

### Emerson Report to Government on a Mandatory Code of Conduct

On 23 August 2024, the Hon Julie Collins MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, announced that Dr Craig Emerson had been selected to examine whether there was market failure in the grape and wine sector and provide advice about regulatory or other interventions.

Dr Emerson was also given the task of leading an independent impact analysis of regulatory options for the Australian grape and wine sector concerning fair trading, competitive relationships, contracting practices and risk allocation.

Dr Emerson made 14 recommendations following this review and analysis.

#### Summary

Dr Emerson's review noted the following general points, which informed his recommendations.

- Winegrape growers with weak bargaining power, particularly in the warm inland grape growing regions of Australia – the Riverland, the Murray Darling and Swan Hill regions and the Riverina. Uneven bargaining power is less prevalent in the cooler regions, but harmful commercial conduct by winemakers in these regions, such as protracted payment terms for their grape suppliers, can similarly shift risk inordinately from winemakers onto their grape suppliers.
- Power imbalances exist between many independent wine makers and oligopolistic liquor retailer. Endeavour Group, Coles Group, Metcash Limited and ALDI comprise around 80 per cent of the domestic retail market, with Endeavour Group and Coles Group having a combined market share of around 60 per cent.
- The current industry-led voluntary Code of Conduct is unenforceable.
- A mandatory Code is the only viable option – it should be enforceable by the ACCC and apply to large and medium-sized wineries buying winegrapes from external providers – those with annual grape purchases exceeding 2,000 tonnes (calculated on a 3-year rolling average basis).
- The Code should require early notification of offer prices for grapes – specifically
  - winemakers purchasing grapes from the warm

inland regions should be required to provide Wine Australia with their offer prices for simultaneous publication on the first Wednesday in October each year for grapes purchased under contract for each grape variety they seek to buy, and

- participation in two surveys run annually by Wine Australia should be a requirement of the mandatory Code to improve price signals available to growers.
- The Code should make quality assessment processes more objective – in place of arbitrary assessments, objective standards for assessing maturity, purity, condition and other grape parameters – as provided for in the current voluntary Code – should be a requirement of the mandatory Code.
- The Code should protect against retribution – protection against retribution should be included in the purpose of the Code and an anonymous complaints mechanism for growers to report issues to the ACCC should be established.
- The Code should require grape supply agreements and purchase orders to be in writing and not be subject to unilateral variation by a winemaker. The Code should improve payment terms between winemakers and grape growers – minimum payment terms should be fair across all Australian jurisdictions and all winemakers covered by the mandatory Code should be required to notify Wine Australia of their payment terms, which Wine Australia would publish

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## BOARD ACTIVITIES REPORT



**Riverina  
WINEGRAPE  
GROWERS**

### **2025 Vintage Levy Return**

So far we have processed around 70% of the \$2 per Tonne Levy Returns for this years crop, however there are still quite a few levy returns that have not been returned for processing. the levy returns will not be processed until we receive your updated details to ensure that the funds get deposited into the correct

account. So if you have been waiting on your return because your details haven't changed and have not returned your form please do so or contact us and we can provide a new one .

### **Introducing our new Office Manager**

Hi, I'm Kristy, your new friendly face when you walk into the office. I'm excited to be apart of the team and help keep everything running smoothly.

A little about me-I enjoy family time, coffee, reading and all things craftly. (I have a collection of hobbies).

I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you, so please feel free to stop by and sat hi, I'll be in the office Wednesday, Thursday & Friday.

### **Meeting With MI & New CEO Phillip Holliday**

Riverina Winegrape Growers Chairman Bruno Brombal and CEO Jeremy Cass met with MI CEO Phillip Holliday and General Manager of Customer Services and Water Delivery Lindsay Golsby Smith on the 23rd of September to welcome Phil and give them an overview of the industry, we informed them that due to the depressed state of the industry many growers would be finding it difficult to pay their bill on time. They were very understanding and asked if they could put a couple of words into our news letter to address growers.

### **MI—We're here to support you**

At Murrumbidgee Irrigation, we understand that life can sometimes present unexpected challenges. If you're currently experiencing financial hardship, reach out to us so we can work together to create a payment arrangement that suits your situation. Contact us on 02 69620200 to discuss payment arrangement options.



**Kristyanne Snaidero**

**Are You Removing Vines?  
Please let us know  
so we can update your maps.  
02 69623944 or 0427 759 094**

**Letter to Minister Julie Collins**

Hon Julie Collins, MP  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Dear Minister Collins

On behalf of Riverina Winegrape Growers, I am writing to raise deep concerns about the ongoing financial distress facing growers in our region and to call for urgent reform in how winegrapes are contracted, priced, and paid for in Australia.

The Riverina, based in southern New South Wales, is one of the nation's largest winegrape producing regions and a key contributor to both domestic wine supply and export volume. Winegrape production underpins the Riverina's rural economy, supporting hundreds of growers and regional jobs. However, growers are increasingly being asked to operate under conditions that are economically unsustainable, unpredictable, and ultimately unfair.

The removal of trade barriers with China has raised hopes across the industry, and we acknowledge the federal government's efforts in restoring market access. Unfortunately, the anticipated uplift in grower returns has not materialised. Prices for the 2025 vintage have remained well below the cost of production, and early signals for 2026 are equally discouraging. This is particularly troubling given recent forecasts by Wine Australia, which suggest price stability or modest improvements in some varieties. Current pricing practices and payment structures are compounding the pressure. The voluntary industry code, which allows processors to delay releasing indicative prices until mid-December, leaves growers with insufficient time to make critical operational decisions. By this stage, growers have already incurred substantial costs in water, labour, and inputs—often without any clarity on the return they can expect. This imbalance places all the risk on the grower.

Further compounding this is the issue of payment terms, which vary significantly and can stretch beyond what is reasonable or viable for family-run vineyards.

Growers are being asked to wait months—sometimes well into the next financial year—for payment on grapes that have already been delivered and processed. This is simply not acceptable in a modern agricultural supply chain.

To help stabilise the sector and restore a fairer operating environment, we urge the federal government to implement the following interim measures for the 2025 vintage:

- Require all wineries to release indicative prices by 30 September, allowing growers to plan harvest and water allocation with confidence.
- Ensure Expert Determination decisions are finalised by 31 October and made binding under ACCC oversight until a Mandatory Code is introduced.
- Introduce standardised, fair payment terms for grape supply contracts—ensuring growers are paid in full within 30 days of grape delivery, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

These measures are critical to restoring equity and transparency across the winegrape sector. They will allow growers to plan responsibly, invest strategically, and manage their businesses without shouldering disproportionate risk.

We understand that the government has received the final report from Dr Emerson and we respectfully request an update on how and when the recommendations—particularly those concerning a Mandatory Code of Conduct—will be actioned.

Riverina Winegrape Growers remains committed to constructive engagement and policy development that supports a stable and sustainable future for growers and winemakers alike. We urge your office to treat this issue as a matter of priority before another vintage passes with no relief for those who do the foundational work of this industry.

Yours sincerely,  
Bruno Brombal  
Chairman  
Riverina Winegrape Growers



## Emerson Report to Government on a Mandatory Code of Conduct continued

- on the first Wednesday in October each year.
- Informed choice for wine consumers – it should be clear to wine consumers if they are purchasing own-brand wines or not.
- Data to support winemaker innovation – small, independent winemakers should have timely access to sales data for their wine sales through vertically integrated, oligopolistic liquor retailers, and larger winemakers should have access to the market data at the same level of granularity as that for retailers' own-brand wine labels.
- Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) and vertical integration – the WET should be reviewed by the relevant Australian government agencies to ensure it is still meeting its policy objectives without unintentionally providing advantages for vertically integrated winegrape production, winemaking and wine retailing businesses.
- Application of general competition and consumer laws – a range of strengthened competition and consumer law amendments that have already been enacted, together with announced and foreshadowed reforms, should be applied to deal with anti-competitive behaviour and unfair practices in the grape and wine sector.

Impact analysis shows that the benefits of Dr Emerson's recommendations outweigh the costs, and Dr Emerson has ruled out other proposals where the costs would clearly outweigh the benefits.

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1** – make the voluntary code of conduct mandatory

The voluntary Code of Conduct for Winegrape Purchases should be replaced with a mandatory Code of Conduct for Winegrape Purchases (mandatory Code). All winemakers whose purchases of grapes exceed a three-year moving average of 2,000 tonnes per annum should be subject to the Code. Except where a recommendation expressly requires a change in the terms of the current voluntary Code of Conduct, these terms should be carried across to the mandatory Code of Conduct.

**Recommendation 2** – earlier price offers for inland grapes

The mandatory Code should require winemakers to decide on an offer price for each grape variety they seek under contract from the warm inland regions of the Riverland, the Murray Darling and Swan Hill

regions and the Riverina. All offer prices should be notified to Wine Australia, which would collate these prices and publish them simultaneously on the first Wednesday of October each year.

**Recommendation 3** – mandatory survey participation to inform Grape Price Indicators dashboard  
Participation in the National Vintage Survey and the Production Sales and Inventory Surveys should be compulsory for all winemakers subject to the mandatory Code, to improve the accuracy of the Grape Price Indicators dashboard and to further increase price transparency and assist growers and winemakers in making informed business decisions.

**Recommendation 4** – publication of payment terms  
All winemakers covered by the mandatory Code should be required to notify Wine Australia of their payment terms, which Wine Australia would publish on the first Wednesday in October each year. If, after two years of operation of the mandatory Code, payment terms and associated payment times have not improved materially, all winemakers subject to the Code should be required to pay growers in full within 30 to 60 days of the end of the month of the final delivery of grapes.

**Recommendation 5** – price deductions must refer to an objective parameter

Objective standards for grape assessment of maturity, purity, condition and other grape parameters relating to quality – as contained in the existing voluntary Code – should be specified by winemakers subject to the mandatory Code in their contracts with grape growers. For grapes purchased by winemakers subject to the mandatory Code, any deductions from the offer price, or any other adverse decisions such as rejection of the grapes, must be done with reference to at least one objective assessment parameter.

**Recommendation 6** – greater protections against retribution

The mandatory Code should place greater emphasis on addressing the fear of retribution by including protection against retribution in the purpose of the Code and ensuring that retribution captured under the obligation to act in good faith includes action taken against suppliers for exercising their rights under the Code.

**Recommendation 7** – an anonymous complaints channel to the ACCC

An anonymous complaints mechanism should be

## Emerson Report to Government on a Mandatory Code of Conduct continued

established to enable suppliers and any other market participants, including winemakers supplying to retailers, to raise issues directly and confidentially with the ACCC.

**Recommendation 8** – mediation and arbitration built into the Code

The mandatory Code should provide parties with avenues for mediation and arbitration to resolve disputes.

- Parties can agree on an independent mediator or arbitrator. Winemakers must attend independent mediation if requested by a grower.
- Where mediation has not settled a dispute, independent arbitration can be used to settle disputes as agreed between the winemaker and the grower. The working group referred to in Recommendation 14 should identify a suitable entity to take on the function of receiving notifications of disputes.

**Recommendation 9** – no anti-competitive terms in contracts

The mandatory Code should include a requirement that all supply agreements and purchase orders:

- Be in writing and not subject to unilateral variation by a winemaker;
- Not include for the winemaker a first right of refusal for when the grower produces more grapes

than is required by the supply agreement; and Not give winemakers the right to terminate agreements with growers when grapes become surplus to requirements, for any reason and at short notice.

**Recommendation 10** – transparent labelling practices

The large liquor retailers that sell own-brand wine – Endeavour Group and Coles Group – should indicate on the back of their wine labels their ownership of the wine, to enable customers to readily identify the wine as an own-brand product. If satisfactory compliance has not been achieved after two years, consideration should be given to the development and application of an Information Standard to enforce compliance.

**Recommendation 11** – accessible sales data and market reads

Coles Group and Endeavour Group should collaborate with appropriate companies, such as Circana and Quantum, to ensure smaller independent winemakers receive their own sales data and market insights free of charge and, for larger winemakers, at a reasonable price. Coles Group and Endeavour Group should ensure such data is obtainable at the same level of granularity as the granularity of data provided to them for their own-brand wine labels.

**Recommendation 12** – review the WET

A review of the Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) and WET rebate should be undertaken by relevant Australian government agencies to ensure they are still meeting policy objectives without unintentionally providing advantages for vertically integrated grape producers, winemakers and wine retailers.

**Recommendation 13** – ACCC should be adequately resourced

The ACCC should be given adequate resources to enforce the Code and the other recommendations of this Review (without the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry being expected to provide those resources from within its existing budget).

**Recommendation 14** – a working group should guide implementation

A working group should be established to implement the recommendations of this Review that are accepted by the Australian government, led by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and including representatives of the ACCC and Treasury and relevant state government agencies, along with representatives of Wine Australia.



Dr Craig Emerson

## Riverina 2025 Vintage Report

Vintage 2025 was larger than expected, even after the late frost that affected most of the region and several storms that impacted the greater Yenda area. The crop levels in most varieties were generally larger than we have seen for several years and even frosted crops bounced back better than could be expected. The figures shown in Table 1 show the difference in intake 2025 against the final figures for previous years.

The weather conditions over vintage were mostly favorable with very few reports of bunch rots that could have caused fruit to be downgraded or rejected. The drier than average conditions saw some growers

struggle to get through due to higher-than-average demand for water, added to tight water budgets.

Wineries are reporting that the quality of this year's crop is very good, the Chardonnay crop could possibly have been 20% larger if we didn't get frosted and most of the whites made it over the weighbridge, with the exception of some frosted Chardonnay crops that had minimal inputs applied and ended up with powdery mildew, and a couple of blocks that were rejected for mealy bug.

Vintage 2025 also saw a couple of record crops for the region, with both the Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc crops yielding significantly more than they ever

Variety	2025 Final Figures	2024 Final Figures	2023 Final Figures	2022 Final Figures	2021 Final Figures
<b>White</b>					
Chardonnay	57051.27	58493.95	38234.00	69498.87	68349.42
Colombard	7165.92	8109.06	5809.91	8616.38	8686.05
Muscat Blanc (Frontignac)	11670	9416.07	7234.27	13760.28	14580.07
Muscat Gordo Blanco	4607.53	4193.91	3913.25	4932.00	5138.09
Pinot Gris	29922.04	19677.63	20022.91	24888.54	24134.16
Riesling	1804.2	1654.34	1512.68	2296.48	1740.33
Sauvignon Blanc	24305.27	18806.19	16416.04	16662.26	17131.86
Semillon	24877.51	18608.17	19430.25	24494.91	29059.89
Traminer	4688.55	3364.53	3586.61	5976.36	5661.81
Verdelho	1946.42	1323.72	781.87	2579.41	2571.96
Viognier	1676.24	925.60	818.40	1607.60	1722.27
Other White	6969.03	6540.78	5119.55	6458.30	7355.27
<b>Total White</b>	<b>176683.98</b>	<b>151113.95</b>	<b>122879.74</b>	<b>181771.39</b>	<b>186131.18</b>
<b>Red</b>					
Cabernet Sauvignon	16483.25	12926.90	8331.54	12209.57	26330.59
Durif	10880.26	10157.01	7580.95	12096.90	10094.26
Merlot	20712.52	20698.87	13092.75	20216.42	21713.61
Muscat Brown (Red Fronti)	563.48	242.44	460.24	478.66	666.80
Petit Verdot	1982.07	2696.95	1532.04	3090.41	3744.15
Pinot Noir	4679.54	4129.72	4042.83	4932.59	5844.50
Ruby Cabernet	2526.17	3125.72	2050.22	5383.67	7089.68
Shiraz	52434.27	32696.22	32840.26	58434.63	70046.76
Tempranillo	731.96	324.58	178.74	186.26	465.46
Other Red	20786.55	17274.64	14765.77	18974.02	12277.15
<b>Total Red</b>	<b>131780.07</b>	<b>104273.05</b>	<b>84875.34</b>	<b>136003.13</b>	<b>158272.96</b>
<b>Total Grapes</b>	<b>308464.05</b>	<b>255387.00</b>	<b>207755.08</b>	<b>317774.52</b>	<b>344404.14</b>

## Riverina 2025 Vintage Report

have. The previously largest crop of Pinot Gris was just under 25,000 tonnes picked in 2023, with 29,922 tonnes picked this year, up by 32.5% or 10,000 tonnes on last year's crop of 19,672. While Sauvignon Blanc has remained stable for the past five years with a slight increase in 2024, this year saw the intake increase by 5,500 tonnes, up by 23% on 2024. The red grape crop seems to be up as well with growers reporting above average yields, the frost did not have a noticeable impact on the red varieties. That said, there will be grapes left behind that were either over capped fruit or rejected due to desiccation. The quantity that didn't get picked is unknown but believed to be in the thousands of tonnes, Shiraz is still the biggest problem as a variety, but most reds varieties are still in over supply.

The implications of this year's crop are that the extra tonnes helped grower returns, but most growers again received less than the cost of production. The downside being that this will only add to the oversupply situation that has crippled the industry since the Chinese imposed tariffs. It is extremely disappointing that the oversupply and related impact on the wine industry especially in the warm irrigated regions, has been ignored by government even with recommendations from the senate inquiry into the code of conduct, and the second prebudget submission from Australian Grape and Wine stating that this year was worse than last and that things are not getting better. It is hard to believe that things could get worse, but early indications are that vintage 2026 will be worse due to the size of the 2025 Vintage.

## IMPACT OF THE WELLNESS TREND ON WINE CONSUMPTION

It has been widely reported that global wine consumption is now at the lowest level since 1961. According to IWSR, in the five years to 2024, global consumption fell by 3.5 billion litres and is forecast to decline by another 1.5 billion litres by 2029. The volume of wine consumption is falling due to a smaller population of wine drinkers who are drinking less than previous generations. While recent cost of

living pressures has contributed to the decline, one major factor is the increasing focus on wellness which has seen consumers moderate their alcohol consumption. This is not a cyclical event but a fundamental shift in consumer behavior. This bulletin examines the increasing focus on wellness and how this is impacting on global wine consumption.

Global consumption of wine (billion litres)





## IMPACT OF THE WELLNESS TREND ON WINE CONSUMPTION

### The rise in Wellness culture

Wellness culture is a lifestyle cultural change that emphasises holistic well-being, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

While it was a growing trend prior to 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged a surge of people to re-assessing their health priorities and there was increased interest around immunity, stress reduction, and home-based wellness routines.

The focus on wellness has continued to grow in the years after the pandemic. Research from the Global Wellness Institute shows the global spend on wellness, encompassing products, services and treatments, reached a record \$US6.3 trillion in 2023. This makes the wellness economy larger in size than the green economy, IT, and sports.

Sectors like fitness, nutrition, mental health, and workplace wellness are booming. The Global Wellness Institute has forecast that the wellness economy will grow to nearly \$US9.0 trillion by 2028, almost double its size in 2020.

This rapid growth shows how wellness, which was once viewed as a luxury, is becoming a bigger part of everyday life across all generations. Millennials and Gen Z treat wellness as a daily lifestyle, not an occasional indulgence. While older generations are investing in healthy ageing, longevity, and preventive care.

### How wellness is changing occasion

The wellness culture is reshaping how people think about wine and influencing drinking habits. This

includes what and how much is consumed as well as the occasions when wine has traditionally been consumed.

More people are exploring and movements like Dry January are gaining increasing traction, especially among younger consumers. The social stigmas and cultural barriers around drinking less alcohol have been broken down.

The growing wellness culture is also radically reshaping social life, from how we gather, to what we consume, and how we connect. There are noticeably fewer wine-drinking occasions today, and it's not just about people drinking less. It's about how, when, and why they choose to drink at all.

Perceived traditional wine moments like dinner parties, celebrations, or winding down after work, are being replaced by wellness-oriented activities such as yoga sessions or early morning hikes.

At home, people are drinking wine less often. And while this is partly due to the moderation trend, importantly it is also because there are less wine drinking occasions at home such as nightly family dinners.

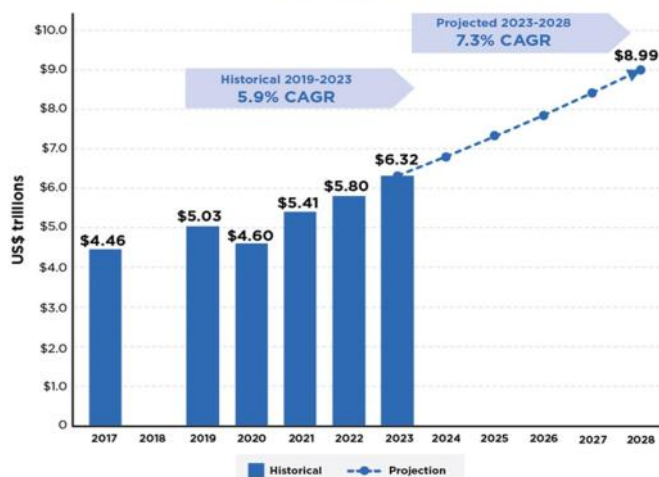
### How wellness is changing product interest

The rise in the wellness culture has seen a surge in demand for functional beverages that cater to consumers who seek more than just hydration from their drinks. These beverages are specifically formulated with ingredients that offer additional health benefits, such as boosting energy, improving digestion, relieving stress or supporting the immune system. The thirst for functional beverages has seen strong growth in products such as energy drinks, sports drinks, vitamin and botanical infused waters, and fermented drinks such as kombucha.

As consumers become more health-conscious and focused on well-being, there is a growing demand for wines that allow them to enjoy the experience of drinking wine while moderating their alcohol intake. This has resulted in growth in the consumption of no and low alcohol (NOLO) wines with NOLO being one of the few wine categories to record solid growth in recent years.

IWSR is forecasting consumption of low alcohol wines to overtake no alcohol wines by 2028, with low alcohol wine consumption forecast to grow by 14 per cent per annum over the period, compared to 7 per cent per annum for no alcohol wines.

Global Wellness Economy Market Size and Growth Projections, 2017-2028



CAGR=Compound Annual Growth Rate  
Source: Global Wellness Institute



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## Chemical Recording Requirements

Under current NSW legislation and the regional HACCP and FreshCare program **ALL** chemicals used in vineyards **MUST BE RECORDED**, this includes any **Fungicide, Herbicide Insecticide and Fertiliser** applications on your property. Most wineries in our area prefer you record all your chemicals in an electronic spray diary and some wineries still accept a manual spray diary. Please make sure you check with your winery their preferred recording method, for growers who's wineries use the Grape Web any fertilizer applications can be stored here as well. If you require assistance in entering your spray or calibration data electronically, please contact myself Brian Bortolin 0401 567 449 or Thomas Lefebvre 0428250537

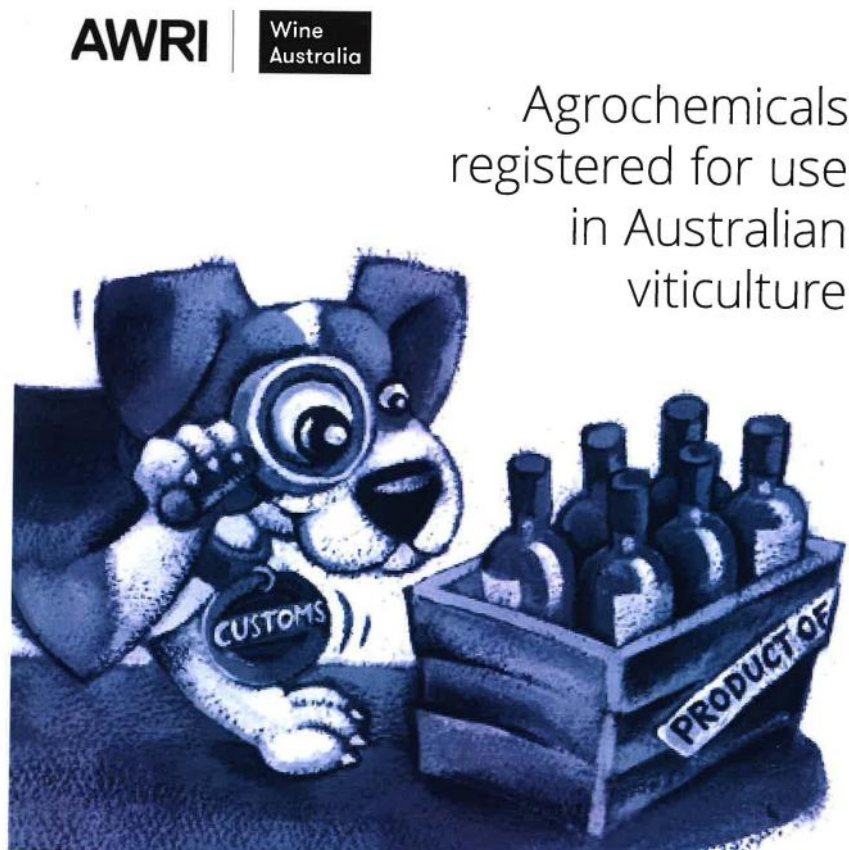
A hard copy spray diary will be available at the Board office to collect if you require one. **If you wish to use these for your other commodities there is a minor charge applicable which covers the costs of printing.** The office has credit card facilities to assist you.

**Dog Book for Agrichemical use in the wine industry:** Please check in your August edition of "Grapegrower & Winemaker" magazine for a copy of the **2025/26 Dog Book**. Please check the Dog Book and discuss with your winery regarding any restriction on products and any new chemicals available for viticultural use. If you have not received a copy or require additional copies please call into the WGMB office at 182 Yambil Street to collect a copy or call us on

6962 3944.

The recommendations in the Dog Book have been developed as a general guide and it is best to check with your winery/grape purchaser to discuss your spray program before the season begins and also to ask if they have any specific chemical recommendations/limitation or requirements.

Please also be reminded the we still provide \$100 reimbursement on Chem Certification and \$150 reimbursement on 3<sup>rd</sup> party HACCP Certification for wine grapes.



Agrochemicals  
registered for use  
in Australian  
viticulture

# 2025/26

AN ESSENTIAL REFERENCE WHEN  
GROWING GRAPES FOR **EXPORT** WINE

Compiled by Suzanne McLoughlin  
15 September 2025

Dog Book

## IREC Research Update

On the 26th of August the Irrigation Research & Extension Committee held an Irrigation Research Update day, in conjunction with its AGM. The topics covered included a session on Challenges and Opportunities in Horticulture, where James

Cremasco spoke on Prunes, Steve Barbon spoke about High Density Olives, and Jason Pandolfo on Citrus. Other topics included a panel discussion on Carbon on Farm, Herbicide Resistance in the Riverina, Measuring Green House Gas Emissions in



Jason Pandolfo, James Cremasco, Steve Barbon, and Kate Smith on the opportunities in Horticulture Panel.

## Murray Darling Association 81st National Conference

Griffith hosted the 81st national conference of the Murray Darling Association in a 2 day event, which was attended by stakeholders from all parts of the basin to hear the latest news and happenings from researchers, politicians, and industry representatives.

Riverina Winegrape Growers CEO Jeremy Cass was part of the panel discussing the Food and Fibre perspective, topics ranged from Basin Plan Update, Research, Infrastructure, Value, Biosecurity, and Industry.



Minister for water and the environment Murray Watt opening the Conference via pre recorded message



## Griffith Visit by NSW Nations Leader Dugald Saunders

On Tuesday 12th of August Dugald Saunders Leader of the NSW national party made a trip to Griffith accompanied by Nicole Overall National MLC, met with wine grape growers to listen to current issues faced by the industry. Dugald and Nicole met with



growers at Steve Barbon's farm, and while the coalition of the nationals and liberals are not in power they have a much better focus on what is happening in Regional NSW and are committed to keeping the voice regional Australia heard in the NSW parliament.

Dugald Saunders MP and Nicole Overall MLC and Bruno Brombal

## Nationals Economic Forum Held in Griffith

The National Party held its economic forum in Griffith on Monday the 22nd & Tuesday the 23rd of September at the Southside Leagues Club, Both state and federal National Party Politicians descended on Griffith for the event that took place over the 22nd and 23rd of September, day one focused on water with the topics of Water Allocation and Economic Viability, Infrastructure and Innovation for Water Supply, and Water Policy Development. While day 2 split into groups, with one looking at Regional Economic Development and Infrastructure while the second focused on Agricultural Trade and Market Development. Many local agricultural commodity groups attended the Ag Trade talks including Winegrapes Citrus, Cotton, and Rice, where we got a chance to present the current challenges facing our industries. It was great to hear

politicians talking about food security and promising to do what they can as opposition to try and ensure or rights don't get eroded away by the government and their policies that negatively impact primary producers

for the event that took place over the 22nd and 23rd of September, day one focused on water with the topics of Water Allocation and Economic Viability, Infrastructure and Innovation for Water Supply, and Water Policy Development. While day 2 split into groups, with one looking at Regional Economic Development and Infrastructure while the second focused on Agricultural Trade and Market Development. Many local agricultural commodity groups attended the Ag Trade talks including Winegrapes Citrus, Cotton, and Rice, where we got a chance to present the current challenges facing our industries. It was great to hear



Senator Bridget McKenzie addressing the forum





**Mon, 10 Nov, 9am - 2pm AEDT**  
**NSW DPIRD site, 217 Murray Rd, Hanwood**  
**NSW 2680**

***Hanwood NSW, Australia***

### **Event description**

Join us for a dynamic and informative day dedicated to the evolving landscape of viticulture in NSW.

#### **What makes this event special:**

- NSW Wine industry overview
- Resting & mothballing
- Scale and Mealybug management
- Carbon farming with GreenCollar

#### **Why You Should Attend:**

- Q&A sessions
- Networking with fellow growers and industry members
- Provide feedback to NSW DPIRD on future direction

#### **Acknowledgements**

This event is part of the Greater NSW–ACT Wine Australia Regional Program, delivered by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (NSW DPIRD) in partnership with NSW Wine. This field day was part of a wider effort to show viticulturists how to adopt practical information to benefit their individual operations.

## MEDIA RELEASE – Australia Grape & Wine

### Government Extends Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grants as New Report Confirms \$51.3 Billion Economic Contribution of Wine Sector

Australian Grape & Wine welcomes today's announcement by the Albanese Government of Round 7 of the Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grants, and the commitment to extend the program for a further three years.

Valued at \$10 million each financial year, the program allows eligible wine producers to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 for their eligible rebatable domestic cellar door sales. The program encourages agritourism by rewarding producers who attract visitors to Australia's world-class wine regions. Since its establishment, it has supported hundreds of wineries and cellar door operations to enhance visitor experiences and showcase the premium wines that underpin our national reputation.

Also released today by Wine Australia was a landmark AgEconPlus/Gillespie Economics report<sup>1</sup> on the economic contribution of the Australian wine sector. The report found that:

The wine sector contributes \$51.3 billion in gross output to the Australian economy.

It adds \$25.4 billion in value-added activity to GDP.

It supports more than 203,000 direct and indirect jobs, the vast majority in regional Australia.

Wine tourism alone attracted 7.5 million visits in 2024, with tourists spending \$11.6 billion in regions.

Tourists who stopped at a winery spent significantly more than others, averaging \$1,487 per trip.

Australian Grape & Wine Chief Executive, Lee McLean, said today's announcement was a clear signal of the Government's commitment to regional Australia.

"The Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grants Program is instrumental in helping wineries reinvest in their cellar door experiences, attracting more visitors and strengthening regional economies. Extending this program for another three years provides certainty for producers at a challenging time for our industry," Mr McLean said.

"The new [Economic Contribution of the Australian Wine Sector](#) report confirms what we already know: wine is not only a key export industry, but also one of Australia's most important agritourism drivers. With more than 200,000 Australians supported by our sector and \$51 billion contributed to the economy, investing in cellar door experiences is investing in regional jobs, tourism, and prosperity."

## Mental Health Resources 24/7 Counselling Support

- Lifeline –13 11 14
- Rural Outreach Counselling Inc — 0418 762 255 / 0408 221 697
  - NSW Mental Health Helpline – 1800 011 511
  - Mensline Australia — 1300 789 978
  - Beyond Blue — 1300 224 636
- Brother to Brother 24 – hour Crisis Line 1800 435 799
  - Suicide Call Back Service — 1300 659 467

## Container Deposit Scheme for Wine—AGW

The South Australian Government, in conjunction with the New South Wales Government, announced that both states will expand their Container Deposit Schemes (CDS) to include wine and spirit bottles.

We understand that in SA and NSW:

- Wine and spirit bottles up to 3L will be included.
- Changes will come into force in mid to late 2027.

Both governments have expressed their intent to work with industry through this transition to ensure the least cost, simplest approach, and with a focus on assisting small businesses.

In addition, the Northern Territory Government introduced legislation today giving effect to the expansion of the CDS in the NT to include wine and spirit bottles.

For NT, we understand that:

- Wine and spirit bottles up to 3L are included.
- Changes will come into force on a date set by gazette or automatically by 30 August 2027.

Transitional period of 2 years from commencement of Part 3 to display refund mark labelling.

Australian Grape & Wine, the South Australian Wine Industry Association and NSW Wine are actively engaging with the South Australian Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Susan Close, and the New South Wales Minister for Climate Change, Energy and the Environment, Penny Sharpe, to discuss the implications of the proposed expansions.

For many years, our organisations have invested significant resources in advocating on behalf of the grape and wine sector in relation to CDS expansion across jurisdictions. We have consistently argued that

any changes must be underpinned by robust, evidence-based analysis that demonstrates strong environmental outcomes. Evidence shows that CDS schemes are expensive and deliver limited additional environmental benefit.

The regulatory impact modelling assumes that additional costs incurred by winemakers can be passed on to consumers. However, experience in Queensland and the realities of today's retail market show that this will be challenging for many businesses. Under the CDS, the cost to wine companies is likely to be around 20 cents per bottle. This includes the 10-cent refund, scheme fees, and administration costs for registration, reporting and payment – and does not include label change costs for compliance.

Our organisations will continue to engage with governments to ensure any changes deliver meaningful environmental outcomes while also safeguarding the sustainability of the Australian wine sector.

We are calling for:

- A nationally harmonised system for CDS registration, reporting, invoicing and payments to reduce duplication and costs for wine businesses.
- Adequate transition arrangements to ensure businesses have time to adapt.
- Cost impact relief for small businesses, for example through exemptions or thresholds.
- A government commitment to ongoing investment in the wine industry to underpin export and domestic sales success.



## Wine Australia Media Campaign



## Update on what Wine Australia does for the Riverina

### Wine Australia has

- Funded the joint appointment of Riverina based personnel resource for growers – Thomas Lefebvre.
- Regional Program for Riverina and NSW continued across locally chosen programs and extension work for growers.
- Continued work in sustainability and ESG including work on carbon and circularity. The ESG Webinar series is free for growers who wish to learn more on planning their sustainability elements in their business.
- CCA posts circularity project underway, One Basin project (Alex Sas represents), Drought Hubs and many agtech projects for fruit quality.
- Grape growing research and winemaking research with specific projects focused for the inland regional needs.
- Administered the funds allocated to the Code of Conduct review by Craig Emerson. AGW to advise timing and next steps.

- Meets monthly between Jeremy Cass, Riverina Winegrape growers and Martin Cole CEO and Shirley Fraser of Wine Australia to discuss local issues and support with issues arising for growers.
- Continued dialogue with growers following the AGM in June on an individual basis to answer queries and encourage participation on discussions or programs and provide feedback to committees and projects underway. Provided market insights support to this
- Launched the grape grower cost calculator and finalised the three-year IMT project for transparency.
- Works closely with NSW Wine and its programs.
- Met with Riverina winemakers in Griffith to discuss the One Grape & Wine Sector plan progress and market development/access. This included discussing with Carrah and major wineries their plans for promoting. Where

# Riverina Winegrape Growers

## Update on what Wine Australia does for the Riverina

wine made from Riverina fruit is not labelled as Wine of NSW or Riverina but often as Wine of Australia or Southeastern Australia, this will impact the proportion of promotion under the region. However, when Riverina or NSW Wines selects to partner with Wine Australia programs, the tradeshow and roadshow program is open to them and promoted fortnightly in updates to states and regions that wish to promote.

Wine Australia has promoted NSW at tastings internationally, in 2024-25, poured 151 SKUs from NSW at 41 events, representing 46 brands.

In exports – NSW label claims represent 2% of total export volume. If you give a portion of “Southeastern Australia” to NSW (estimated by their share of crush) the share of volume goes up to 24% however that is not on the labels. NSW share of production is 30%. The

decision for regionality on labels is a commercial and brand decision outside of Wine Australia remit.

Created the domestic campaign for “We make a wine for that” to allow NSW wineries to promote their brands and regions under the campaign templates with free assets and promotion of their events on the Australian wine website.

Sponsored the Australian Wine List of the Year Awards including the promotion of NSW wines on wine lists both within NSW and nationally.

Continued work in the functions of research and innovation, market development and regulations.

Developed handouts for growers – find on Wine Australia website

On hand for any queries grower have for our services.



Its taken a bit of work but the vineyard is finally financially sustainable

**Wine Grapes Marketing Board** 182 Yambil Street Griffith NSW 2680 Phone: (02) 6962 3944 Fax: (02) 6962 6103  
Email: [board@wgmb.net.au](mailto:board@wgmb.net.au) Web: [www.riverinawinegrapes.com.au](http://www.riverinawinegrapes.com.au) Office Hours: 8:30am - 5:00pm Mon - Fri

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