



WAOC President's Annual Report for 2023

With the cost-of-living pressures featuring heavily in the regular news, the olive industry has certainly not been immune to these issues. Staffing continues to be a challenge for many in the olive and wider horticultural industry.

By all reports, the 2024 harvest is a low year for many, and some growers have experienced very poor flower set and crop development, which will result in little or no harvest in 2024.

These poor results may see extra virgin olive oil from local groves being in shorter supplies than in past years across the state in terms of quantities, but we hope the quality remains high, as was the case in past years. This was reflected in the results of the 2023 WA Olive Awards.

Some groves have experienced biosecurity issues with pests and diseases also having an impact on their results, along with the very hot and dry climatic conditions we have experienced in the 2023/4 growing season.

The WA Olive Council Board has met several times on Zoom in the past 12 months and pushed on with several projects. As volunteers, with busy schedules in their olive groves, their 9-to-5 jobs and other commitments. I'd first like to extend my thanks to the Board members who have contributed this past year. There have been several projects that are ongoing, like the training of Judges, the *Olives Oil & Toil* book project, attending the Perth Royal Show and The Slow Olive Festival at the Gidgegannup Small Farm Field Day and some ongoing research projects, in addition to the annual WA Olive Awards.

The board has continued to work to represent our members to prospective buyers and the community.

The WA Olive Awards ran again in 2023 with pleasing results for local members and non-members, plus interstate groves. Our dedicated Moderator of Judges, Isabella Okis, continues to dedicate her time and passion to training a very professional and competent pool of judges. Several workshops, including the recent York workshop, have welcomed new beginner tasters and shown an uptick in new judges coming on board, which is important for succession planning.

The Awards have enjoyed the support of several sponsors, including The Label Factory, NSW DPI Olive Oil Testing Service and Australian Olive Association, in addition to the continued support of trophy sponsors; Chapman River Olives, Tarralea Grove, Olio Bello, and new Trophy sponsor for 2023; Plasdene Glass-Pak.

The financial support of sponsors means we could avoid increasing entry fees as operating costs have increased - fees have risen by only \$5 since 2017!

If there is a business that you know is well-placed to be promoted to the wider olive industry through sponsorship, please contact us.

The construction of a new Olives WA website has been delayed somewhat, but is close to completion in the coming weeks.

In 2023 I was appointed as the Western Australian representative on the Australian Olive Association Board and have attended several meetings both on Zoom and in-person to push for more support for WA. We are pleased to be working more closely with AOA to achieve maximal outcomes for the WA industry.

In other Olives WA Board activities, the Executive Committee is pleased to support several research projects, including Prof Stan Kailis's continuing research into olive varieties (or cultivars). Stan is working on a report to be distributed to the industry in due course.

Olives WA has renewed its membership of the Buy West Eat Best program, which has provided several promotional opportunities in the past two years.

As an industry, we have also continued our partnership with the WA Wine Industry Association of WA through associate membership to secure members' access to a discounted Australia Post eParcel facility. Registered members can use this discounted service for their online and website sales.

Another exciting project that WAOC was involved with is the now-published book; "Olives Oil & Toil. Stories from WA Olive Groves 1995- 2020", headed by Maggie Edmonds and supported by Thelma Burnett. Maggie is now marketing the book, and it is still available for sale. The book was launched at our WA Olive Awards night, on Saturday, 21st October 2023.

My thanks to the Directors and to our financial and life members for their work, support and experience. Your input throughout this year has been greatly valued.

I would like to extend my special thanks to Ken Jeffries and Taryn Port for their work on financial management and controls and for their support on the Executive of the Board.

Another special mention of thanks to Ken for his invaluable contribution to the Board activities for the past several years, as he is not seeking Board re-election in 2024.



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