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MEDIA RELEASE

Wine sector seeks to complete Vintage 2020 amid fears of national shutdown

Australian Grape & Wine welcomes the approach taken by the Victorian and New South Wales Governments to allow businesses to continue working through the 2020 vintage, and encourages other governments to follow suit.

Australian Grape & Wine Chief Executive, Mr Tony Battaglione said “We understand the potentially devastating ramifications of COVID-19 on the health and welfare of Australians, and recognise that governments have to make difficult decisions that impact businesses, the economy, and our normal way of life.

“However the next 4-6 weeks is a critical period for grape and wine businesses in Australia. They have just one chance per year to grow grapes and make wine, and many are nervous about whether heightened COVID-19 responses will require them to shut down vintage 2020” said Mr Battaglione.

2020 has seen hundreds of wine businesses facing a future without tourists visiting their cellar doors, or suffering the impacts of fire and smoke damage. Cancelling the 2020 vintage could spell the end for many – possibly hundreds – of Australian grape and wine businesses, with significant flow-on impacts in rural and regional communities.

“It is imperative that we get these grapes picked, crushed, fermented and locked away from maturation” said Mr Battaglione. “About 30 per cent of the national crop is still to be picked, with many growers and wineries currently working around the clock to get the job done. A shut-down of the sector now would destroy the vast majority of the 2020 vintage, which would have ramifications for many years to come”.

“Wine businesses are putting unprecedented measures in place to ensure the safety of their people and their customers, and to comply with government directives. These measures are allowing the grape and wine sector to complete vintage under tight conditions that will help halt the spread of COVID-19 in the community” said Mr Battaglione.

“We hope all governments across Australia can implement arrangements that protect human health and ensure Vintage 2020 can be completed”.

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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.