



The 2022 Graham Gregory Award Goes To A Local Legend



Bruno Brombal received a standing ovation when he was awarded the 2021 Graham Gregory Award during the 2022 ICC Sydney NSW Wine Awards.

The award was given to recognise Bruno's amazing career within the wine industry, undertaking representative roles in wine growing since 1979, as a foundation member of the Hanwood Grape Growers Association.

When talking about his achievements, Kate Lormier Ward, NSW DPI Deputy Director General, Agriculture, commented that Mr Brombal has been on the Wine Grape Marketing Board (now known as Riverina Winegrape Growers), an executive member of the NSW Wine Industry Association, the Chairman of Winegrape Growers Council of Australia and involved in the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (now known as Wine Australia).

Kate continued, "However, it's not just what titles you hold but what you do within those roles. Mr Brombal has been an advocate leading to many positive changes for growers in the wine industry. He has championed the development of the region's young growers, actively encouraged young growers to take up industry positions, and fully backed a sponsorship program so that young growers can attend industry events

and undertake other opportunities to reach their full potential. He has supported the appointment of a viticulture Industry Development Officer that is co-funded by DPI and Riverina Winegrowers. The strong partnership between the Riverina Winemakers and DPI is leading to investment in joint projects and research that will help to improve regional competitiveness, sustainability and adoption of technology and research. He is passionate about ensuring a promising future for young growers, to support the regions and ensure the next generation can be sustainable and profitable in this industry."

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BOARD ACTIVITIES REPORT



RWG Christmas Office Closure

Riverina Winegrape Growers Office will close for the Christmas break on Friday the 23rd of December 2022 and will reopen on Monday the 9th January 2023. The board and staff would like to wish you and yours a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year

Riverina Winegrape Grants for Growers

The first round of grower grants were delivered to 80 growers who attended the introduction to Sustainable Winegrapes Australia (SWA) workshops. These workshops were run by Maggie Jarret from the DPI. A grant of \$500 was paid to growers to attend and give feedback on the program, many growers that could not make it to one of the sessions have contacted me to see if we will be running it again, yes we will. Another round will be held post vintage, and we hope to do a couple in Leeton at this time as well.

Accessing Hail & Storm Grants

Bonnie Taylor is a new financial councilor taking over from Sarah Digglemann, we wish Sarah all the best for the future, and thank her for here support. Bonnie will be working out of our boardroom for one day a week to help growers access these grants. Bonnie can be contacted for an appointment by phoning 0447 479694 or email bonnie@rfcsnsw.com.au

Note from CEO Jeremy Cass

What a year it has been, despite the state of the industry we have kicked a few goals for the region on the national and state stage.

Wine Australia invested in the Riverina by recognizing that the inland commercial regions are a very important part of the Australian Wine Grape Industry, and as such put funding into a pilot profitability study as well as holding a board meeting in Griffith. The profitability study known as Wine Industry Profitability Project or WIPP has partnered with Riverina Winegrape Growers, Wine Australia, NSW Wine, NSW DPI, CSU Galbali Institute, and FIAL. Some of the quick wins for this project have been the grants for growers to get paid undertake activities, that may help make them aware of opportunities that are available to them. As well as this a NSW Grape Trading platform has been developed and launched, as have some budgeting tools that were developed by NSW DPI. CSU are working on the study will the input of you the growers. Thanks to all of those who filled in the surveys or agreed to be interviewed, this project will not work without your Input.

On top of this Riverina Winegrape Growers Chairman Bruno Brombal was recognized for his contribution to the Industry, by not only being the recipient of the Local Legend award, but also the Graham Gregory Award.

Nugan Estate took out the best Shiraz which was then escalated to the best red wine of show, and being pipped at the post for the best wine of show, this was all from Riverina Fruit.

Finally I would like to thank you the growers, for making my first 12 months in this position so rewarding. I have lost count of the number of growers that have welcomed me to the position, and more recently told me that I have been doing a good job. This has been very humbling but encourages me to continue to work for you and advance the viticultural industry here in the Riverina

BUDGET AND STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING REPORT

On Wednesday 12th October 2022 46 growers, partners and guests attended the Budget and Strategic Planning dinner meeting held by Riverina Winegrape Growers.

The meeting which was open to all growers in the region is held to discuss and approve the 5 year Strategic Plan of the Board and the set the statutory fees and charges for funding of the Board.

The board announced that they had approved a \$1.00 per tonne levy return from the 2022 vintage to growers.

The rate for 2022 will be \$3.90 per tonne fresh weight.

Growers approved a comprehensive expenditure budget for 2022 and discussion around the reserves of the Board was held with growers comfortable that the Board will maintain a solid financial approach and return excess funds in the future if and as required.

Riverina Winegrape Growers 90th Anniversary Dinner



Past and Present Board Members that attended the Anniversary Dinner

Saturday night on the 10th of December 2022, saw Riverina Winegrape growers turn out in force to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the organisation that started its life as the Wine Grapes Marketing Board. The organisation was signed into being on the 13th December 1932 with the first board members signing on in January 1933, NSW Local Member Helen Dalton put in an appearance but did not stay for dinner while federal local member Susan Ley was an apology. Approximately 160 people turned up to celebrate this milestone, mainly growers and their families. All of the current board and staff were in attendance as well as 6 past members. A great evening was had by all with pleasant conversation and great company, accom-

panied by great food and wine. A special thank you to Julie McMahon for organizing such a fantastic event and also to our local wineries who donated the wine.



WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD

Appointed Board Members

Are you interested in joining the team, we are coming up to that time of year when we can take on new board members, these positions are appointed positions, meaning that you need to send a cover letter and a resume as per the adjoining notice. These are paid positions and there is no requirement to be a wine grape grower for an appointed board member, so if you are interested and feel that you have something to offer then please apply

HACCP & 3rd Party Rebates

With Vintage fast approaching a quick reminder that you may need to have your HACCP audit completed, Brian has completed most of them but there are still a few outstanding don't leave it until the last minute give Brian a call on 0401 567449. If you have to have a third part Audit like Freshcare don't forget about the \$150 rebate, just call into the office with a copy of your paid invoice to receive the rebate. Anyone who has paid for a chemical users course is eligible for a \$100 rebate.



**RIVERINA WINEGRAPE GROWERS
BOARD MEMBER POSITIONS**

In accordance with the *Agricultural Industry Services Regulation 2015 (NSW) Part 2. Division 3 Clause 10 Membership of the Board*, the Board is calling for nominations from interested persons for two (2) persons on the Board, to be appointed by the elected members.

This is an opportunity for interested persons to become involved in and contribute to the regions wine grape industry.

Duties would include attending and contributing to regular Board meetings and participation at relevant meetings of the industry.

An annual sitting fee of \$5,000 is paid along with a travel allowance to attend meetings plus \$250 per meeting attendance.

To apply, interested persons should provide a covering letter and brief resume outlining relevant experience to the Board C.O.B. 6th January 2023.

Appointments to the Board will take effect from 3rd February 2023 for a 3 year term.

Applications should be addressed to:

THE CHAIRMAN
Riverina Winegrape Growers
PO Box 385 GRIFFITH NSW 2680
✉ board@wgmb.net.au

or by contacting Jeremy Cass, Chief Executive Officer on 02 6962 3944.

WHY DON'T YOU TEST THE COLOUR AND MATURITY OF YOUR GRAPES

The Board funds and operates a laboratory service during the vintage that allows growers free of charge to test the maturity and colour of winegrapes.

The pH and Titratable Acid (TA) of the grapes are recorded and reported along with the variety and baume. Results are generally the same day and can be sent to your directly to your phone.

Growers could look to develop a yearly portfolio of their winegrapes are capable of in terms of the vineyard qualities that would assist you in any future negotiations with buyers.

Growers for example that constantly achieve a high colour score can test it via our laboratory and file the information away for further reference.



NSW DPI Viticulture Projects Update

Prepared by Katie Dunne NSW DPI

Budgets to help with decisions

The Southern Horticulture team have been busy creating budgeting tools for growers. The budgets were initially developed by Citrus Development Officers Steven Falivene and Andrew Creek. Using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, all inputs and outputs associated with producing a crop are entered to generate cash flow estimates as well as sensitivity analyses. Budgets for mothballing, reworking and replanting vineyards have been developed, as well as for avocados (Darren Fahey), cherry and hazelnuts (Jessica Fearnley) and citrus (Steven and Andrew). The budgets for the alternative crops include vineyard removal.

A draft workbook is available and was presented to growers on 14 December 2022, where different options were explored for mothballing, reworking and replanting vineyards. Final versions of these tools will be made available to growers after feedback and updates have been incorporated in January.

Mothballing vineyards

A mothballing research trial is currently underway at the NSW DPI Griffith Research Station in Chardonnay. The trial is being run in partnership with the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), which is completing a similar trial in shiraz in the Riverland. Some treatments are showing positive results for reducing crop load. Results will be published at a later stage after further analysis of vine health. The trial also has an irrigation component where 3 different irrigation strategies are being investigated to limit fruit production while maintaining vine health. This trial is being funded by Wine Australia.

Fungicide resistance

Fungicide resistance continues to be a problem in the regions with reports of metalaxyl (Group 4) and pyraclostrobin (e.g. Cabrio®; Group 11) resistance in

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NSW DPI Viticulture Projects Update

downy mildew populations. SARDI is currently receiving samples of downy mildew, powdery mildew and botrytis. Fungicide resistance can occur very quickly in a season, and given the current high disease pressure, the risk is further increased. Fungicide resistance management strategies should be followed to ensure these chemicals remain effective in disease control. Please refer to the AWRI's Dog Book for registered chemicals.

Spray workshop

In October 2022, a spray workshop was held at the NSW DPI Griffith Research Station with Alison Macgregor from the Australian Table Grapes Association, David Manktelow (Applied Research and Technologies Ltd) from New Zealand and Marcel Essling from the AWRI. Even though the day was plagued with rain, when the sprayers were in action, the rain held off. The importance of spray coverage was discussed and how it is often little things that can help to minimise the risk with practical examples of when things have gone wrong. Both David and Alison provided practical tips for improving spray coverage, such as changing nozzles and the importance of cleaning them. The presentation slides will be made available to those who attended the event.

Seasonal conditions

This season has proved to be challenging with all the extra rainfall that the region has had leading up to Christmas. As many blocks are in the fruit development to pre-véraison phase, it is important to be aware of the risk for botrytis; while there might not be any obvious symptoms, it is in the vineyard. Latent infection period is from flowering to pre-bunch closure. Given the significant amount of bunch trash and decaying bunches due to downy mildew, the risk is high. There have also been reports of large numbers of light brown apple moth (LBAM) caterpillars, which are a vector for botrytis. Regularly check your vineyards and discuss with your agronomists and winery what you can do to control the problems. Just before pre-bunch closure is the last chance to ensure that the chemical application will target bunches internally where the disease is likely to occur and where LBAM larvae will be. Even though botrytis is mainly weather-dependent, now is the time to reduce the risk where feasible.

If you would like to get your vines sampled for suspected trunk disease, virus or fungicide resistance, please let me know so that we can organise sampling and testing. Any questions, please contact me on 0429 361 563, katie.dunne@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Wine Inland Productivity & Profitability (WIPP) Project

Winegrape growers in the Riverina have been central to the development of three new collaborative initiatives launched today by the collaborative Wine Inland Productivity & Profitability (WIPP) project, that is providing locally driven business support.

A winegrape trading platform, budgeting tool and local coordinator for the Riverina are the first results from the three-year project that is co-designing local solutions with the region's growers in collaboration with state and national, peak industry bodies and organisations.

The three-year WIPP project – a partnership between NSW Wine Industry Association, Riverina Wine Grape

Growers Association, Wine Australia, NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), Charles Sturt University and Food Innovation Australia (FIAL) – commenced six months ago to address productivity and profitability challenges facing wine grapegrowers in warm inland grape regions.

NSW Wine Industry Association president Mark Bourne said, "The NSW wine industry employs 53,000 people across NSW and currently the growers in our largest wine region centred around Griffith – which makes around 20 per cent of the volume of Australia's wine – are struggling to remain profitable. Developing a new sustainable production model fit for the future, is es-

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Wine Inland Productivity & Profitability (WIPP) Project

regions and communities we live and work in”.

The WIPP project is exploring viticultural techniques and resources, business knowledge and skills, and technologies that will address current challenges and help develop future sustainable, productive, and resilient businesses.

Wine Australia CEO Dr Martin Cole said, “Winegrape growing is a vital part of the community in Riverina. When we sat and spoke to our customers in Riverina six months ago, it was clear that immediate action was needed and also how fundamental it would be to co-design the solutions with local growers, so they are always at the centre of the outcomes”.

“We’re delighted to be launching the first initiatives from the project and look forward to continuing to deliver and extending outcomes through other regions so that we can build a really solid foundation for the sector’s ongoing profitability and resilience in the future,” Dr Cole said.

Riverina Wine Grape Growers executive officer Jeremy Cass said, “The collaboration across regional, state, and national organisations has come at the right time for our local growers”.

“We hope to identify any gaps in knowledge, skills, business management and vineyard practices relating to profitability for Riverina grapegrowers, and then transfer this knowhow to assist other warm inland wine regions,” Cass said.

The first three initiatives of the WIPP project launched in the Riverina for winegrape growers are:

A new winegrape trading platform, developed by leveraging FIAL’s Australian Food & Beverage Catalogue to assist growers to find new customers for their grapes.

A new budgeting tool built by NSW Department of Primary Industries, with the support of Riverina Winegrape Growers Association, to assist growers in making crucial decisions around replanting or redevelopment options.

The appointment of a coordinator to be the local ‘go to person’, who will work with experts at Charles Sturt University and NSW Department of Primary Industries to assist with research inputs and outputs, and growers on the adoption of recommended best practice models, tools, and techniques.

The new winegrape trading platform, leveraging FIAL’s Australian Food & Beverage Catalogue, is being launched ahead of the 2023 vintage, with the aim to connect growers with uncontracted fruit to wineries seeking grapes.

Managing Director of FIAL Dr Mirjana Prica commented, “We enthusiastically support this much needed grower–industry–research collaborative project. The new grape trading platform and cluster coordinator are real and immediate tools and support for grapegrowers doing it tough. We look forward to this project having wider benefits across all the grapegrowing regions of Australia, leading to the sustained growth of the wine sector into the future”.



WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD



we wish you
and yours a
merry christmas
filled with
wonder and joy



Happy New Year
2023



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