The inherent reasons for wine shows, the needs that they meet, the expectations of winemakers, marketers, consumers and agricultural societies have been, or will be covered in this seminar. The benefits that can in some tangible way be attributed to the system in place, have been well covered by previous speakers.

The proposal presented now will obviously not meet everyone's needs, nor does it claim to have answered many of the questions set. It comes from casual discussions from Brian Walsh, Len Evans, James Halliday, Huon Hooke and many other wine show judges at various times in recent years.

The proposal is not new, and is prefaced by the tabling of some views that are an inherent part of this whole discussion.

The primary function of a wine show is:
- To improve the breed.

Weaknesses of the present system are:
- The total number of entries in a show (some shows have now gone to five panels of three judges, plus associates).
- Increasing class sizes.
- Some shows awarding points and medals to unfinished wines:
  - Cumulative costs
  - entry fees
  - stock
  - attendance
  - preparation/dispatch
- What happens with remaining bottles?
- Lack of consistency with class descriptors/requirements.
- The number of shows.
- The lack of available time to be involved in discussions with other judges and, more particularly, associates.
- The lack of feedback to exhibitors.

The proposal seems simple enough:
1. Regional Wine Show
   - Medal winners, bronze to gold, to then go to the capital city of the state in which that region exists.
2. Capital City Wine Show
   - Medal winners, bronze to gold, to then go to the championship wine show.
3. Championship Show
   - Possibly circulated from city to city, year to year.

Regional results may have a tendency to be more generous than the capital city or championship show because the judges in the main may be more closely associated with the region and its styles.

Regional wine shows
In both the domestic and export markets the importance of regional differences continues to gain momentum. There have been leaders here including the Hunter, the Barossa and others.
- Regional strengths
- Regional styles
- Individual vineyard wines

Iain Riggs has explained in detail the way the Hunter Wine Show operates and the criteria for entry. In this seminar, it is best to concentrate on the regional show system, as its make up and ongoing performance is crucial to this alternative operating well.

The entry requirements would probably be:
- Wines made from regional fruit (AWBC Regs 20–22);
- Wines made by a winery in the region, but from other region's fruit, would be entered in the region in which the majority of the fruit is grown;
- There would need to be a section for regional blends where the greatest percentage by region dictates the selection of the regional show;
- Unbottled product could not receive awards, but exhibitors would receive comments on the wine (James Halliday, 2001); and
- In order to still satisfy the improvement of the breed criteria it may be necessary to quality rate these wines from 0–5 say, but include a clause in the entry requirements that precludes the use of this data in any promotional material including labelling. This 0–5 rating has been used before.

5 Point Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Good</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While understanding the emphasis on regionality, the opportunities for wine blended across districts or regions needs to be preserved. After all, some of the great wines of the past have been made from regions hundreds of kilometres apart. There needs to be a mechanism to allow these wines to be entered into a regional wine show. As previously suggested, it is perhaps best managed from the major region in the blend as long as it is 20% or above.

The regional show strengths have been covered:
- smaller class sizes;
- great opportunity for ongoing regional quality focus;
- less cost;
- more attuned focus on 'regionality' of wines entered;
- greater opportunity for smaller companies to enter; and
- more time to fully assess all wine.
The difficulties are:
• Availability of judges;
• Timing; and
• Training of more judges.

Most alternatives would require some lead-time, and a significant amount of ongoing training.
• The Advanced Wine Assessment Courses at the AWRI
• The Association of Judges (Len Evans)
• Len Evans Tutorial
• Tertiary Wine Appreciation Courses

The need for more judges in the system has long been recognised. This must happen, for there are many capable palates out there who have yet to come into contact with the wine show system. A strong regional system is the best conduit for this to occur. It is vital, and the best regional shows already do this so that the judging standard at this regional level remains strong. Regions that present medal wines of dubious quality would be readily exposed at a capital city level.

Timing
All regional shows could be between July and September. This would mean that the capital city wine shows would be in October and November, and the championship show in December. It may be possible to have the championship show in February of the following year, but there are some stock questions that may impact on this. The alternative is to let them remain as they are with a few alterations.

In order to be more inclusive of separate subregions within a zone, some regional shows would probably need to alter. The McLaren Vale Wine Show may become Fleurieu Wine Show, and thereby include Langhorne Creek, Currency Creek, Finniss and so on.

James Halliday has suggested that eligibility may become an issue for regional wines to go to the capital city wine show. If this were the case, there would then be an opportunity to extend entry requirements to the previous 12 months rather than just the one regional chance.

Another question is that winemakers, and more so marketers, may rue the lack of opportunities for the collection of medals. Perhaps the answer lies amongst the following:
• The mid to long-term provision of a larger core of experienced judges will result in more consistent results.
• Smaller individual classes and overall show entries should result in more time and effort per wine. This would lead to better, more consistent results and more useful reporting.
• The criteria of bronze medals and above should ensure that an extremely high percentage of the better wines get through to the capital city wine show.
• The championship wine show could be restricted to silver medals and above, should class sizes and overall show size be a problem.
• Entry fees could be raised and judges paid for their participation.
• Judges’ comments should be made available to the exhibitor.

The above should lead to an increased value for any award, but particularly gold medals and trophies won at any of the regional, state or championship shows.

The number of wineries continues to increase—there are now around 1,197—and the number of wineries exporting continues to increase. Therefore, there is not only a need to examine the efficiency of the system going forward, but there is a desperate need to ensure that value is retained in the results of the judging system. The continued study and understanding of the different styles and different markets within the competition is needed—the industry itself must exert a measure of control and direction on the overall show award system.

Although a program has been built that many people from overseas have admired, it is now time to look closely at the system and to improve it.