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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **We can have effective pregnancy warning labels without punishing Australian wine businesses**

Australian Grape & Wine supports a mandatory pregnancy warning label that raises awareness about the risks of drinking during pregnancy, but not one that unnecessarily targets the more than two-thousand small wine businesses across Australia.

Earlier this year the Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation asked Food Standards Australia-New Zealand (FSANZ) to review its original label design on the grounds that it presented “an unreasonable cost burden” on industry. This was the right call, but the review recommendations released today show that FSANZ has failed to address the concerns of Ministers.

“This was the recommendation keeping Australia’s small wine businesses up at night” said Tony Battaglione, Chief Executive of Australian Grape & Wine.

“We’re surprised that FSANZ has chosen to ignore the increased awareness about the risks of drinking during pregnancy achieved through voluntary labelling and industry-government partnerships such as the [DrinkWise Australia FASD Awareness Program](#). This program has been supported by industry and government over many years and provides an integrated and targeted approach reaching millions of Australians through medical practices, pregnancy magazines, online media, radio, secondary schools and community settings” said Mr Battaglione.

“While we are pleased FSANZ has suggested a more targeted headline of ‘Pregnancy Warning’, this change does not address the Ministerial Forum’s concerns about unreasonable costs to wine businesses in any meaningful way” said Mr Battaglione.

The primary cost concern raised by wine businesses across Australia is the requirement to use black, white and red on the warning label on the bottle, and on the outer packaging (the carton).

“Small family-owned wine businesses simply won’t be able to take this kind of hit, especially on the back of drought, bushfires, smoke and now COVID-19” said Mr Battaglione.

Australian Grape & Wine estimates that if contrasting colours were used instead of the three proposed mandatory colours, wine businesses would save around 35 per cent per SKU compared to the more costly option.

“Contrasting colours are all that is required for every other FSANZ warning label and it will raise awareness in this instance too. The only thing it won’t do is drive small wine businesses into the ground” said Mr Battaglione.

“Either option will raise awareness about the risks of drinking during pregnancy. The choice Ministers have to make is whether they will back small businesses by agreeing to the pragmatic approach of requiring high-contrast colours; or whether they will choose the more punitive pathway” said Mr Battaglione.

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**About Australian Grape and Wine Inc**

Australian Grape and Wine Inc is the national association of grape and wine producers. We address issues across the supply-chain that impact on the profitability and sustainability of the sector. We lead and advocate public policy that enhances the ability to responsibly produce, promote and enjoy Australian wine in moderation.

Australian Grape & Wine is recognised as a representative organisation for winegrape and wine producers under the Wine Australia Act 2013, and is incorporated under the SA Associations Incorporation Act 1985. We work in partnership with the Australian Government to develop and implement policy that is in the best interests of winegrape growers and winemakers across Australia.