



# 2007 Annual Report



MGA Staff: Chief Executive Officer - Jos de Bruin  
 National Legal Counsel Workplace Relations - Marie Brown  
 National Employment Law Advisors - Jessica Cohen, Aneeqa Khan & Renata Koretski  
 National Training Manager - Michael Russell  
 National Training Coordinator - Allison Hawkins (Not Present)  
 Office Manager - Judy O'Reilly Office Administration- Nicky Allen  
 Membership Services, Magazine/Website- John Markham (Photographer)  
 Associate Members Liaison - Keith Watts (Not Present)

To date we have received a preliminary report from DBY based upon the qualitative surveys that were done with the quantitative surveys currently underway in most states. The preliminary report illustrated a need for the MGA to be the dedicated industry provider in the areas of Workplace Relations, Training, Representation and Networking for the independent sector.

This year we have been very active traveling interstate presenting the MGA offer to various industry brand boards around Australia. I have been privileged to meet many colleagues in all states and look forward to building ongoing relationships between their businesses and the MGA. Our first presentation was to the IGA National Board on November 27, 2006. The IGA National Board endorsed the MGA as a 'Preferred Industry Employer Association' and recommended the MGA present to all IGA State Boards around the nation which subsequently occurred. IGA WA were the first additional group of IGA retailers to join the MGA with IGA NSW/ACT closely following. The MGA's strategy is to ensure existing members in each state receive the very best of support and service and has therefore put on hold, its expansion into SA and QLD until early 2008.

Workplace Relations continues to be a very important ongoing area of support and service for our members. Many of our members have taken advantage of our 'Workplace Agreement Making Service' and are very keen to pursue the option of developing their own agreements and engaging directly with their staff. Owing to unsavoury practices by a handful of employers moving away from union based agreements and pushing the boundaries into the unfair territory, there has been adverse publicity toward Workplace Agreements. The Federal Government responded to this by introducing the Fairness Test in May this year. All agreements must now be submitted to the Workplace Authority and must be subject to a 'Fairness Test', based upon employees not being disadvantaged. Any benefits or conditions employees receive under their respective awards cannot be lost in transition to a Workplace Agreement, they can only be compensated for or traded off for another benefit.

Industry specific training as highlighted in our preliminary industry research report is a very important component of the MGA's service offer. We have traditionally delivered to our members courses such as OH&S, Food Safety Supervisors, Food Handlers and Responsible Service of Alcohol.

We have begun a process of further identifying and developing a number of additional courses specific to our industry.

The MGA has been active in obtaining and administering funds from Government bodies dedicated to particular industry initiatives. The MGA was successful in tendering for and obtaining \$220,000 from the Packaged Liquor Industry Development Trust Fund. These funds are dedicated to assisting and supporting smaller members with liquor licenses by providing specific business tools to assist in developing and growing their liquor businesses. We have assisted 70 stores to date.

\$34,000 has been obtained from the Department of Industrial Relations Victoria (IRV) as part of the 'Working Families and Community Balance' study. These funds have been dedicated to a research study with the Champions Group of stores in Victoria and is built on the work already undertaken by IRV by surveying a group of regional retail businesses in regard to employer and employee thoughts and opinions on employee rostering, allowing for optimum work, life, family and community balance.

A grant has been obtained from WorkSafe Victoria for the MGA to conduct FREE OH&S audits in member stores with 50 employees or less. We have had considerable uptake so far which has enabled our members to be certain all OH&S compliance requirements are in place.

Our industry, as always, has been active with an emphasis being placed on store owners to reinvest in their stores in order to lift store retailing and customer service standards. This activity is certain to increase in the new financial year. Retailers have seen demonstrable sales and profit increases after they have renovated and refurbished their stores. This activity is an investment for the future and augers well for our members in all states.

The MGA's Associate Membership continues to grow and provides a connectedness between suppliers and our retailer members. Networking opportunities are organised, in particular, the MGA Golf Day and the GALA Dinner Dance, both of which were hugely successful this year. Many of our Associate Members enjoy continuing mutually beneficial business relationships with our store members. We are grateful for their support and look forward to growing our national offer with them.

Finally I wish to very much thank Rodney Allen, President of the MGA board and all Board members for their vision, insights, support and commitment to the direction and strategy for national expansion

Jos de Bruin CEO