



# WOW goes in search of new chief

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World of WearableArt boss Gabrielle Hervey is calling it quits, and she means it this time.

The company which runs the internationally renowned Brancott Estate World of WearableArt Awards is seeking a new general manager/chief executive, almost three years after Ms Hervey announced she was stepping down as chief executive, and a general manager would replace her.

In March 2009, Warwick Hastie secured the role of general manager of the Nelson-based World of WearableArt, but a month later he left the organisation and returned to Australia. Ms Hervey stepped back up to resume running the company.

"I'm definitely stepping aside, for sure. I don't have any plans

other than to retire. I've done a decade here and we've achieved great things and it's now time for some new blood and energy."

Ms Hervey said the WOW board, of which she is a member, would be making the appointment this time. It had not employed an external agency to handle the recruitment process as it did last time. She would not elaborate on what happened, other than to say the "wrong person" was chosen and it was not a good fit.

Ms Hervey plans to enjoy time at home but will remain as a consultant to WOW, which is seeking a "passionate, strategic thinker who leads creatively" to take over and help guide the company through its next growth stage.



**Gabrielle Hervey**

Audience numbers to the annual WearableArt Awards show in Wellington – the brainchild of Nelson sculptor Dame Suzie Moncrieff who started the show in Wakefield in 1987 – have now grown to 50,000 and last year 30 per cent of entries were from overseas. Later this month WOW will also take to the stage in Hong Kong as part of a 70-minute specially adapted showcase at the annual Hong Kong Arts Festival from January 28 until February 5.

"WOW has grown a lot in the last 10 years, but I believe we need new blood coming through. I can't recall if I put a timeline on my tenure when I came back [in 2009] but my feeling towards the end of last year was that I would step aside after taking the show to Hong Kong, which was always part of my goal," Ms Hervey said.

She recalled saying in 2002 when she came on board to head the company that international plans were the goal, and while that would not happen overnight, it would happen.

"I can't believe it's taken as long as it has. It's a great step forward and I will enjoy watching the next phase from the sidelines."

Ms Hervey hoped the position would attract a good field of talent and the right person would be found to lead what was a "fantastic organisation".

WOW brands and strategy manager Donna Ching said on Friday that since the job was listed on January 9 she had received 28 requests for a job description.

"Applications close on February 17 and we look forward to introducing the new appointment," Ms Ching said.