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New Zealand Winegrowers Names Anishka Jelicich Chief Executive

She succeeds Philip Gregan after more than 20 years in wine markets across New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Europe.

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Anishka Jelicich has been appointed chief executive officer of New Zealand Winegrowers, the national trade association said Wednesday, bringing in a new leader with more than two decades of experience in the wine and drinks business across New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Europe.

The appointment comes as New Zealand’s wine sector enters a new phase. The industry group said demand for premium New Zealand wines remains solid in international markets, even as growers and winemakers face a mix of global and

domestic pressure. In that setting, the association said it wanted a chief executive with industry knowledge, international perspective and the ability to work across a broad membership base.

In a statement announcing the move, New Zealand Winegrowers said Jelicich combines a strong understanding of the local wine business with global commercial experience. The association said her strategic approach and leadership would help the sector manage opportunities and challenges ahead.

Jelicich succeeds Philip Gregan, the recently retired chief executive who led the organization during a long period of growth for New Zealand wine. The association credited Gregan, its board, staff and members with helping build one of the country’s most successful export stories.

Her appointment places her at the head of an industry that has become a major contributor to New Zealand’s economy and international image. According to figures cited by New Zealand Winegrowers, wine is now the country’s eighth-largest export and generates about NZ$2.1 billion a year. The association said New Zealand wines are sold in more than 100 markets.

That international reach has been one of the defining features of the industry. New Zealand’s producers, especially in categories such as Sauvignon Blanc, have built strong recognition abroad over the past several decades. Industry groups have also spent years promoting the country’s wine under themes of quality, freshness and sustainability, which remain central to how the sector presents itself to importers, retailers and consumers.

Jelicich said her years working overseas shaped how she views the industry she is now joining. In the statement, she said she had repeatedly seen the level of respect New Zealand wine commands around the world and described that perspective as both personal and professional. She said joining New Zealand Winegrowers was a privilege because of the role the organization has played in shaping the sector.

She also signaled that her first months in the job will be focused on consultation rather than immediate policy changes. Jelicich said her first priority would be to listen and learn by spending time with people across the industry and understanding what matters most to them before setting the next direction.

That approach is likely to matter in an industry that spans growers, wineries, exporters and regional organizations, and that must balance long-term brand building with immediate operating concerns. New Zealand Winegrowers represents a sector that depends heavily on export markets and is closely tied to changes in consumer demand, trade conditions and production costs. The association did not set out a detailed agenda for Jelicich’s first year, but it framed her arrival as an important step as the industry looks to maintain growth and protect its position in premium wine markets.

For producers in New Zealand, the leadership change comes at a time when the industry is trying to preserve momentum without losing focus on the pressures at home. Jelicich, in the association’s account, will begin that work by meeting members across the country and taking stock of the issues they see as most urgent.