engagement
- People & Culture
- Technology & Digital Transformation

## **7.4 Format of applications**

Applications should include:

- A **short cover letter** outlining the skills and experience the candidate brings to the Board;
- A **full resume** (maximum 3 pages) detailing work history, relevant experience and qualifications. Please remember to include your full contact details; and
- The **Board Skills Matrix self-assessment**, using the self-assessment template and guide enclosed.

*Note: All candidates will be assessed against the Board Skills Matrix by Rimfire Resources and the DNC. To assist in this process, please note that the Matrix self-assessment forms an essential part of the application.*

Applications should be completed online via Rimfire Resources' website at [www.rimfireresources.com.au](http://www.rimfireresources.com.au) and should be received **no later than 5.00 pm Monday 6 July 2026**. For further information, please contact Mick Hay or Katrina Conlon at Rimfire Resources on 1300 380 701.

On receipt of your application, you will receive an automated email acknowledgement.

## **7.5 Confidentiality / Privacy**

Applications will be received and reviewed by Rimfire Resources, who will then provide the applications to the DNC and the Hort Innovation Company Secretary. Information contained in applications and assessments conducted by the DNC may also be presented to the Hort Innovation Board.

Applicant information will not be otherwise shared, and all assessments conducted of applications received are treated as confidential information in accordance with usual recruitment practices.

All applicants will be responded to via email around early August, once the DNC has developed a shortlist of candidates for interview.

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A – 2026 Hort Innovation Board Skills Matrix
- Attachment B - The Board Skills Matrix self-assessment template and guide