

20 June 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

Grape expectations for Australia - European trade relations

WFA has welcomed the announcement of the impending Australia – European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (the Agreement) negotiations, and commends the Australian Government for its continued forward thinking trade agenda.

In Monday's joint media release, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Minister for Trade and Investment Steven Ciobo, promoted the benefits for Australian businesses and Australian jobs by launching negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with the European Union.

The wine sector hopes to benefit from the negotiations with the removal of tariffs into the European Union market. Tony Battaglone, WFA Chief Executive said, "The Australian wine sector has been a major beneficiary of the Governments aggressive free trade agenda, and regional Australia is reaping the benefits."

However, one issue of great importance to the Australian wine sector is maintaining the rights of Australia's winemakers to market their wines in Australia and internationally using grape variety names.

Tony Battaglone explained, "The use of grape variety names, such as Prosecco, is a point of contention between the European Union and Australia. Prosecco has always been an internationally recognised grape variety, until 2009, when the European Union cynically sought to prevent its use by non-European producers. Australia's burgeoning Prosecco industry would be destroyed if Australian negotiators were to bow to European demands. Flow-on effects for other grape varieties could have a significant impact on Australian wine businesses as well as threatening other agricultural commodities."

Tony Battaglone went on to praise the Government for their strong support for the Australian wine sector in international negotiations.

"In the lead up to these negotiations, WFA has been raising awareness of the grape variety protection issue and the support from all political parties has been unprecedented. The Australian people have rallied behind the cause and publically expressed their support" he said.

-ENDS-

MEDIA NOTE: Available for interview - WFA Chief Executive Tony Battaglone – 0413 014 807

MEDIA CONTACT: Alison Laslett – 0424 135 381