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MEDIA RELEASE

Non spirit based alcopops ruled out by government

Australia's brewers and winemakers have welcomed legislative amendments designed to rule out the controversial overseas practice of manufacturing alcopops with ethanol stripped down from wine or beer.

Both the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) and the Brewers Association of Australia & New Zealand support the closing down of loopholes for non spirit based RTDs.

The legislative amendments seek to narrow the definitions of 'beer' and 'wine' for excise and customs purposes and were introduced into Federal Parliament yesterday. They deal solely with this narrow technical matter of where the line between beer, wine and alcopops should be drawn.

WFA Chief Executive, Stephen Strachan, commented, "Our members are proud local producers of quality wine. The wine sector is made up of 2,300 winemakers, 7,500 grapegrowers and 60,000 direct and indirect jobs across the country. We are happy to leave the manufacture of pre-mixed products to spirits manufacturers."

Brewers Association Executive Director, Stephen Swift added, "Our Australian members have been brewing since before Federation itself. They have strong business links to the local malting barley and hops farming communities. Australia's brewers have resolved not to use ethanol stripped from beer as the base for alcopops."

Last year, both organisations forwarded separate policy proposals to Treasury which sought to end the 'passing off' of alcopops as beer or wine for taxation purposes. Yesterday's legislative response is largely consistent with those proposals, thus providing certainty for Australia's traditional local industries.

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