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Extraordinary – a champion in Aussie wine

Philip Laffer AM has been named Life Member of the Australian Wine Industry – the first recipient to receive the new national award.

The descendent of vineyard owners and the son of an agricultural scientist, some could argue wine is part of Philip's DNA. So too are passion and vision as he has played a significant part in making Australian wines what they are today.

Working in trade, marketing, winemaking, viticulture and management over the years, including being one of the architects of Jacob's Creek, Philip has given a lot to the industry.

When his career began, Australia table wine was just finding its feet.

"How much things have changed," said Mr Laffer AM, "but we also must continue inspiring the viticulturists and oenologists of tomorrow to keep industry on its game.

"We need to keep attracting talented and driven people to the wine industry, people who are passionate about their wines, their brands and the future of an important and diverse Australian industry," he said.

"Receiving this award is an honour and I am humbled and proud to be recognised by my industry in this way. Thank you."

Administered by the Winemakers' Federation of Australia, the Life Member of the Australian Wine Industry Award recognises outstanding leadership and contribution to the nation's wine industry, going over and above an individual's career achievements.

Federation Chief Executive Paul Evans said Mr Laffer has spent his entire life promoting the nation's wine industry – and it was richer for it.

"We need champions like Philip and it is important for industry and the wider community to hold our pioneers in high regard because we can both learn from them and encourage the next and future generations to follow in their footsteps," Mr Evans said.

Mr Laffer graduated with Agriculture from Roseworthy College in 1961, and Oenology in 1963.

He worked progressively at Lindeman's Holdings as winemaker, technical director, head of marketing /sales and then executive director from 1963-1990.

From 1990-2012 he worked at Orlando Wyndham, Pernod-Ricard Pacific and Premium Wine Brands.

From 2013, Mr Laffer has continued in the industry as a winemaking and viticulture consultant in Australia, China and Argentina.

He has served on the Winemakers' Federation of Australia Board, including as Vice President, as well as President and Vice President of the South Australian Wine Industry Association.

Other senior advisory roles include with the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (Wine Australia's predecessor), the Australian Wine and Research Institute, the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation, the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia, the CRC for Viticulture and the NSW Wine Industry Association

Other Awards presented to Mr Laffer include:

- 2014 Membership of the Order of Australia
- 2013 Life Membership of Wine Communicators Australia
- 2010 Maurice O'Shea Award
- 2005 Life membership of SA Wine Industry Association
- 2004 Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering
- 2003 Roseworthy Award of Merit
- 2002 Qantas/Gourmet Traveller Winemakers of the Year

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