

2 December 2008

MEDIA RELEASE

WFA welcomes historic Australia and European Community Wine Agreement

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) welcomed the signing of the historic Australia and European Community Wine Agreement in Brussels overnight by the Hon Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Stephen Strachan, WFA Chief Executive, said that the agreement would bring a number of important benefits to the Australian wine industry, including the recognition of all existing winemaking techniques used in Australian production of wine and a simplified procedure to authorise the approval of new winemaking techniques.

"The agreement will also simplify labelling provisions and a standstill clause has been adopted that prevents the introduction of more restrictive trade measures that could affect the importation of wine," Mr Strachan said.

Other benefits in the Agreement include:

- Under certain conditions, the terms ruby, cream, tawny and vintage will be able to be used to describe fortified wines on the European market;
- Wines with a mineral content which reflects the naturally occurring levels found in Australian agricultural soils will be able to be sold in Europe;
- More flexible blending rules have been adopted;
- Statements referring to the number of "standard drinks" in the wine, mandatory in Australia, will be able to be displayed on Australian wine labels entering the European market; and
- A commitment to work cooperatively with the aim of harmonising their respective regulatory requirements in relation to the indication of ingredients in wine.

"This agreement ushers in a new era of cooperation with the European Union, which will bring mutual benefits, not just to our respective wine industries, but will help cement wider relations" Mr Strachan said.

"Negotiations on this agreement have been taking place for over ten years and I would like to extend my thanks to the Australian Government and all the negotiators from both sides who have worked tirelessly to resolve this agreement."

Australia exports over \$1.3 billion of wine to Europe, making it one of the country's largest export markets.

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