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MEDIA RELEASE

Statement in relation to pregnancy warning labels

Australian Grape & Wine has consistently supported the introduction of mandatory pregnancy warning labels. However, we are deeply disappointed at the decision of Food Forum Ministers to approve a flawed label that will cost industry and consumers \$400m.

In requiring the warning label to carry specific colours – rather than simply mandating legibility and contrast standards – Food Forum Ministers have imposed significant costs on winemakers for no measurable public health benefit. Every other warning label in the Food Standards Code, such as those for allergens, require contrasting colours only.

Australia's winemakers are hurting after a summer of drought, fire and smoke taint, followed by months of trading restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many winemakers will not come back – and this decision will result in even more cellar doors closing permanently and wine industry jobs lost. These losses will be felt most acutely by small businesses across regional Australia.

Despite the leadership shown by the Commonwealth – supported by New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, who all voted for the equally effective, but much cheaper contrast option – other jurisdictions chose an option that they know will hurt small businesses already doing it tough. In particular, the Governments of Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania must explain their decision to the large number of winemakers, their families and their employees in their states.

Ultimately, this exercise has been driven by ideologically driven, powerful and well-funded anti-alcohol groups with no regard for the people and communities of rural and regional Australia that depend on a thriving Australian wine industry.

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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.