

Women's representation in Australian wine sector sees growth, but challenges remain

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A decade after one of the world's first studies on gender representation in the Australian grape and wine sector, a new report reveals encouraging progress for women's advancement in key leadership and operational roles.

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The findings show that women now hold 33.7 per cent of CEO roles in the Australian grape and wine community, a dramatic increase from the 12.7 per cent reported a decade ago. This 21 per cent jump surpasses the estimated national average of 22 per cent for women in CEO positions across Australian industries.

In winemaking, women's representation rose from 8.8 per cent to 16.7 per cent, while in viticulture, female participation increased from 10 per cent to 21.5 per cent. Women also continue to dominate the wine marketing sector, now representing 58.4 per cent, up from 53.5 per cent in the previous study.

Dr Galbreath highlighted the sector's exceptional progress in CEO roles as a standout achievement. "A decade ago, only around 13 per cent of women held CEO positions in the Australian grape and wine sector. The latest data indicates a rise to 33.7 per cent, exceeding the national average and demonstrating a significant shift in leadership representation," he said.

Despite the promising trends, Dr Galbreath emphasised that there is still room for improvement, particularly in operational roles like winemaking and viticulture. "The number of women in these critical positions has increased, but there's more work to be done to achieve true equity," he noted.

Wine Australia and the Australian Grape & Wine's Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion in Wine Committee are collaborating to address existing gaps and create opportunities for women across the sector. The new report offers key insights to inform ongoing initiatives, including mentorship programs, regional women's networks, pay equality, and clearer career pathways.

Ali Laslett, Chair of the Diversity and Equality in Wine Committee, acknowledged the positive momentum while stressing the need for continued efforts. “We are happy to see a shift in the dial with these results, but challenges like the gender pay gap still require attention. This research provides significant evidence of change over the past decade, and we are grateful to Dr. Galbreath for his continued work in this area.”

Dr Liz Waters, General Manager of Research and Innovation at Wine Australia, echoed this sentiment. “Since the original report, the sector has made significant efforts to promote women’s achievements and raise awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusion. This new report shows progress, but there is more to be done, and we remain committed to making gender representation a priority.”