



Executives Chairs AGM Report 2023

Well, I would have taken very big odds that it would have been me presenting, either the Chairs report or the Executive Officers report for the WCA in 2023. As you may know, I stood down from the board (in my capacity as treasurer) at this meeting a year ago. It was time to give someone new the opportunity. However, through happenstance including the departures of both the Chair and EO at the end of June 2023, I am excited and energised to be back in this new role at the WCA.

I would like to mention the outstanding work done by outgoing chair, Marni Cook, who saw us through the difficult Covid 19 years and beyond. Marni was a valuable contributor to the WCA, and I was delighted to present her with WCA life membership in Adelaide earlier this year. Similarly, I thank Andrew Stark for his 2 years as EO of the WCA. Andrew brought his particular brand of strategic thinking to the WCA and has contributed to us gaining a number of new partners as well. Andrew is a friend of mine, and I thank him most sincerely.

The WCA has a good year in 2022-2023. We finished the year with a very modest profit, a balance sheet that was clean and relatively healthy and a catalogue of activity that we should be proud of, including new large-scale activities such as the DTC Symposium held in Sydney in June and the Market Growth Summit in Adelaide.

I would like to highlight two areas of the WCA that I think have been beacons for the good things that the WCA do.

1. The Wine Industry Mentor Program that we run in conjunction with partners at Wine Australia, the University of Adelaide, WISA and the ASVO. This year saw 54 mentees and mentors go through the program. This is industry best and the calibre of people involved in this program are first rate. I would like to ensure that this program continues into the future. My personal opinion is that we should focus on the quality of the experience rather than the volume of people going through the course.
2. The activities of the state chapters. I have been privileged in recent months to be involved and attend activities in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Only through proactive State Chapters will the WCA thrive into the future. We need fresh ideas and enthusiasm, and it is great to be involved with these chapters. I



really think a sweet spot for the WCA is the small the medium events such as panels that state chapter can hold and would encourage each state chapter to look at 2 to 3 of these events each year in their state.

The board of the WCA has also seen change in the past year. Justine Henschke resigned from the board last year. Today sees the last day as board members for both Stephanie Duboudin and Mel Ward, both from Victoria. I would like to thank all three for their service to the WCA and I look forward to seeing them at the various activities going forward. We have also seen the appointment of several new directors:

- Sandy Hathaway from South Australia (who has also taken on the role as Treasurer)
- James Hall from Victoria
- Liz Mencil from West Australia

I am pleased to report that all three have already played a strong role in governance and provided strategic thinking to the board and executive.

Depending on the results of the Directors Election today, it seems apparent that we will have some vacancies in the maximum number of board directors (12) that our constitution allows. I believe that we should seek some expressions of interest from the broader WCA community as to becoming a board member. This refreshes the board and also teases out individuals who can assist the WCA. I do think that it is important that we have some representation on the national board from the big end of the wine world, and at the moment our national board does not have anyone from the biggest companies in the industry.

The next year will be with some challenges. The wine industry is going through a difficult time with sales down and costs up. These are the recipes for people and companies deciding where to spend their discretionary money, and the WCA fits in to this category. We need to continue to provide value and substance to our members, whilst at the same time questioning why we exist and who benefits. I always believe that if you cannot tell people why they should be a member of the WCA in the time it takes an elevator to go from the 5th floor to the ground, there is a strong chance that we lose them!

So, the focus for this year coming

- Increase the profitability of key revenue driving activities.



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- Ensure our members are engaged and attend WCA activities
- Grow our membership base.
- Increase the number and satisfaction of partners and sponsors.
- Support key initiatives such as the Mentoring Program.
- Plan the future of the WCA

As for me, I signed up for 6 months which comes to an end at the end of December this year. I have enjoyed my experience and feel as though I have contributed to the WCA in many ways. I am working with some great people like Prue Kline. I would be happy to remain in this role for the foreseeable future (at the discretion of the board). I believe that we need to work hard in the new year to build partnerships and memberships. We need to establish better protocols for the state chapters to operate with some independence, but having a set of guiding principles. We also need to unlock new income streams. But I am also of the belief that in the long run, the role of Chair and Executive Officer are probably best done separately.

I would like to thank the board for their support and advice. I intend to challenge you to be involved, and to help us shape the future of the WCA. Thank you to the state chapters, without whom, this organisation would rapidly lose momentum and relevance. I would like to thank Alex Gibbs and Lynda Schenk as co- deputy chairs. In this dual role as Executive Chair, I rely on them both to keep me honest and moving in the right direction. Lastly, thank you to Prue Kline. Prue is the beating heart of the WCA. Super smart, honest as can be, positive, and hard working. Simply, we are lucky to have you Prue.

Thank you all.

Angus