

Press Release
EMBARGOED UNTIL 3:30PM FRIDAY OCTOBER 20 2017

Eric Vivian Thomson awarded Victorian Legend of the Vine 2017

Eric Vivian Thomson, fondly known as Viv Thomson amongst wine industry peers, was today announced Legend of the Vine Victoria at the annual WCA Melbourne Wine Show Awards Lunch. Thomson comes from a long line of winemakers and received ‘*Legend of the Vine*’ status for his service to the wine industry as one of Australia’s longest serving winemakers.

“Viv has made an outstanding contribution to the wine industry and is a highly respected figure amongst his wine peers in Australia,” said WCA National Chair Angus Barnes.

“His list of accolades, including his 2014 Order of Australia Medal, is a true reflection of where his reputation sits within the industry, and why he is recognised as Victorian’s newest Legend of the Vine.”

Thomson descends from one of Victoria’s most successful wine families dating back five generations. Born and raised in Swan Hill, Thomson moved to Great Western as a six-year-old boy where his grandfather owned Concongella Vineyards in Great Western. Winemaking has always been a part of Thomson’s family – in 1920 his grandfather purchased Best’s Great Western where Thomson has spent majority of his career managing operations and acting as chief winemaker.

A graduate of the acclaimed Roseworthy College in South Australia, Thomson spent three years studying agriculture before deciding it would be worth taking a crash-course in winery analysis. After returning from two years abroad, he joined his father Eric running the vineyard and making wine at Best’s Great Western, he also managed two wineries 230 kilometres apart from each other, one at Great Western and one at Lake Boga.

Since entering the winemaking role in 1962, he has completed 51 consecutive vintages and was acknowledged for his service to the wine industry, awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the General Division as a part of the 2014 Queen’s Birthday Honours.

During the Christmas period, Thomson would close the doors of Best’s Great Western as there was no cellar door to manage. He spent a week behind closed doors examining each barrel to ensure it was meeting industry expectations and would virtually plan a 12-month program for the business before pre-harvest.

Best’s now operates across six vineyard blocks including Rhymney Vineyard, Concongella, Thomson Family Block, Nursery Block, Barts and Marcus and The Hill Block. The winery’s Concongella and Nursery Block was planted in 1868 by Henry Best, Best’s Great Western original founder.

Thomson now considers himself the elder statesman of Best’s Great Western since handing over the reins of the business to his eldest son Ben. Viv has been recognised by the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival as a “legend” for his services to the wine industry and was also President of the Victorian Wine Industry Association for many years.

The Legend of the Vine Award was first introduced in Victoria in 2014, and extends across New South Wales and South Australia with annual awards issued in each state. The nominees from each state are nominated by the WCA Board and State Chapters, with the final winner determined by the WCA National Board.

Viv Thomson is the fourth person to be awarded *Legend of the Vine* status in VIC, and joins a prestigious national list that includes Colin Campbell, Ross Brown and Kathleen Quealey.

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WINE COMMUNICATORS
OF AUSTRALIA
PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN WINE

For further information including images from the annual WCA Sydney Royal Wine Show Lunch, please contact Lynda Schenk, WCA Executive Officer:

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ABOUT WCA

Wine Communicators of Australia was established as a national not-for-profit company in December 2010 growing out of the well-respected Wine Press Clubs of NSW, Victoria and South Australia. It aims to be Australia's pre-eminent organisation connecting business professionals working with wine and currently has more than 500 members.

WCA's annual program includes networking events, webinars and its prestigious lunches in association with three major capital city wine shows – Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. It also runs the annual Wine Communicator Awards and Legend of the Vine Awards.