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MEDIA RELEASE

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Wine Industry Impact Summit brings producers, suppliers and researchers together in Adelaide for a day of ‘real solutions, real proof’

Inaugural WISA event, held in partnership with Wine Australia, brings together wineries, suppliers and researchers together in one room to discuss what solutions industry collaboration is currently solving and sharing the learnings and outcomes from the process.



WISA Executive Chair Liz Schoen welcoming delegates to the Wine Industry Impact Summit. Photo: Ben Macmahon, Macmahon Images.

ADELAIDE, 19 August 2026 — Eighty-five delegates from across the Australian wine industry gathered at the National Wine Centre, Adelaide, on Thursday 13 August for the inaugural Wine Industry Impact Summit (WIIS), a one-day event presented by the Wine Industry Suppliers Association (WISA) in partnership with Wine Australia along with Event Sponsors, MGA Insurance, Visy, Bentleys SA and College of Business & Law, Adelaide University.

Built around the thread of “real challenges, real solutions, real proof they work,” the Summit deliberately traded sales pitches for stories behind innovations, bringing growers, suppliers and researchers into the same room to hear, first-hand, what has actually worked, for whom, and why.

The program opened with a panel of Wine Industry Impact Award winners, Heather Mackenzie of Affinity Labs, Dr Eveline Bartowsky of Lallemend Oenology and Dr Rocco Longo of Enartis Pacific sharing the journeys behind three commercialised innovations: Affinity’s Nutritional Information Service, Oenodia’s STARS fermentation technology and WINEGRID by Enartis.

From there, the day moved through a run of case studies and panels covering the breadth of the value chain: autonomous vineyard spraying, a three-way collaboration between wine company, Vinarchy, the Australian Wine Research Institute and Agri Automation Australia; a redesign of a standard wine bottle to deliver a more sustainable package, led by Visy, SIG and Wirra Wirra; risk, insurance and business structuring for growth with MGA Insurance Group and Bentleys; disease-resistant vine breeding through a collaboration between CSIRO and Wine Australia, with fruit from these new generation vines now being made into wine by the likes of Monak Wine Co; modern winery operating systems with Innovint and Hill Smith Family Estates; and a frank look at adopting AI with confidence with the National AI Centre and Hydra Consulting.

The afternoon's program introduced the Australian Wine Future Fund (AWFF), a new mechanism designed to increase funding opportunities for impactful solutions to benefit the grape and wine sector, before Associate Professor Justin Cohen of the Adelaide University’s Ehrenberg-Bass Institute closed the day’s sessions with a framework for growth, unpacking Mental and Physical Availability, the twin forces that make a business easy to think of and easy to find and buy, and showing delegates how to apply it to sharpen their own innovation planning and management decisions.

“Genuine collaboration looks like exactly what happened in that room: people willing to share their wins, their learnings and their pitfalls, and honest enough to ask each other for help. That's what we set out to build with this Summit, and it's what we want to keep building in all our events.”

— WISA Executive Chair Liz Schoen

“Innovation delivers the greatest impact when it is developed collaboratively. The Wine Industry Impact Summit showcased the value of bringing researchers, suppliers and wine businesses together to tackle the challenges of the wine sector and identify practical opportunities for improvement.”

— Martin Cole, Wine Australia CEO

Nominations for the 2026 Wine Industry Impact Awards, celebrating the suppliers, researchers and producers driving meaningful change across the Australian wine value chain, are now open, ahead of the Awards Gala on 19 November in Adelaide.

About WISA

The Wine Industry Suppliers Association (WISA) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run association connecting growers, suppliers, researchers and producers across the Australian and New Zealand wine industry. WISA's purpose is to improve the competitiveness and profitability of the wine industry by championing innovation, partnership and the exchange of practical knowledge across the value chain. wisa.org.au

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IMAGES FROM THE DAY

All images: Ben Macmahon, Macmahon Images. High-resolution files available on request.



Matthew Deller MW, Wirra Wirra, Hahndorf Hill and Ashton Hills discussing why and how they lightweighted their proprietary bottle.



Carmen Houston, Scholle IP (SIG) discussing the importance of alternative packaging like bag in box.



Nick Dry, Foundation Viticulture, on why the industry needs to start working with the Gen 1 varieties that have been 30 years in the making.



Sharon Harvey, Wine Australia and Cindy Heley from Monak Wine Co, on how cutting-edge vine breeding and varietal research is shaping the varieties that will sustain the industry for decades to come.



Eloise Leaver from the National AI Centre on implementing AI with confidence while managing the real risks around privacy, governance and responsible use.



The opening panel on how their innovations came to be, moderated by Athena Stamoulos (Finlaysons), with Heather Mackenzie (Affinity Labs), Dr Eveline Bartowsky (Lallemand Oenology) and Dr Rocco Longo (Enartis Pacific).



Josh Hixson (Wine Australia) moderating the Autonomous Spraying in the Vineyard panel with Caitlin Davies (AWRI) and Tim McCarthy (Vinarchy).



Darren Oemcke (Hydra Consulting), Phil Reedman (Philip Reedman Master of Wine Pty Ltd), Shirley Fraser (Wine Australia) and Tony Robinson (Adelaide University).



James Allen (Bentley's SA) on the Risk, Resilience and Conditions for Growth session with Chris Matthews (MGA Insurance).



Jill Bauer, Adelaide University (centre), surrounded by a cohort of wine students inspired by the day and excited for their future in the industry.