



WINE COMMUNICATORS
OF AUSTRALIA
PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN WINE

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Ross Brown named WCA Legend of the Vine

Ross Brown, one of the Australian wine industry's most respected leaders, was today named the 2015 Victorian Legend of the Vine by Wine Communicators of Australia.

The former CEO and now Executive Director of Brown Brothers received the award in front of 150 industry peers and guests at the WCA Royal Melbourne Wine Show Awards Lunch. The Legend of the Vine recognises an individual who has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to the Australian wine industry and has a passion for telling its story.

"Few people fit those criteria better than Ross," said WCA Chair Angus Barnes. "He has always been a fantastic spokesman for Australian wine and for the important role it plays in so many regional communities.

"He was one of the first to understand and promote the importance of wine tourism and the natural synergy between food and wine, and the Brown Brothers cellar door at Millawa has for many years been considered one of the very best in the country.

"When Ross is not flying around the world promoting Brown Brothers and the Australian First Families of Wine, that's where you'll find him doing what he does best – greeting guests and talking about wine."

Ross said he was "delighted but shocked" to receive the award. "When something is your life and your passion you just go about doing things and getting involved. Awards are the last thing you expect, but it's a great honour when they come," he said.

Ross said good communications remained vital to the industry and the exciting possibilities thrown up by social media had not changed the imperative of telling a good story. "The objective is the same; it's just the techniques that have changed," he said.

He also noted the increasingly co-operative nature of the wine industry.

"There's a word you hear used in regional tourism that I like and it's 'co-opetition' – the ability to compete with each other while also working collaboratively towards a common goal," he said.

"It's about creating a bigger pie so we can all have a bigger slice. There are so many areas in our industry where you can do a lot as an individual company, but you can do a lot more with a collective voice."

Ross is currently a member of the board of Wine Victoria and the advisory board for Victorian Regional Tourism. Last year he was inducted into the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival Legends Hall of Fame.

As a Legend of the Vine, he joins a prestigious list that includes WCA Patron James Halliday, Rob Hirst, Patrick Iland, David Lowe, Phil Laffer, Lyndey Milan and Bill Hardy. He also becomes a life member of WCA.

MEDIA NOTES: High resolution image of Ross Brown and the presentation at the WCA Royal Melbourne Wine Show Awards Lunch are available from Jen Barwick at WCA on 0413 512 745 or comms@winecommunicators.com.au.