

Developing the leadership capacity of Australia's wine industry



FINAL REPORT to

GRAPE AND WINE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Project Number: **DPI 06/01**

Principal Investigators: **Cathy Mansfield and Jill Briggs**

Research Organisation: **VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT
OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**

Date: **29th December 2009**

Table of contents

1. Abstract	2
2. Executive Summary	3
3. Background	4
4. Project Aims and Performance Targets	5
Performance targets	5
Outputs	6
5. Methods	6
6. Results and Discussion	8
6.1 Participation in the Program	8
6.2 Leadership Skills Development.....	11
7 Outcome & Conclusion	20
8. Recommendations	22
9. Appendix	(attached file)

Cover Photo: Margaret River Wine Industry Leadership Program participants with guests Western Australian Wine Industry Association Chief Executive Officer, Sue Vidovich, Margaret River Wine Industry Association Executive Officer, Nick Power, and local wine industry member Leah Clearwater

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank Cynthia Mahoney who was the driving force behind this project and without whom this project would not have existed. We would also thank Natalie Tostovrsnik for her considerable work on this project and her smooth handover to the final team. Thanks to Pam Strange for monitoring the budgets and reporting to GWRDC.

We would also like to thank the following groups of people

- All the guests that provided inspiration to our participants
- Industry individuals who provided information and guidance
- Regional and state wine industry organisations that supported the program both directly and indirectly.
- Winemakers Federation of Australia, Wine Grape Growers of Australia and Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation supported the project from its inception and throughout the design and delivery.

Thanks also go to Euan Laird and Cynthia Mahoney for providing insightful and very useful advice on the drafts of this final report.

1. Abstract

The Wine Industry Leadership Program was a three-year project funded by GWRDC and DPI Victoria. It aimed to increase the number of skilled, networked people in the wine industry at a regional level and to encourage diversity in industry decision-making.

Nine leadership programs were run at eight locations nationwide with 111 people graduating. Participants were mostly under 40 years old, with a range of job roles and an almost even gender split. Participants developed action plans to implement their new knowledge and skills. They made positive changes using their new skills and knowledge in their personal lives, their businesses and the wine industry.

The outcome for industry is a greater pool of skilled, networked people to call on for leadership roles which is timely given the current restructuring and repositioning challenges facing the Australian wine industry.

2. Executive Summary

Developing the leadership capacity of Australia's wine industry was co-funded by Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation and the Department of Primary Industries Victoria in 2006-2009 to increase the number of potential leaders in the wine industry at a regional level. It aimed to reach particularly women and young people who are currently under represented in leadership roles within the industry. Cynthia Mahoney (DPI Victoria) and Jill Briggs from Rural Training Initiatives Pty Ltd developed and delivered the leadership program nationally, which consisted of a three day workshop and participant coaching. Cynthia and Jill drew on their academic qualifications in leadership and rural adjustment, training in facilitation and extension and many years of experience to create a program using adult learning principles. The three day program was called the Wine Industry Leadership Program. Initially the program was to conclude with a national summit but after consultation between the funding bodies, the national summit was no longer seen as a priority.

To enhance both the diversity of participants and regional networking, the program was centrally located within each region. Nine programs were run at eight locations nationally in Griffith, South Adelaide, North Adelaide, Margaret River, Hunter Valley, Attwood, Central Victoria and North East Victoria. The program successfully achieved its stated aim to attract participants who had different experience and characteristics to the current leadership demographic in the wine industry. Participants were mostly less than 40 years old, with a range of job roles and represented an even gender split.

Participants in the program developed an action plan to develop leadership skills in three main areas - personal, business/workplace and regional industry. All but one of the 111 graduates had made a change in at least one of these three areas and the vast majority made self-identified changes in all three areas. Most participants of the program made changes in their personal life (97%) and to their businesses (91%). Participants also had accomplished actions that were focused on their regional industry (74%). The most common topics chosen to work on as a part of their action plans were work/life balance, effective communication, time management and organisation. There are many examples of the positive changes that participants made to themselves, their business and the industry. For example Damien Cofield, a young winemaker and business owner, said *"There has been an increase in my activity in the local regional wine industry group and although I am still not on the board, I may be in the next year or two. I help out on certain committees and have assisted in the restructuring of our organisation, which currently appears to be providing positive effect."*

Training in leadership skills and networking also provided significant outcomes for the participants. The sessions on conflict management and decision making were the most popular because they were relevant to the participants' work, they were delivered so that participants learned and practised new skills during the workshops and the learnings were easy to apply to problems that many participants were facing.

The Wine Industry Leadership Program has provided participants with skills and knowledge that they have applied to their own self-development, the businesses they work in and to their industry. For many of the participants, this was their first introduction to a

range of techniques which are often a part of leadership and management training in large corporate organisations. These skills have improved participants' work-life balance, their businesses skills in terms of leading and managing their staff and their business performance. Participants have been made aware of industry organisations and networking opportunities have been provided by the program to link participants to a range of people and organisations within their region and nationally.

Leadership skills that participants have developed in their personal life and businesses may be applied in the future to industry associations. Strategies need to be put in place by local associations to ensure continued involvement of the leadership programs participants in regional associations beyond the life of the program. Renewal of people in leadership roles and responsibilities is extremely important especially in the next few years while the industry goes through the stress of restructure. Industry leaders often develop "burnout" after experiencing difficult periods so constant development of new leaders is important for the long term resilience of the wine industry both locally and nationally.

3. Background

The rapid expansion of the wine industry in Australia has impacted significantly on the people living and working in local communities. The industry is very diverse with a range of people from different cultural backgrounds and ages involved in roles such as grape growing, wine making, marketing, distribution and export. Currently this diversity is not widely reflected in many of the industry's decision-making bodies at a local, state or national level.

One of the consequences of the industry's rapid expansion is the current structural adjustment pressure being experienced due to an oversupply of wine grapes. This is leading to significant tensions and some fragmentation of the industry with the oversupply situation predicted to continue over the medium term. Effective leadership is needed at all levels of the industry, especially during this difficult time. This will require people with a diverse range of skills and views who can unify different sectors within the industry and effectively communicate an industry vision and outlook and a means of moving forward.

Most regions in Australia have formed wine and grape grower associations to represent the interests of growers in the region and to enable members to access resources such as marketing, education and training. At present there are around 79 associations in Australia. These associations operate primarily on volunteer input from wine industry personnel in the local area.

The DPI GrapeCheque program worked closely with many of the Victorian associations and had identified a need to further build the leadership capacity of people already operating in leadership roles in the industry. This need was not confined to Victoria and was confirmed by further consultation with representatives from different regions across Australia. This project addressed an identified need to increase and diversify the pool of skilled and networked people available for the industry to access for its regional, state-wide and national leadership and decision-making bodies. In addition there is a need to increase the participation of two specific target groups who are currently under-represented in decision-making positions; these being women (Table 1) and young people.

Table 1. Women's share of board positions in rural and regional Australia

Rural and regional bodies	% women members	% women CEOs
Agricultural commodity councils	9	0
Research and development corporations	16	0
Rural representative bodies	13	2
Agricultural companies	7	0
Regional development boards	25	16
Area consultative committees	28	20
Catchment management authorities	26	15

Source: Department of Transport and Regional Services (2005)

For example the report, *Revisiting Missed Opportunities – growing women’s contribution to agriculture* (Sheridan and Haslam McKenzie, 2009), found that over the decade from 1996-2006, little had changed in women’s representation in leadership positions in Australian agriculture and women’s representation had not increased significantly. As women play an active role in effecting successful change within rural communities, so their absence from leadership positions impedes regional communities and industries more generally. The report stated that, “*Over the past decade there has been a demise in the political will and necessary resources to deal with women’s under-representation in decision-making positions which appears to be made on the erroneous assumption that women have “made it”. Yet all the data on leadership positions continue to point on their gross under-representation*” (Sheridan and Haslam McKenzie, 2009).

GWRDC has indicated that leadership and human capacity building is a priority area for current investment. There are currently three leadership programs that people in the wine industry can access. They each are targeted differently and aim to achieve different outcomes. The Australian Rural Leadership Program is a cross industry program aimed at developing regional and rural leaders and is targeted at participants who are already involved in leadership roles. Future Leaders is a wine industry leadership program developed as a succession tool to passing on industry knowledge and developing leaders at a national level. The Wine Industry Leadership Program focuses on skills and network development at a regional level. The Wine Industry Leadership Program develops skills of people that have had minimal exposure and training in leadership but who aspire to lead their wine region with highly developed self-knowledge and newly acquired skills.

The Wine Industry Restructure Action Agenda has recommended a regional approach to managing oversupply of grapes and wine in the Australian wine industry. Similarly the focus of this program is to take a regional approach (Wine Industry Restructuring Action Agenda-Industry Statement 2009) and skilled regional leadership will be essential to ensure effective communication and innovative solutions to the extremely complex and difficult problem.

4. Project Aims and Performance Targets

The aims of the project were listed as objectives in the original proposal to GWRDC. They are listed below.

Performance targets

1. To develop and deliver a three-stage, regionally-based leadership program for the Australian wine industry from 2006-2010
2. To source a minimum of 100 participants for the program (with gender and age diversity) from nine areas in Australia

3. To develop and deliver a national summit for regional leaders in the wine industry.
4. To publicise the results of the project via magazine and journal articles, seminars, conferences as appropriate
5. To evaluate the project using formal evaluation techniques

Outputs

Stage 1 2006/07 – 2008/09:

One leadership workshop (2 days) held in three regions per year (a total of 9 workshops in 9 regions over three years)

Stage 2 2006/07 – 2009/10:

A follow up workshop (1 day) held with each group six months later (a total of 9 workshops in 9 regions over three years)

Stage 3 2009/10:

A National Wine Industry Leadership Summit

5. Methods

Project Development

The structure of the leadership program was developed after consultation with national and state wine bodies such as the Winemakers Federation of Australia and the South Australian Wine Industry Association. Cynthia Mahoney (DPI Victoria) contracted Jill Briggs from Rural Training Initiatives Pty Ltd to develop and implement the Wine Industry Leadership Program. Jill is an accomplished facilitator who brought her considerable experience in leadership training such as Masters of Leadership, academic knowledge, post-graduate research into adult learning, development, management and facilitation of national, state and regional leadership programs within and beyond Australia. The project team initially piloted the program at Colbinabbin prior to the establishment of this project.

Nine regions were visited and a needs analysis was undertaken with the local associations. These initial meetings focused on discussing potential content, the delivery methodology, analysis of potential participants and the leadership training history in the region. Promotion of the program was conducted using a range of methods including direct face-to-face and phone contact with individuals and businesses, promotion by local associations, industry media and general media such as local newspapers and radio programs. Key stakeholders and individuals were identified before and/or during the region consultation visit, during which industry associations, key individuals and businesses were engaged and informed about the program and canvassed for concepts to be included in the program content. A list of promotional material can be found in Appendix I.

The leadership workshops were located centrally within a region to minimise travel and ensure that participation of people with family commitments. The local association at each location was asked to provide a local leader as a role model to the group. They were asked to tell their story, their experience of leadership and why this group was important to the region.



Photo 1. Facilitator Jill Briggs directs an interactive session with the Central Victorian participants

The program was developed using adult learning principles and included a mixture of presentations, group discussion, individual work, short projects and group activities. The program was also modified by the participants during the sessions based on their interest and needs. The topics covered and the time devoted to exploring them was changed as the focus for their leadership development became clear. Methodology was also adjusted to address the difference between the original consultation group's perception of needs and the actual needs of the participants. Materials were also prepared to support the course delivery (Please refer to Appendix V).

Topics covered in the leadership three day workshops included

- Skills in the region
- Teams for outcomes
- Effective communication
- Planning for outcomes
- Building a network
- Building a vision
- Effective decision making
- Industry structure
- Visions - me , my business and a regional plan
- Managing conflict
- Public speaking
- Time management
- Succession planning
- Leadership development plans

Sessions were interactive which allowed the participants to draw on their own experiences and relate them to the course topics. At the conclusion of the first two days, a plan was developed to be implemented during the break of usually 3-4 months between the second and third day of the course. The leadership plan outlined the major focus of their leadership skill development. Leadership skills were selected by each person to develop in their personal life, their work and at a regional industry level. During the break between days 2 and 3, Jill provided coaching to the participants via phone and email to support them to implement their leadership development plan. On the third day, participants reported back to the group on their progress. Notes were taken at each of the sessions and the participant's development was documented.

Financial project support

Encouraged by GWRDC to seek outside funding, 2006/07 project managers sought funding from FarmBis, Victoria, SA & WA FarmBis and Orlando. Participants were also asked to make a contribution. This contribution was set at \$99 per day to encourage women to attend the workshops as consultation had revealed that a potential barrier to women's participation was course cost. Subsidised childcare was also provided to encourage people with young families to attend the program. Funding from the Riverina Wine Industry Association and participant fees enabled two programs to be run in Griffith.

Modification to methodology

In the initial methodology, the project was funded for four years. The first three years were to be for regional workshop delivery (nine programs). A national leadership summit to bring together regional program participants from the first three years was scheduled in year four. DPI, in consultation with GWRDC, decided that the national summit was no longer a priority and the project was scaled back to three years to focus solely on regional workshop consultation, delivery and evaluation.

6. Results and Discussion

The result section is divided into two parts:

- 6.1. Participation in the program and
- 6.2. Leadership skill development.

Participation in the program demonstrates the diversity in the type of participants who attended the WILP and contains evidence which illustrates this diversity being reflected in regional activity and associations. Leadership skill development outlines the changes to participants' skills based on their action plans and in relation to the industry-identified priority outcomes of developing skilled and networked leaders.

6.1 Participation in the program

The Wine Industry Leadership Program was implemented from 2006-2009 with nine sessions run at eight regional locations nationally. These regions were;

- Hunter Valley
- North East Victoria
- Central Victoria
- Attwood (Geelong and Mornington Peninsula)
- Margaret River
- North of Adelaide

- South of Adelaide
- Griffith.

A session was planned for Tasmania however after negotiation with the industry about timing of the course, insufficient numbers were obtained to run the course in this location. In Griffith, two sessions were run in response to the overwhelming interest in the course.

A total of 126 people participated in the program and of those 111 successfully graduated. The remaining fifteen participants did not graduate because they did not attend the final day of the program. Participants' reasons for missing the final day included family commitments, workplace commitments, the employer enrolled participants without participants knowing the content, change of career, change of company and ill-health. Only one participant of those who didn't complete the course identified that they were dissatisfied with the content on the first morning so would not continue.

Participation of women in the leadership program was a specific aim of the program. Just under half of the participants (48%) were women Figure 1.

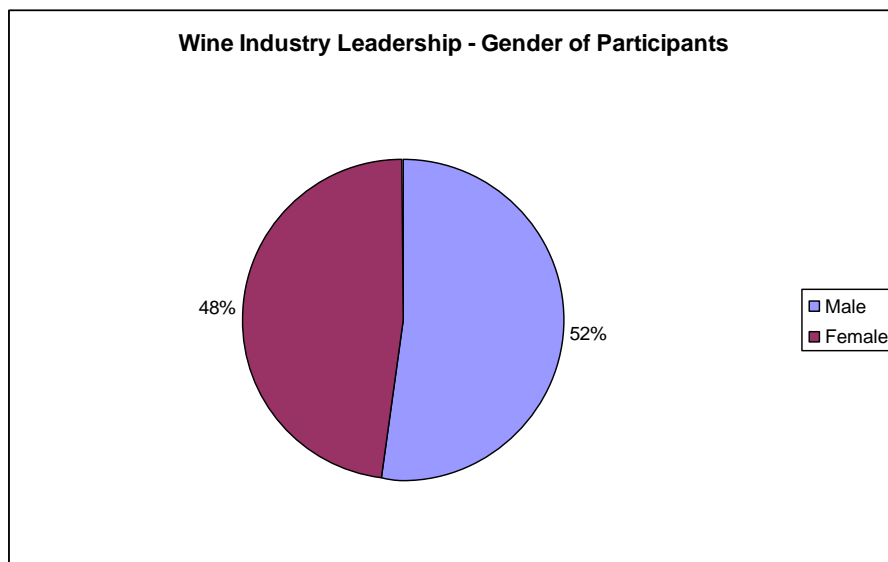


Figure 1. Percentage of males and females attending the leadership program

Women's involvement in the industry is illustrated by the strategic decision two women from the Hunter Valley WILP took to engage more formally with the Lovedale Vignerons



Association. Sarah joined the association knowing this would provide her with a new industry network and therefore relevant industry knowledge and potential partnerships (Photo 2). Jan began attending industry functions understanding that through this process her industry information would be more current and therefore having a positive impact on her business.

Photo 2. Jan and Sarah (with Jim) from the Hunter Valley Wine Leadership Program joined the Lovedale Vignerons Association

The other demographic that was targeted by the program was young people. Eighty percent of the participants were aged 40 years or younger. Participants who were 30 years or younger were 35% of the total participants (Figure 2)

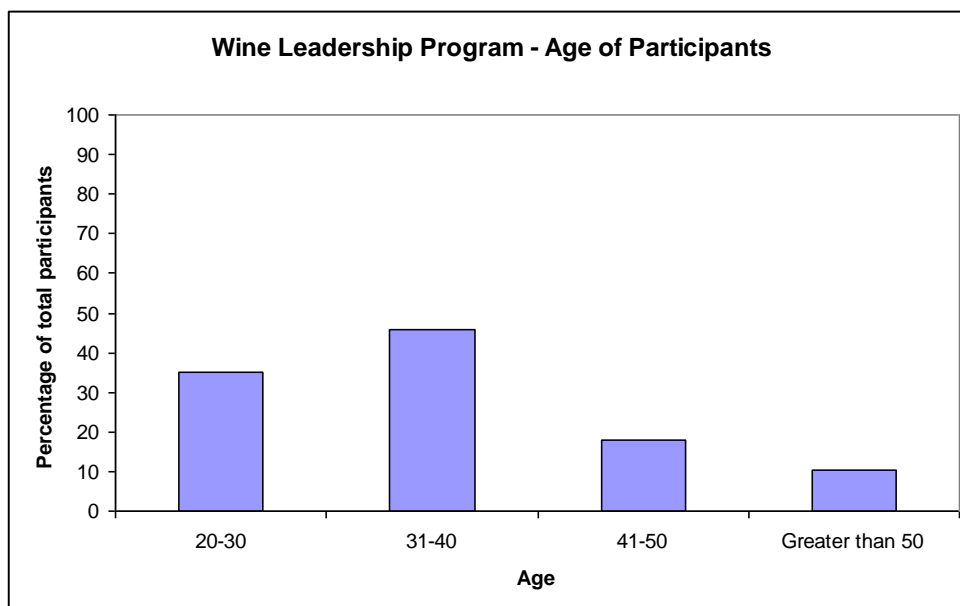


Figure 2. Age of participants in the leadership program

Damien Cofield (Photo 3), a young winemaker and business owner, said *“There has been an increase in my activity in the local regional wine industry group and although I am still not on the board, I may be in the next year or two. I helped out on certain committees and have assisted in the restructuring of our organisation, which currently appears to be providing positive effect.”*



Photo 3. Damien Cofield (centre) discusses actions with the North East Victoria program participants

Early in the development of the project, it was determined that time taken to travel to the course was likely to influence the composition of the course. The further the course was from home, the less likely participants with family commitments were likely to travel. For example, a number of the Hunter Valley participants involved in small businesses or those unable to delegate responsibilities had been to work and set up the day for their workforce and then travelled on to the leadership course. Most participants travelled an hour or less to attend the course as demonstrated in Figure 3.

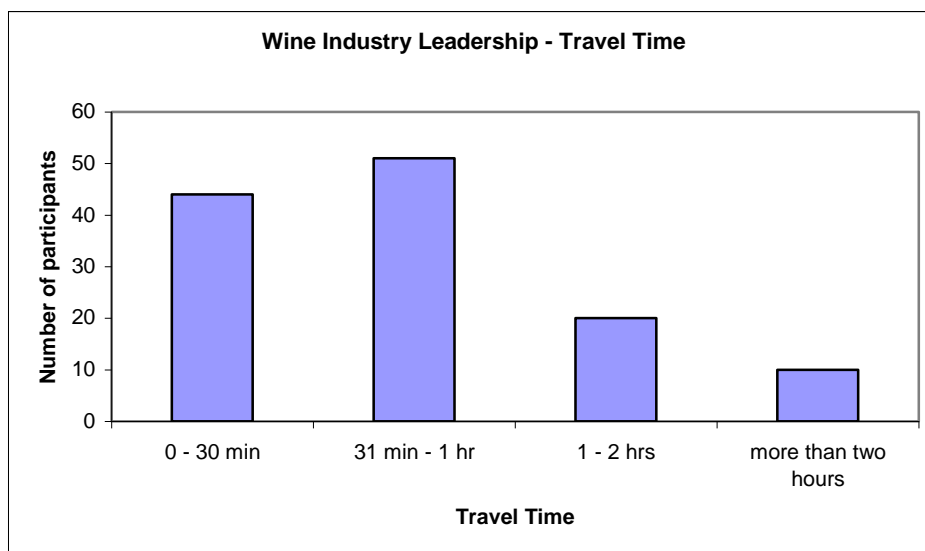


Figure 3. Travel time of participants from home/work to the course location

Participants outlined their job roles within the wine business with some participants having more than one role.

Most participants involved in the leadership program saw their role based

- in the winery (72%)
- in the vineyard (28%)

The most common roles of participants in the program were

- Managers 38%,
- Winemakers 19%
- Owners 17%.

The other occupations of participants were described as Marketing/Sales, Technician, Worker and Extension/Organisation Staff. Participants in this program often were new to leadership roles or may have one or two staff. This differed from the participants of the Future Leaders program who were often senior managers or chief winemakers in large wine businesses.

6.2 Leadership Skills Development

Participants in the program outlined an action plan to develop skills in three main areas, which was their personal skill development, business skills and regional industry skills. All but one of the 111 graduates had made a change in at least one of these three areas. Most participants of the program made changes in their personal life (97%) and in their

business (91%). Participants were less likely to have started or completed tasks that were focused on their regional industry with only (74%) percentage working in this area.

Participants selected a range of topics to be the focus of their leadership development (Appendix V). Most participants' personal development aims were directed towards the topics of work/life balance, effective communication, time management and personal organisation. In their work life, most people wanted to improve their ability to effectively delegate, improve time management and improve their assertive communication. Many of the participant job roles were in middle management and they recognised they didn't have strong people management skills. Participants identified outcomes they wanted to achieve in the wine industry. These were;

- gaining knowledge of the industry organisations
- reinvigorating the regional organisation
- networking
- up skilling to participate
- joining sub-committees.

Participants have developed skills in managing both themselves and their businesses during and after the completion of the course. Change was made to fulfil the requirements of their action plans. The following results outline examples of changes that have been made.

Work/life balance

Thirty three participants indicated a need to adjust their work/life balance. Reasons for being unable to achieve work life balance included:

- inability to delegate due to confidence
- workforce limitations
- lack of the ability to communicate roles and responsibilities
- lack of role description
- unclear lines of delegation.

Michael Oxlee identified through the program that although he thought he was being effective and responsible by not taking time out through annual leave, this was actually proving counter-productive (Photo 4). Delegation was not happening therefore he was limiting the scope of growth of the other workers in his business. He wanted to take leave but didn't know how with his current role description and no apparent line of delegation and lack of confidence in his communication ability. During the program, Michael planned the justification, delegation and implementation process of taking leave and by the conclusion of the program had booked a holiday and taken leave.



Photo 4. Michael Oxlee (right) with Peter Long from the North East Victorian Wine Industry Leadership Program.

Effective communication

Participants indicated that at a personal, workplace and industry organisation level, communication needed to be enhanced. Effective use of time, active listening, engaging in areas of interest and managing workplace positional power were all areas that challenged participants specifically.

Jo Millard, chairperson of the local association, developed a greater self awareness of the implications of her chairing style. She mentioned that she did not always have the patience to listen to others ‘waffle’ at meetings. Because she had a tendency to cut people short, the industry organisation meetings were not as effective as she was not hearing opinions of others. She identified that she needed to use her new listening skills and that doing this would allow the opportunity for all voices to be heard and succession of roles and responsibilities to occur. She now holds her role with more confidence, skill and with more co-operations from the organisation through her communication skill development from the program.



Photo 5. Kim Pilkington (front) and the South Adelaide participants tackle a challenge using communication and teamwork skills

Time management

Time management was also a high priority nominated often by program participants. Work roles during the often quoted busy time of vintage/harvest were identified as a focus for time management improvement. Cellar door staff particularly mentioned the need to improve the dispatching of large orders. As a result of this analysis, individuals identified areas of personal improvement including prioritising, effective written and spoken communication processes throughout the business and development of “job list” systems to be accessed by the whole workplace during busy times.

Kim Pilkington spoke of her time management issues at work and how in turn this impacted negatively on her work/life balance (Photo 5). Kim identified this as an area of improvement for her and established a process for managing change. She clearly understood she needed to communicate concerns to her employers. In having the conversation with her manager, she was able to identify areas she could delegate to others freeing her time. This also provided her workplace with the opportunity re-scope her position and put her into a new area of responsibility, international markets, which grew the business.

Networking

Network development and the related skills were a specific aim of the program. Participants demonstrated increased networks and networking skills during and as a consequence of participation in the program. Participants through involvement in the

leadership program have been introduced to other leadership program participants in their local area. In some cases, this original link developed into ongoing formal regional networks and others have just established friendships. Specific skills and knowledge were imparted by the guest speakers and used by participants to improve skills and knowledge.

The guest speaker Michael Matthew (VWIA Chairman) agreed to be a formal business mentor of Lisa Cole as an outcome of the Central Victoria Leadership Program (Photo 6). The outcome for the Lisa was that she was able to analyse her business strengths and weaknesses and identify price points for her product.



Photo 6. Lisa Cole and Steve Thomas discuss how to run an effective meeting at the Central Victorian Wine Industry Leadership Program.

The WILP workshops were designed to facilitate linkages and network development between participants and local industry associations as well as national organisations through the inclusion of guest speakers. Efforts were also made to improve participant awareness of industry resources such as industry newsletters. Guest speakers came from groups such as GWRDC, WFA, WGGA, the Future Leaders Program, Australian Society of Viticulture and Oenology, state and regional associations. They made a direct network connection with participants that would not have occurred without the course. This gave industry organisations the opportunity to connect with a new audience and increase membership. An example of this is that ASVO provided sponsorship to the WILP and set a reduced membership rate for WILP participants. This provided benefits to the ASVO through increased subscriptions.



Photo 7. Mark McKenzie presents graduate certificate to Hans Loder of the South Adelaide Wine Industry Leadership Program

Through participation in the program, participants established networks with the following three major national organisations – Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation, Wine Grape Growers Association and the Australian Society of Viticulture and Oenology mainly through their attendance at the courses (Photo 7 & 8). State and regional associations were introduced to many participants through their involvement in the program (Table 2).



Photo 8. John Harvey (GWRDC) and the North Adelaide Wine Industry Leadership Program participants.

To fulfil a requirement of the leadership program, participants were asked to identify current industry issues and develop possible solutions. The program assisted participants in the South of Adelaide program from the Langhorne Creek Wine Region to develop the confidence to form a group, develop a project process and deliver an outcome (Photo 9). They were able to analyse the information being provided regarding water use allocations,

saw gaps in information availability and managed to fill the gap by developing a new informal network.

Table 2 List of industry associations that were linked to participants during the leadership program

Victoria	Western Australia
Northeast Victoria Tourism Association Tourism Victoria King Valley Vignerons Victorian Wine Industry Association Heathcote Wine Industry Association Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum Alpine Valleys Food and Wine	Western Australia Wine Industry Association Margaret River Wine Industry Association Geographe Wine Industry Region
South Australia	New South Wales
Langhorne Creek Wine Industry Australia McLaren Valley Wine Industry Association Wine Titles South Australia Wine Industry Association Clare Wine Industry Association	Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association Lovedale Vignerons Association New South Wales Wine Industry Association Riverina Wine Industry Association Riverina Wine Grape Growers Association

The program increased knowledge of the industry through program participants forming and managing formal networks. The North East Victorian participants formed a group and met at regular intervals for a two year period to discuss regional business and leadership issues. Informally through participation, individuals in the program met others in their industry and gathered knowledge and regional industry contacts.



Photo 9. Langhorne Creek Wine Industry Leadership participants develop networks

There has been an increase in skill level of the Langhorne Creek Wine Industry Association members due to a number of graduates from the Wine Industry Leadership Program integrating into the committee and executive of the organisation. They are more equipped to make decisions and more able to speak up about issues and ideas.

Skills development training

Nine skills development sessions were presented and the two most enjoyed sessions were:

- conflict management
- decision making.

Reasons stated in the program evaluation that conflict management was enjoyed was that it was relevant to their own work and industry organisations, students found the sessions practical and were able to easily apply the assertiveness process. For example, one of the participants commented on the conflict management session

“Something I had always put off and now feel confident to address if and when it occurs”

Decision making sessions were also enjoyed because participants stated that they understood the processes involved in making good decisions, they learnt how to effectively participate in meetings and how to chair a meeting.

“I found the session of chairing and holding meetings very useful because I look after a lot of meetings”

The most challenging sessions for the participants were the decision-making sessions, conflict management and project planning. Participants said that conflict management was challenging because *“I am passive and need to be more assertive”* and *“I don’t operate well in conflict”*

The decision making sessions were challenging because *“the meetings that I attend need a major overhaul”*, *“I know the theory but I can’t implement it”* and *“when working on a whole group project plan it was very difficult to get agreement.”*

The project planning session was challenging because “*it was hard to prioritise and decide what to do*” and “*it was hard to look at the big picture rather than operation plans*”

Participants demonstrated through their comments that they gained knowledge, skills and new perspectives on the functioning of themselves and their businesses.

Participants could link their behaviour changes to direct financial benefits to their businesses. Networking can be extremely valuable for wine businesses because it provides opportunities for exchange of information, skills and can provide a business with new opportunities. On an industry wide basis, networking is a very useful tool to accelerate the awareness of technical information, business information and industry directions and this can enhance an industry’s adaptability to change. Tim Long from the North East has used the networking skills he developed in the program to establish and manage relationships with the media; he has been able to publicise events in the Warby Ranges which will have long term financial benefits to both his own wine business and those in the district

Many participants mentioned improved communication skills as a learning outcome of the program. Cost savings can be made in business due to time saving through more efficient communication and processes this time can translate into time devoted to growing the business or a better work life balance.

It has been possible for some of the participants to put a monetary value to the new skills they have acquired. One of the participants was asked to quantify the financial impact of the time savings with the new methods he had learnt during the course. The participant who was an executive on the Glenrowan Winemakers Association identified during the program that regional meetings were run ineffectively and that a requirement was to establish meeting procedures that used member’s time well (Table 3).

Table 3. Cost savings from new skills gained through attending the wine industry leadership program

Prior to the Wine Industry Leadership Program

ITEM	Descriptor	Business Cost
Meeting Planning ad hoc	All members (8) talking occasionally throughout two months (Pay rate \$30/hr)	\$240.00
Meeting managed with little structure/decision making	Six members attend for 3 hour meeting	\$540.00
Second meeting managed with little structure	A number of returned agenda items due to lack of decision-making. Six members 2 hours	\$360.00
Post meeting action	Three members with 3 hours	\$270.00
Total Cost		\$1410.00

Post WILP

ITEM	Descriptor	Business Cost
Meeting Planning	Executive (4) meet planning outcomes from	\$120.00

	agenda items for 1 hour	
Meeting managed	Six members attend for 3 hour meeting	\$540.00
Post meeting action	Three members with 4 hours	\$360.00
Increased business	Due to members remaining in businesses compared to wasted time in meetings – 13 hours	(\$390.00)
Total Cost		\$630.00

GWRDC and DPI funded the program with the aim to increase the number of skilled networked leaders in the regions. Participant's activities and learning demonstrated that they achieved the projects desired outcomes.

7 Outcome & Conclusion

The project had five project aims and performance targets

1. To develop and deliver a three-stage, regionally-based leadership program for the Australian wine industry from 2006-2010

The project developed and delivered a three-stage regionally based leadership program for the Australian wine industry from 2006-2009. A variation agreement was made to modify the project to conclude in 2009 instead of 2010, as was the original proposal.

2. To source a minimum of 100 participants for the program (with gender and age diversity) from nine areas in Australia.

Over 123 participants attended and 111 graduated from the program. The gender balance was nearly evenly split with 48% women and 52% men. Over 80% of the participants were under 40 years old and 35% were under 30 years. Only eight broad regions were reached but 9 sessions were run. Attwood contained wine industry participants from two distinctly different regions of Geelong and the Mornington Peninsula.

3. To develop and deliver a national summit for regional leaders in the wine industry.

A project variation was approved on the 27 July 2009 after consultation between DPI and the GWRDC. This reduced both the project budget, timelines and took out phase three of the original project, which included the national summit.

4. To publicise the results of the project via magazine and journal articles, seminars, conferences as appropriate

Articles advertising upcoming workshops as well as those promoting the achievements from all workshops were widely circulated to key industry publications as well as local media e.g. Oct 07 Grapegrower & Winemaker, Daily Wine News, state association websites and newsletters, ASVO, local newspapers, ABC radio.

A full list of publications can be found in Appendix I

5. To evaluate the project using formal evaluation techniques

The project was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the participation in the program and the impacts of the program. Evaluation documents are in Appendix III

Implications for the grape growers and winemakers

The Wine Industry Leadership Program has provided participants with skills and knowledge that they have applied to their own self development, their business and to their regional industry. For many of the participants, this was their introduction to a range of techniques which are often a part of leadership and management training in large corporate organisations. These skills have improved participants work life balance, businesses skills in terms of leading and managing their staff and their business performance. It has made them aware of a range of organisations and people within their region and nationally.

A major aim of the program was to increase involvement in regional industry and seventy four have taken action in this area. Some participants have created regional working groups and networks and others have taken up leadership roles within established local associations since being involved in the program.

Participants continued involvement in their regional associations will depend both on their own priorities and personal situation. Skills that they develop in their personal lives and business have the potential to be utilised in the future by industry associations. Strategies need to be put in place by local associations to ensure continued involvement of the leadership programs participants in regional associations beyond the life of the program. Renewal of people in leadership roles and responsibilities is extremely important especially in the next few years while the industry goes through the stress of restructure. Industry leaders often develop “burnout” after experiencing difficult periods so constant development of new leaders is important for the long term resilience of the wine industry both locally and nationally. Ensuring that communication of industry information reaches further than the business owners to winemakers, vineyard and cellar door staff will broaden the involvement of people in the regional associations. A follow-up invitation to participants to attend regional wine association functions and meetings may promote their long term links to the regional wine industry.

Economic, environmental and broader community benefits of the project.

Apart from the example in the results section, the economic impact of the project was not measured as the impacts are as diverse as the participants themselves. Some have made simple changes to the way they communicate with staff which has saved time, money and stress. Improved communications, conflict resolution, improved skills in project and people management have direct financial benefits to the business by improving the working environment, promoting the opportunities for creativity and efficiency.

There are no measurable environmental benefits of this program.

The broader community benefit of the program includes the leadership skills being used to assist other community organisations such as school committees and local tourism authorities.

8. Recommendations

Recommendations for developing regional leadership

- Train current leaders of regional associations in leadership and governance. Courses such as “running better meetings” will improve the effectiveness and longevity of current industry leaders.
- Run regional programs to attract young people, women and those new to the industry to build capacity in regional businesses and associations.
- Contact leadership participants to follow up on progress in the year after the course to ensure a continued connection and support between them and industry organisations. Personally invite them to local association board meetings or events to increase likelihood of long term outcomes of the program for industry associations.
- Wine Business should consider leadership and management training for their staff. Participants raised many conflict management issues that were impacting on the functioning of their workplaces that could have been managed with training to deal with these complex interpersonal issues.

Recommendations to the wine industry (national, state or regional)

- Direct communication such as newsletters and notices of events to wine makers, vineyard managers and cellar door staff to increase the pool of people connected to the industry. Often mail just goes to the owner or the levy payer.
- Enhance attendance at events by supporting women and young people to attend by choosing central locations in the regions and supporting childcare to increase the activity of a more diverse range of people.
- Actively encouraging women, young people and people from different aspects of the wine business into leadership positions will provide a wide range of experience and knowledge to provide solutions for ongoing challenges.
- Ensure that people who take up leadership positions in the higher national and state bodies can demonstrate strong active networks in the regions to assist with industry cohesiveness.

Recommendations to GWRDC

- Liaise with the local associations to discuss the outcomes of this project and develop strategies with the local associations to increase involvement of new leaders in regional issues.
- Re-invest in the leadership of the wine industry at a regional level as it will provide a pool of trained leaders who can continue to support the industry through the restructure

- Ensure research and extension staff that are funded by GWRDC liaise with local associations and deliver extension in a central location within the regions rather than only at one or two locations in a state.