



FORMER BILLABONG, QUIKSILVER EXECUTIVE JOINS OPTIMA BOARD

MEDIA RELEASE

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A former senior executive in the USA with iconic surfwear brands, Quiksilver and Billabong, has been appointed a Director of emerging Australian surfwear group, the listed Optima Corporation Limited ("OPC").

Mr Michael Lesher follows other key Optima appointments as part of its assault on the US surfwear market through the Australian brand, "West".

Optima relisted on the ASX in April with full ownership of the licence to market "West" in the US - the world's largest surfwear clothing and accessories market.

Mr Lesher will be a Non-Executive Director of the Company but has been given a mandate of seeking potential acquisitions in the surfwear industry that are non-competing but complementary to the "West" surf apparel brand.

Mr Lesher was recently at Fusion International Partners, where he served as the Chief Executive Officer for the Surf, Skate and Snow aggregator company. Prior to Fusion he was the CEO for Counter Culture Clothing, a boutique surf clothing company in California. From 1998-2000, Mr Lesher was the Director of Sales for Hurley International, achieving a multi-million dollar sales in its first year. He spent 14 years as the Director of Sales for Billabong U.S.A, growing domestic sales from US\$5.1 million to US\$74.2 million. Mr Lesher also worked with Quiksilver USA and Lord-Babcock Inc. between 1975 and 1983.

"Mr Lesher brings to the Company lifelong relationships with every major specialty surf retailer in the United States as well as national retailers," Optima's Managing Director, Mr Blair Sergeant, said today.

"His proven track record of taking surf companies in the United States from small operations to multi-million dollar companies is obviously extremely relevant given the task facing West. I am confident that his experience will prove to be invaluable in the success of West in the US," Mr Sergeant said

Optima recently announced the appointment of Californian-based Mr Jim Watson as President of Optima's wholly-owned subsidiary, West Surfing Products (USA), Inc. with responsibility for the launch and day-to-day operations of the West surf brand in the US.

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"Together with Mr Watson's experience, we have garnered the key personnel and experience to deliver the hands-on, head-on thrust needed to propel the West brand quickly, strongly and successfully into the competitive US surfwear environment," Mr Sergeant said.

Mr Watson has more than 20 years executive experience in the US's surfwear industry, including positions with Reef, Flojos, Bubblegum Surf Wax Company, the Stubbies Pro Surf Contest and JEB Industries, one of Orange County's largest cut & sew manufacturers.

Optima has an exclusive 10-year licence to manufacture, market, use, sell and distribute products bearing the "West" brand name and logo within the United States.

"Our aim is for West to join three other Australian surfwear icons - Quiksilver, Billabong and Rip Curl - as the dominant surfwear brands in the US. The appointment of both Mr Leshner and Mr Watson is the direct outcome of Optima's strategic focus to secure the critical contact and experience resource needed to succeed in the US," Mr Sergeant said.

He said the Company was continuing to lay the foundations with specialty surf retailers in the US leading up to the "official" launch of West in September this year.

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