

MEDIA RELEASE

18 December, 2013

Winemakers' Federation defends Australian rights to Prosecco

The Registrar of Trademarks has upheld an objection to the application lodged by the European Commission seeking to register the Italian geographical indication (GI) Prosecco as a GI in Australia. If the application had been successful, Australian producers would no longer have been able to use Prosecco on a label.

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia objected to the application by the European Commission on the basis that the term is used in Australia 'as the name of a variety of grapes'.

WFA CEO Paul Evans said 'This is a triumph for common sense and protects the right of Prosecco producers in Australia to market their product as they wish'.

Pioneered by Dal Zotto wines in the King Valley who were the first winery in Australia to produce commercial quantities of Prosecco with their first vintage in 2004, Prosecco has been used as a grape variety name in Australia and internationally for many years.

Roland Wahlquist, Chief Executive Officer of Brown Brothers, Australia's largest producer of Prosecco, welcomed the decision saying 'This is a very important outcome for the producers in the King Valley. Prosecco is now so well known in Australia, that in 2011, Tourism Victoria launched King Valley Prosecco Road, a food and wine trail designed to help visitors discover the pleasures of Prosecco in the King Valley of North East Victoria.'

Mr Wahlquist went on to say 'While the variety has Italian origins, the King Valley makes its own version of this wine, with an emphasis on freshness and delicacy. Each year the regions 6 Prosecco producers sell over 30,000 cases in the Australian market. '

According to Paul Evans 'Prosecco is a great variety suited to Australian conditions and popular with consumers. WFA is delighted with the outcome for our producers'.

The full decision can be found in Winemakers Federation of Australia v European Commission [2013] ATMOGI 1 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/ATMOGI/2013/1.html>). The European Commission is likely to appeal the decision in the Federal Court.

Further information:

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