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MEDIA RELEASE

WFA 2008 Vintage Survey Report: 2008 Harvest above expectations

The 2008 Winemakers' Federation of Australia Vintage Survey has come in above expectations in both size and quality, reaching a total of 1.83 million tonnes. This figure is significantly larger than estimations made at the start of the growing season, and is in fact almost double some early predictions.

"The figure of 1.83 million tonnes represents a resounding success in a challenging year, and is testament to the resilience and adaptive nature of our regional growers and wineries. A harvest such as this should dispel any fears that we are unable to supply our domestic and international markets with the volume of quality Australian wine required," commented WFA Chief Executive, Stephen Strachan.

"However with increasing pressure around water shortages, a strong Australian dollar, and a tough international market, we can no longer compete on price alone," continued Strachan. "And a high figure such as this raises some concerns regarding the future sustainability of the lower-priced sector of our industry."

"Australian wineries produced some extremely high quality wines this vintage – with some regions experiencing their best season in years – and this is where our focus must lie."

"This year most branded wine producers acted sustainably by only purchasing the volume of grapes needed to meet their existing branded requirements, no-one wants to return to an oversupply situation. However this large harvest underlines the fact that structural change is required in some parts of the wine industry if they are to have a sustainable future."

Red grapes accounted for 53% of the total intake in 2008 with a rise of 45% over 2007, while white grapes, representing 47% of the crush, recorded a much smaller volume increase of 18%. Aromatic varieties continue to increase in popularity, with Pinot Noir intake rising 63% to just over 47,000 tonnes (2.6% of the total crush) and Sauvignon Blanc intake rising 74% to over 66,000 tonnes (3.6% of the total crush).

For further comment on the vintage report, contact:

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