HAWKE'S BAY WINE
NEW ZEALAND

Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Hawke's Bay Winegrowers' Association Inc.

Date: Wednesday, 14 October 2025
Time: 5.30pm
Venue: Smith & Sheth Village Oenotheque, 5 Havelock Road, Havelock North

Present:

Sally Duncan (Chair), Peter Hurlstone (Deputy Chair), Wim Barendsen (Board Member), Oliver Kettle (Board Member), Brent Linn (CE), Richard Brown (Tironui), Xan Harding, Beatrice Ham (Alpha Domus), Jenny Dobson (Jenny Dobson Wines), Tony Bish (Tony Bish Wines), Rene Fisch (Whenua Wines), Rod & Emma Easthope (Easthope Winegrowers), John & Kathryn Loughlin (Askerne), Stefan Loetscher (Oak Estate), Andrea & Phil Cranswick, Alwyn Corban (AB Corban Wine), Emma Taylor (NZW), Anishka Jelicich (NZW), Ed Massey (NZW), Tim Nowell-Usticke (Wineworks), Nick Picone (Poulter Group), Mike Henley (Cellar 495), Jordan Robinson (Poulter Group), Sarah Watson (Trinity Hill), Mitch Gardiner (Monarch Platform), Raquel Kallas (Natural Selection), Kate Radburnd (Radburnd Cellars), Nick Putt (Craggy Range), Kate Lattey (No. 287), Caleb Dennis (Vitiguy Consulting).

Apologies:

Bridget Wilton (Board Member), Emma Lowe (Board Member), Ian Quinn (Two Terraces), Paul Ham (Alpha Domus), John Buck (Te Mata), Nick Buck (Te Mata)

Sally Duncan, Chair, welcomed everyone, particularly Councillor Alwyn Corban; Sponsor Mitch Gardiner; and Emma Taylor, Anishka Jelicich and Ed Massey from NZ Wine, and thanked them for attending. Sally also thanked Smith & Sheth for hosting the AGM.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting

Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 8 October 2025 at Pask Winery Cellar Door, are a true and correct record.

Sally Duncan / Emma Taylor - Carried

2. Chair Report

Sally Duncan presented her 2026 Chair Report including a presentation:

Some years remind you exactly what a region is made of. This has been one of them, and Hawke's Bay has plenty to be proud of.

We can't pretend it's easy out there. For some of our members, it has been a tough year. But you know me, I'm always going to look for the positives. We've backed each other, kept moving and produced a fantastic vintage that reminded us just how good our fruit, our people and our region are.

This report looks back over the past year. On behalf of the Board, I'm proud to share what we've achieved together and what it has meant for our members.

Our purpose and priorities

At the heart of it, our job is pretty simple. We're here to look after the shared interests of Hawke's Bay's grape and wine industry and help our community be the best it can be.

Earlier this year, we got together for a strategy day and had a good honest look at what we should keep doing, what we should stop and what might be better handed over. We came away with five clear goals.

The goals are advocacy, capability, promotion, reputation and good governance. But the real test is simple: does our work make a difference for our members?

Advocacy and support for growers

One of the big priorities in the past year has been helping independent growers gain a clearer picture of vineyard profitability.

Our October benchmarking workshop looked at just that, including the big differences in Chardonnay and Merlot margins across the last three vintages. The real value is in sitting down together, talking through the numbers and working out what they mean for your own business. Every business is different, but there is a lot we can learn from each other.

We also joined with other regional associations so the issues facing our sector were heard with one clear voice. Thank you to everyone who shared their knowledge and experience.

Water and the TANK process

Water matters enormously to our members and to the future of our region. TANK Plan Change 9 affects how water is allocated and monitored across Hawke's Bay. Reliable water supports vineyard productivity, planting decisions and land value, so it has been really important that our members have had a voice through the appeal. A special thank you to Peter Hurlstone and Emma Taylor for helping us work through what has been a complex legal and political process.

Building capability within our region

One of the things I love most about Hawke's Bay is how willing our growers and winemakers are to share what they know. Our programmes give that sharing a bit of structure, but it is our people who make it work and keep this wine community connected.

This last year we covered everything from exporting, red and sparkling wine to grafting, low-input viticulture, disease monitoring, vine genetics, pruning and wellbeing. Thank you to every speaker, host and member who gave their time and shared their experience.

International knowledge, brought home

International travel is only really valuable if people come home and share what they have learned. Great Wine Capitals gives us the chance to do exactly that. Through Great Wine Capitals, Rachel Garnham, Chelsea Abramoff, Holly Girven-Russell and Amy Hopkinson-Styles explored innovation, wine tourism, storytelling and sustainability overseas, then they brought those ideas home to share with all of us and gave us some ideas on what we can learn from and act on.

Promoting our wines and our region

The Chardonnay Collection gives us a great Hawke's Bay story to take to people here at home and around the world. The V24 collection drew 56 entries, with 12 wines selected through blind tasting and sent to domestic and international media.

Our digital reach

It was also great to see our digital audience continue to grow. Our social audience reached 11,811, impressions and views grew 75.8% to just over 85,000, and website users rose 17.5% to 16,364. The short videos featuring our people, wines and vineyards were especially popular.

Great Wine Capitals

Great Wine Capitals connects Hawke's Bay with an international wine community and opens doors we simply could not open on our own.

Twenty of our wines are now available at La Cité du Vin in Bordeaux. We showcased Hawke's Bay at the Bordeaux AGM, and next week we have the real privilege of welcoming the network here to our place.

The Wine Tourism Awards recognise excellence and new thinking, and Kim Thorpe took on the role of New Zealand Great Wine Capitals Ambassador.

Building our profile and reputation

Over the year we welcomed writers, educators, technical specialists and sommeliers, and we appointed Sydney sommelier Mimi Mrazikova as our first sommelier ambassador.

A huge thank you to the members who opened their doors and made time for these visits. We know how much effort hosting takes when you are already busy running your own businesses, and we never take that generosity for granted.

Opening trade doors

In May, 13 producers took Hawke's Bay to the Melbourne Trade and Sommelier Showcase at The Kelvin Club.

The event brought together a trade tasting and masterclasses, launched our first Hawke's Bay Wine Ambassadorship and put our producers directly in front of Australian trade and sommeliers.

Telling the Hawke's Bay story

Our people and community

When I look back at everything in this report, it all comes down to people who stepped up, gave their time and got stuck in. That is what makes our wine community so special.

Taste Hastings brought together 28 wineries and more than 1,200 wine lovers. Along with our awards, celebrations and regional events, it gave us a chance to connect with consumers and with each other. Thank you to everyone who helped make these events happen.

The Hawke's Bay Wine Auction

The Hawke's Bay Wine Auction is something we can all feel incredibly proud of. Our members donated wine and experiences, and buyers gave generously to support Cranford Hospice. It really is one of the best examples of our industry coming together and giving back.

Member recognition

Over the past year, it was also a real privilege to recognise some of the people who helped shape our wine community.

Congratulations to John Hancock on his recognition in the Hawke's Bay Wine Awards Hall of Fame, and to Xan Harding and Jenny Dobson as New Zealand Winegrowers Fellows.

We acknowledged Richard Brimmer and Peter Robertson as Hawke's Bay Wine Life members, and Philip Gregan as a Fellow.

On behalf of the Board and all our members, congratulations to everyone being recognised. Hawke's Bay is stronger because of what you have given. Please join me in acknowledging them.

Thank you to our partners

I also want to say a big thank you to our partners, ICIB, UKKO and Hortus.

Your support makes our events, member programmes and promotion possible. We are very grateful to have you alongside us.

Thank you to our Board and team

A personal thank you to my fellow Board members: Peter Hurlstone, Oliver Kettle, Wim Barendsen, Bridget Wilton, Emma Lowe and Amy Hopkinson-Styles. Thank you for the experience, commitment and genuine care you bring to this region. I feel very lucky to work alongside you.

To Brent Linn, our Executive Officer, Sarah White in marketing and communications, and Fiona Rollings, our Office Manager, thank you for everything you do for our members and for the care and energy you bring every day.

And finally, to our members, thank you. You are the ones who keep showing up, backing each other and pushing Hawke's Bay forward. Even in a tough year, you have given us so much to be proud of.

There is still plenty to do, and none of us would pretend otherwise. But I have real confidence in this region, because I see the talent, generosity and determination behind it every day.

Let's keep backing our people, backing our wines and backing this place we are so lucky to call home.

Let's be proud, stay positive and keep telling the Hawke's Bay story with confidence.

3. Executive Officer Report

Brent Linn presented his Executive Officer Report together with a presentation:

Your Chair, Sally Duncan, has clearly laid out the milestones ticked off in the last financial year. My report will highlight the financial outcomes arising from last year's activities, outline our plan for

the coming year and most importantly, address the urgency for all members to “get in behind” our plans.

Finance Report

Presented here are the draft financial reports for Hawke’s Bay Winegrowers Association recording a surplus on activities of $18, 369 for FY2026, reversing the loss of $17,198 in FY2025.

We highlight the notable variance in Advertising and Marketing income and expenditure between the two financial periods. This is due to the Aotearoa Chardonnay Symposium being held biannually, reported here in FY2025 with the recent Symposium falling in the FY2027 period.

Also, we note the significant increase in Other Income and Advocacy Expenditure. This relates to the TANK Appeal HBW undertook on behalf of members. The Other Income relates to member contributions towards funding the appeal and the Advocacy Expenditure relates to legal costs incurred.

HBW remains solvent with adequate liquidity to continue operations.

The Financial Reports are presented in draft form, awaiting final reviews by our Accountant Oldershaw & Co. We do not envisage any material variance from these reports following the completion of the review engagement. Should the Hawke’s Bay Wine Board consider the final reviewed financial reports are materially different to these draft statements, then Hawke’s Bay Wine will call a Special General Meeting within 60 days of final reports being available to approve the final reviewed reports.

The Year Ahead

Your Board has clearly laid out the priorities for FY2027 in its strategic plan and I highlight some of these here:

- Advocate for members on high-risk / high value issues. We are maintaining a watching brief on the TANK plan change and new RMA legislation.

- Build Industry capability by supporting growers and winemakers through knowledge sharing and capability building. Notable here are the HBVINE grower events programme, Aotearoa Chardonnay Symposium and three regional Technical Workshops.

- Promote the Hawke’s Bay wine story and grow recognition and demand for Hawke’s Bay wine.
    - We are planning for six media hosting events in FY2027, most notably 15 wine media and commentators in region in February 2027 on the back of the SB27 conference.
    - Following the successful Export initiative of a trade delegation to Melbourne FY2026 we are planning another event in June 2027 to Sydney and Brisbane.
    - To deliver our acquisition goals for our digital channels we are investing in content creation that tells our unique story.
    - To equip our customer facing ambassadors at cellar doors, and in the wider hospitality industry, with a clear and compelling regional story we are rolling out a “Hawke’s Bay Host” training programme.
    - To help our visitors find you we are introducing a digital cellar door map.

Future funding

Quite simply, we need members to invest in helping your Association deliver on the plans outlined above. Hawke's Bay Wine's share of New Zealand Wine levy revenues is reducing as their levy receipts reduce in response to market conditions.

The Board recognises the difficult trading conditions we are all experiencing, but now is the time to invest in the future of our region. Three years ago we introduced a voluntary members fee to augment our regional vote from New Zealand Wine. This has generated nearly $60k from a committed and invested part of our community, but it now needs to be supported wider.

We ask you to consider joining your peers to support your Association's work.

4. Presentation of Annual Accounts

The financial accounts for the year ended 30 June 2026 were presented in draft form at the meeting.

Resolved:
That the draft Financial Report for the Year Ending June 2026 as presented at to the meeting be accepted with the undertaking that if, in the opinion of the Board, the final Reviewed results are materially different, Hawke's Bay Wine will call a Special General Meeting of members within 30 days of receipt of the same to receive and consider the final Reviewed Report.

John Loughlin / Sally Duncan - Carried

5. Appointment of Reviewer

Resolved:
That the Board of Hawke's Bay Wine be empowered to appoint a suitably qualified party to undertake the review of the financial accounts for Hawke's Bay Wine Association Incorporated for the financial year ending 30 June 2027.

Ollie Kettle / Emma Taylor - Carried

6. General Business

Xan Harding thanked Sally Ducan and Brent Linn for their updates and asked about the ongoing support and funding for Hawke's Bay's Great Wine Capitals (GWC) membership. Sally confirmed that the Board had agreed a year earlier to continue supporting GWC and remained committed to securing funding for this, including through Activation membership contributions. It was noted that other GWC regions had access to considerably greater public funding.

Tony Bish asked about participation in the voluntary membership programme and queried whether a lowering the GWC contribution could encourage greater uptake. Brent advised that approximately 30 of an estimated 167 eligible businesses currently contributed, leaving considerable scope to broaden participation. Increasing Activation and GWC support through direct engagement with members was a priority for the coming year.

The option of invoicing all members for the $495 base membership fee was discussed but discounted due to the associated administration costs. Brent confirmed that the Board had tasked him with personally contacting members who currently had limited engagement with the Association to discuss the value of HBW's work and encourage greater involvement and financial support.

Alwyn Corban highlighted that the region continued to punch above its weight and that developing outstanding visitor experiences was a significant opportunity. The forthcoming GWC conference, bringing approximately 80 international delegates to Hawke's Bay, was recognised as an important opportunity to connect with influential people from the global wine community.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.15pm.

Chairperson……..……

Date……