



**Australian Grape & Wine submission to
FSANZ Targeted stakeholder
consultations on:**

**P1059 – Energy labelling on alcoholic
beverages**

December 2023

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About Australian Grape & Wine

Australian Grape & Wine is Australia's national association of winegrape and wine producers. Our activities focus upon the objective of providing leadership, strategy, advocacy and support that serves Australian wine businesses now and into the future. We represent the interests of the more than 2,500 winemakers and 6,000 winegrape growers working in Australia. Our role is to help forge a political, social and regulatory environment - in Australia and overseas - that enables profitable and sustainable Australian wine and winegrape growing businesses. These businesses make a significant contribution to underpinning regional economies by driving growth in jobs, regional exports and food and wine tourism. We represent small, medium and large winemakers and winegrape growers from across the country. Policy decisions by the Australian Grape & Wine Board require 80% support, ensuring no single category can dominate the decision-making process and guaranteeing policy is only determined if it provides significant industry benefit. In practice, most decisions are determined by consensus. 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.

Background

In mid-January 2023 Food Standards Australia & New Zealand (FSANZ) released a Call For Submissions (CFS) regarding Proposal P1059 - Energy labelling on alcoholic beverages ([P1059](#)), which considers amending the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) to require energy labelling on alcoholic beverages. In general, the majority of submitters to the CFS were supportive of the provision of energy information on alcoholic beverages. However, there were mixed views as to the most appropriate format, with some submitters raising concerns about potential unintended consequences. Some submitters also had concerns with the proposed approach in relation to energy content claims, percentage daily intake (%DI) information and the voluntary provision of nutrition information panels (NIPs) on alcoholic beverages. As a result, FSANZ undertook consumer testing of the proposed format and alternative formats, to understand how consumers interpret the information and whether there would be any adverse impacts.

Work on P1059 is being progressed alongside Proposal P1049 - Carbohydrate and sugar claims on alcoholic beverages ([P1049](#)) to allow consideration of interrelated issues and to align any labelling changes to reduce the impact on industry. Additional work undertaken on broader FSANZ "added sugar" proposals '[P1058 - Nutrition labelling about added sugars](#)' and '[P1062 - Defining added sugars for claims](#)' are also interrelated to these proposals.

In late November 2023, a [Consumer Research Report](#) was released by FSANZ and the outcomes of the report presented to targeted stakeholder groups with feedback sought verbally, or in writing, by 13 December 2023. The following submission is made by Australian Grape & Wine in response to the targeted consultation.

Summary of wine sector position

As the peak industry body representing the interests of Australian grape and wine producers, Australian Grape & Wine has sought input broadly from the sector throughout the consultations on P1059. The following summarises our broad views on P1059 on behalf of the sector.

- We support the provision of meaningful, easily understood information which supports consumers to make decisions about energy content of alcoholic beverage.
- There remains no conclusive evidence provided throughout this process that shows that the proposed changes will influence behavioral change in consumers, leading to health outcomes.
- A simple option which aligns with the objective of providing easily understood consumer energy information remains the preference for the Australian wine sector. The most relevant and simple to understand measure for consumers for wine is Energy kJ (Cal) per 100mL.
- Information beyond this basic energy information, only adds complexity for consumers and costs to business. These additional pieces of information should not be mandatory, but industry should be allowed to provide such information on a voluntary basis, or via other off label solutions, if deemed appropriate to convey true and correct information to consumers.
- International consistency is of great importance to the sector. A flexible approach, which allows for the provision of some additional voluntary information will help mitigate the impact of this measure on small business, while providing consistency in providing the most relevant information for consumers.
- This is a major labelling change that will require an adequate transition period of a minimum of 4 years (48 Months) as well as provisions for stock in trade.
- We strongly believe that an approach which utilises FSANZ preferred option but allows for voluntary use of some aspects of consumer information is the most appropriate option. This will address the majority of stakeholder concerns raised and allows Ministers and FSANZ to meet its stated objectives of P1059.
- Concerns raised by some stakeholders around the possibility that certain nutritional information on alcoholic beverage creating a 'health halo' are completely unfounded with no factual evidence to support them and contradict the intended outcome of P1059.
- Australian Grape & Wine has reviewed drafts of the South Australian Wine Industry Association and New Zealand Winegrowers submissions to this targeted consultation and we support the positions raised in these papers. We further support an additional joint wine sector meeting with FSANZ to discuss any of the points raised.

Questions for stakeholders

Do you have any comments about the findings of the consumer research?

Scope of the Research

The stated reason for FSANZ preparing this proposal was that "*Despite public health efforts the prevalence of overweight and obesity in the Australian and New Zealand populations continues to increase.*" It was noted that "*Energy balance is fundamental for maintaining a healthy body weight and reducing the risk of chronic disease related to overweight and obesity.*"

Food Ministers have stated that they "*expect food labels to provide adequate information to enable consumers to make informed food choices to support healthy dietary patterns*", noting that "*consumers' ability to understand the energy contribution that alcohol makes to their diet is severely limited, as alcoholic beverages are exempt from providing nutrition information on the label*". With these concerns in mind, the Food Ministers asked FSANZ

to consider energy labelling on alcoholic beverages.

It is clear from the above that the reasoning and intent behind this proposal relates solely to the energy content of alcoholic beverages and providing information to consumers to allow them to understand that energy content.

The scope of P1059 including the consumer research should therefore focus on energy content of alcoholic beverages and providing information to consumers that is meaningful and easy to understand. Australian Grape & Wine supports the provision of this information but urges FSANZ to thoroughly consider the costs and benefits of implementing such an approach. It is our organisation's view that energy information can, and should, be provided to consumers without imposing an undue labelling burden on industry.

We are concerned that the process undertaken by FSANZ to date has shifted away from that intent, which was clearly defined and agreed to by Ministers, FSANZ and the majority of submitters in P1059.

The inclusion on aspects of serving size information and "Standard Drinks" within the consumer research departs from the original intent and the drivers of P1059. These terms are well defined and established some time ago as measures related to volume and alcohol content of these beverages. Total volume of the product, alcohol by volume (ABV) percentage and total standard drinks in a product are already mandatory labelling requirements on all alcoholic beverages. The consumer research extended the scope of this proposal beyond its intent by introducing concept of 'Average Restaurant Serve' and Standard Drinks as aspects which relate to energy content. We are concerned that the inclusion of another additional, mandatory volumetric descriptor (the serving size) will not assist consumers in their understanding of energy intake and may lead to negative consequences in relation to how a serving size interacts with the well-established notion of a standard drink. We note the concept of a serving size is not used on wine labels in Australia, and nor is it used on other alcoholic beverages that we are aware of.

We are also concerned that the concept of an average restaurant serve (150mL), which was used in the FSANZ consumer research, could be wildly misleading and confusing for consumers. We are strongly of the view that standard drink mandatory requirements must retain their primacy on the label, and that the concept of a serving size is potentially confusing and misleading. A standard drink is a well understood concept amongst the industry and consumers and is unambiguous in terms of its calculation. In contrast, a serving size, which could be set by a business using whatever formulation it likes and subject to the vagaries of alcohol content, which varies from vintage to vintage for most wine producers. We fear this could have a broader negative impact on those who see standard drinks information as their primary reference point when choosing to consume an alcoholic beverage in line with the National Drinking Guidelines.

While industry is well-placed to promote the importance of consumer understanding of standard drinks in their products, it would be unreasonable to ask industry to promote an approach to serving sizes that does not have a clear methodology or to promote an approach that it views as potentially confusing to consumers.

The concept of a serving size is irrelevant to a consumer's understanding of energy content in a bottle of wine (noting the majority of wine sold in Australia is in this packaging format). It would be an unnecessary and redundant mandatory requirement for a consumer who is well versed in utilising the most relevant and easily understood measures of volume and energy (Kilojoules /Calories) content.

Labelling of standard drinks is a mandatory requirement of all alcoholic beverages. The use of the standard drink's logo provides consumers with a prominent and well understood measure of the standard drinks in an alcoholic beverage. The proposed inclusion of standard drinks information in this process is out of scope and would require a separate process to consider. Standard drinks information is different to energy content information and its inclusion in this process risks unintended consequences which may detract from this important health and safety information.

The consumer research therefore used information outside of the scope of this proposal. It expanded the scope

to aspects which had not previously been a part of the original intent or considered under P1059. Expanding the scope of the consumer research with the inclusion of these terms means its results have been skewed with proposed changes that will further complicate and confuse consumers and impose significant costs and impost on industry.

Research validity

Australian Grape & Wine considers that the Consumer Research study, was conducted based on a very narrow scope and therefore did not answer a number of key questions related to how consumers will engage and interpret this information in real world scenarios. The study lacked external validity as it was highly focused on a single option without broader real-world context. External validity relates to a measure of how applicable a study's outcomes are to real world scenarios.

The study does not take account of real-world perspective of labels that already contain volume and standard drinks and other important health and safety information. Participants in the study were shown a table only or a table printed on a label without additional mandatory information that would accompany the table in a real-world scenario. The study did not consider the attention this consumer information would receive on real world labels, nor how the addition of this information may impact other critical health and safety information (e.g. allergen labelling) on an alcoholic beverage label.

The study also failed to account for the differences in how these beverages are served and consumed in real world. For example, the use of "average restaurant serve (150mL)" as the serving size for wine is irrelevant in real world scenario where the intent is to provide consumers with energy information about the products they are consuming. This is because a wine consumer in a restaurant will generally not have access to a wine label. If consumers are being provided with a serve of wine at a restaurant or licensed venue the serving typically varies between 100mL, 150mL or 250mL pours. In the majority of these cases when the wine is poured to a measured volume it is done by the venue the consumer isn't provided with the bottle allowing them to investigate the back label and assess the energy content of their glass of wine. Additionally, wine consumed at home is rarely measured to precisely 150ml when consumed. The use of "average restaurant serve (150mL)" for wine in the research lacks real world understanding and insight into how these beverages are consumed and further calls into question the validity of the study's outcomes.

Format used in the consumer research.

Through this process FSANZ established its preferred option for P1059, a truncated nutritional information panel (NIP) in table format. Australian Grape & Wine is supportive of a truncated NIP format (broadly speaking). The CFS used FSANZ preferred option and sought feedback on this format. The outcome of the CFS was that the majority of submitters were supportive of the provision of energy information on alcoholic beverages. However, there were mixed views as to the most appropriate format, with some submitters raising concerns about potential unintended consequences.

While FSANZ acknowledges the mixed views raised in the CFS on the appropriate format it ignored feedback on alternative options and continued to prioritise its preferred format within the consumer research study. The FSANZ preferred option was used as the control with participants viewing a range of variations of that preferred format. The study assesses the FSANZ preferred option and its variations rather than other simplified versions that may be easier to understand and would impose least impost and cost on industry.

One option that Australian Grape & Wine believes warrants further consideration is the provision of some information via off label solutions. While this option has been considered and dismissed as an option by FSANZ in

the past, we assert that since that assessment took place the technology and consumer acceptance of such has progressed well beyond the preference for on label information only.

FSANZ consideration of off label solutions occurred throughout consultation in July, September, and October 2021, with a preliminary analysis released in December 2021. It is this work that appears to underpin FSANZ recommendations not to adopt off label solutions. The European regulations on nutritional and ingredient labelling for wine, including the use of a QR code for additional information were passed in December 2021. This means that these assessments could not have considered the EU approach including digital solutions.

Since this time not only have countries begun to regulate digital solutions for labelling but the technology and the consumer acceptance and use of such technologies has grown rapidly. We would therefore assert that further consideration of alternative means such as the provision of digital off-label solutions, as a part of this proposal needs to be undertaken by FSANZ. Without considering a more modern approach to our Australian Food Standards we risk the regulation and Australia as a whole being left behind by others who adopt a more dynamic and effective approach to innovation in regulation.

Do you have any comments on the proposed revised format for energy labelling on alcoholic beverages?

Wine perspective on format

As noted above the current proposed format only serves to add unnecessary complexity that could confuse or mislead consumers. In addition, it will add significant labelling burden and cost to industry compared to alternative options.

In relation to energy content, serving information such as "standard serve", "average restaurant serve" and "total servings per pack" are irrelevant to wine and may potentially mislead or confuse a consumer in real-world practical use.

For wine, 100mL is defined in Australia and internationally as a standard serve. For wine the measures of 100mL and standard serve would be the same, making multiple listings redundant. If 100mL had been used on its own as the standard serve the results of the consumer research would have been different for wine. 100mL is much easier to calculate and understand for consumers and adding other measures only stands to confuse. Noting the original intention of providing consumers with energy content information Australian Grape & Wine recommend a simplified clear single figure of kilojoules (Cal) / 100mL (a standard serve) be used to convey the energy content of wines with any additional information to be provided on a voluntary basis.

One size fits all approach

It is clear to Australian Grape & Wine from both the CFS and the consumer study that there are a range of views on the most appropriate format that will provide consumers with relevant energy content information and be appropriate for different categories of beverage. This remains the case despite the consumer study findings. The reason for this divergence of views is because we are seeking to apply consistent rules to categories of alcoholic beverage which are quite different in their makeup and how they are served and consumed. This is why efforts to develop a "one size fits all" approach for all alcoholic beverages has continued to illicit a range of views. In isolation the outcomes of the consumer research reflect this as there are variations between each of the beverage categories.

For this reason, Australian Grape & Wine is strongly recommending further consideration be given to an

alternative proposed solution which meets the objectives of Ministers, FSANZ and allows for some autonomy amongst beverage categories.

Our proposal uses FSANZ proposed format with a variation to allow for some information to be applied on a mandatory basis and other to be added voluntarily as appropriate to the product. In the example table below:

- Text below the line (in black) includes the critical information for calculating the energy content of the alcoholic beverage and would be mandatory for all beverage categories.
- A small additional elements (in red) could be added to the mandatory information to ensure serving size volume is specified. This is consistent with examples used in the consumer research.
- Text above the line (in blue) could be applied on a voluntary basis depending on the relevance to each category/product and how best it is determined to convey that information to consumers.

ENERGY INFORMATION		
Servings per package: (insert number of servings)		
Serving size: mL / Serving size: mL (x standard drinks)		
% daily intake		
	Quantity per (x mL) serving	Quantity per 100 mL
Energy	kJ (Cal)	kJ (Cal)

Ideally for Wine, the preferred option would be to only mandate a “Quantity per 100mL serving” as the sole mandatory requirement with additional information of less relevance provided only on a voluntary basis if deemed necessary by the producer.

This approach would allow for consistency across all alcoholic beverage categories for the vital information used to calculate energy content. It also allows for additional contextual information that may or may not be relevant to each category to be applied on a as needs basis.

If deemed appropriate, these voluntary provisions could extend further to the full nutritional information panel as is currently the case.

This approach would be wholly consistent with how FSANZ apply other voluntary provisions to the NIP for other food such as % daily intake information. Furthermore, it provides consumers with easily understood information that can be tailored by each category to the relevant aspects of the product. This option would also be much more well received across all industries as it would make information more relevant for each and would allow a level of flexibility and trust for the sector.

We strongly believe that this alternative, incorporating some voluntary and some mandatory information, is a viable solution which will help achieve the objective of Minister and FSANZ under P1059 and presents a reasonable compromise to all stakeholders involved in this process.

Do you have any information or views about the costs and benefits associated with the revised format for the energy statement? Please provide as much evidence or reasoning as you can to support your views.

As noted above Australian Grape & Wine considers the proposed format to be overly complicated and large in size and shifting beyond the scope of the intent of the P1059. The cost of this only serves to add unnecessary complexity that could confuse or mislead consumers. In addition, it will add significant labelling burden and cost to industry compared to alternative simplified options. Unfortunately, a range of alternative options which could deliver the same understanding of energy content but impose less cost on the sector were not tested as part of the consumer study.

Increased competition for labelling space with a range of mandatory labelling changes, implemented or pending implementation, in recent years are placing ever increasing pressure on labelling real estate. Ongoing changes and large mandatory labels present a significant risk in both cost to the industry and in potential to detract from other critical health and safety information. It also serves to undermine winemakers' ability to tell the story of their product to a consumer and potentially erodes the value of brand IP.

Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to remove the requirement for a NIP when a nutrition content claim about energy is made?

Refer below to comments on voluntary provision of NIP.

Can you offer any information or data about the number of SKU's of alcoholic beverages currently making an energy content claim?

No

Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to not permit %DI information in an energy statement?

Not permitting the voluntary use of % Daily Intake is inconsistent with every other food & beverage category. It again gives weight to some stakeholder feedback over others without due consideration or scientific basis for the change.

The Australian Dietary Guidelines consider alcohol to be a discretionary food (i.e. energy dense, nutrient poor) and that "*limiting alcohol intake is an important strategy for achieving appropriate energy intake*". The guidelines recommend that "*alcohol intake contribute less than 5% of dietary energy*" (NHMRC, 2013). These guidelines refer to percentage dietary energy intake of alcohol, so we see no valid reasoning for alcohol exclusion. If the concerns relate to confusion for consumers in understanding that Alcohol is part of a regular daily energy intake than the same logic should be applied to other discretionary foods that are high in salt, sugar or fats.

The proposal to restrict voluntary provision of %DI for alcoholic beverages is completely counterintuitive to the stated intent of P1059 to provide consumers with energy information about the products they consume.

Can you offer any information or data about the number of SKU's of alcoholic beverages currently labelled with %DI information?

No

Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to remove the permission for the voluntary provision of a NIP on alcoholic beverages?

While nutrient content claims are not prevalent for wine, some businesses do use them¹. Of greatest concern in this regard relates to the process being undertaken by FSANZ which appears to inconsistently weight the feedback received.

FSANZ notes that following the CFS that "Some submitters [emphasis added] also had concerns with the proposed approach in relation to energy content claims, percentage daily intake (%DI) information and the voluntary provision of nutrition information panels (NIPs) on alcoholic beverages".

¹ <https://www.littleripples.co/collections/wines>

Despite the fact that these concerns were the views of “some submitters”, not all, these views appear to have been adopted into the final recommendations with little if any scientific evidence provided to justify these changes. It is clear there were not consistent or significant stakeholder concerns raised on the matter. It is unclear why the views of some submitters would be implemented above others without a scientific basis to justify them. Likewise, the views of some submitters were that the proposed approach will place an undue impost on industry, but these concerns do not appear to be reflected in FSANZ current proposal. For example, we suggest it is unreasonable and unhelpful from a policy formulation perspective, to weight the content of a submission provided by a single person the same as that of an industry association representing thousands of businesses that drive employment and economic activity across regional Australia.

Furthermore, the CFS notes concerns raised by public health of the potential health “halo effect” of allowing alcoholic beverages to provide nutritional information. This was ultimately disproven by FSANZ own consumer research study. It does not make sense why some nutritional information would create a health halo effect but not others.

The proposal to remove producers’ ability to provide a full NIP when voluntary nutrition claims are made is unjustified, lacks clear scientific basis and bias the input of some stakeholders over others.

Do you agree with FSANZ’s estimation of SKU’s of alcoholic beverages available that are currently voluntarily labelled with a NIP? Please provide as much evidence or reasoning as you can to support your views.

We do not have adequate data available at the time to support this estimate.

Do you have any additional comments on the proposal for requiring energy labelling of alcoholic beverages?

Transition Periods

Noting the interest from Ministers to expedite this process, and the intentions to link this proposal to others related to sugar and carbohydrates, Australian Grape & Wine would like to strongly reiterate the need to ensure minimisation of labelling changes and the allowance of adequate transition periods. Labelling changes are extremely costly, and this proposal presents a significant change to labels. The proposed size of the current format would require redesigning of entire back labels to accommodate the large table.

We note that the current consultation paper does not specifically address any transition periods but that the recently published approval report for P1062 proposed a four-year transition period and two years of stock-in-trade provisions. We strongly submit that this same transition period applies but that an unlimited stock in trade period, equivalent to that for the pregnancy warning mark, be utilised for any Food Standards Code labelling changes moving forward. This is a particular concern for wine as a long-life product with complex supply chain arrangements. Wine products can see a lengthy period between labelling and sale such as museum wines.

A time limited stock in trade period may mean that businesses may have to go through and over sticker existing labels, at substantial cost. This would be even more complex because the labelling changes would be product specific. At the end of the stock in trade period the product may be in the hands of someone other than the initial producer (e.g. a retailer), and that person may not possess the information necessary to relabel such stock. With short stock in trade provisions, those remaining should not be left with substantial and potentially impossible to meet compliance obligations. It is unclear what purpose this would serve, noting that wine represents only 12% of the actual containers on the Australia and New Zealand markets.

Furthermore, we also reiterate the importance of aligning transition periods with existing consultations, which may also result in labelling changes. It is vital that adequate provisions for transition periods and stock in trade are provided to allow industry to limit the excessive cost of this potentially significant labelling change.

Due consideration of preferred option

There have been a number of new concepts which have only been introduced at the latter stages of the consultation or remain unanswered such as format, standard drinks, average restaurant serve, removal of voluntary NIP and %DI provisions, which have not been given due consideration.

Progression without due consideration could lead to unintended consequences. Efforts to progress this and related sugar/carb proposals rapidly are leading to a lack of scientific justification and due consideration. These are all highly complex issues which require further consideration of implications for industry and consumers. There is no identified health imperative that requires these proposals to be progressed quickly nor any evidence that they will have an impact on changing consumer behavior once implemented. What is clear though is that they will impose unnecessary burden and cost on industry without clear understanding of their potential to mislead or confuse consumers and possibly lead to adverse health impacts.

International consistency with overseas regulations

Harmonisation of international regulation is of great importance to the Australian wine sector, which is an export orientated industry. We are therefore supportive of FSANZ seeking to understand and align its approach to other overseas regulations. This should be encouraged where regulations are appropriate and applicable to Australian consumers and industry. We note that the current proposed format is inconsistent with all other international energy requirements currently imposed or pending for alcoholic beverages. While FSANZ has insisted it has taken account of international regulation as part of its review, it is clear that the current proposal remains wholly inconsistent.

For example, the European Union has now mandated energy labelling for wine, which entered into force on 8 December 2023. These requirements mandate a single statement of the energy (kilojoules and kilocalories) expressed per 100 mL on wine labels accompanied by a QR code with additional nutritional and ingredient information. To simplify the format and avoid the need for language translation, the symbol "E" (for energy) is being used to identify the on-label energy information. The information must be presented in kilojoules and kilocalories per 100mL. This simplified, easily understood measure is being implemented across Europe and has been under development for many years. The energy content measurement is the most critical information for consumers and is the only information directly applied to the label. The current proposal from FSANZ is inconsistent with this measure, which means our labels would no longer be compliant in the EU and would require development of additional separate labels for our wine exported to the EU.

The EU are often leaders in developing wine regulation globally and it is common for others to replicate these as harmonised regulation supports improved trade and reduction of cost for businesses. Adopting measures that were inconsistent with the EU would not only disadvantage Australian wine exports to Europe, but it would further advantage our competitors who seek to align their regulations and further disadvantage us in their markets as well.

At present both the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), our two biggest export markets by volume and value are reviewing their wine regulations and considering adopting measures for nutritional or energy information. The United States Government has, via the Department of the Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) confirmed on 17 November 2022 that it will engage in a new rulemaking on nutrition content labelling in respect of alcoholic beverages and related matters. In May 2023 The UK through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announced its intention to significantly reform wine regulation in the UK via a Wine Reforms Consultation. Many of these reforms are being implemented in 2024 and

it is expected that the UK will also consider aspects of alignment with the EU nutrition and ingredient regulations. Given the significance of these markets, Australia's own implementation should consider, at a minimum, options which allow for alignment with these measures before progressing with a measure that could result in trade impediments and additional expense for business.

Since 2020, The International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) has been considering amending its International Standard for Labelling of Wines. These changes include amendments that align with the EU approach and are inconsistent with the current FSANZ proposal. It is expected that once published that a number of OIV members will reference the OIV standard in consideration of development of future nutritional information requirements.

Furthermore, Asia presents the greatest opportunity for growth and diversification for Australian wine exports. Few markets in Asia produce large volumes of wine and they typically look to traditional wine markets like the EU or international bodies like OIV or Codex to develop appropriate wine regulation. Australian wine businesses will be further disadvantaged in a number of Asian markets that will likely replicate the EU, OIV or Codex standards if we do not consider and seek to align ourselves with international regulation currently in force or being developed.

We therefore urge FSANZ to consider options which allow the sector some flexibility to harmonise labelling requirements with international standards and regulations. This would include mandatory kJ (Cal)/100mL serving and the option to voluntarily provide additional nutritional information via alternate labelling or off label means.

Links to Sugar proposals

We note that P1049 and P1062 related to sugar and claims have been fast tracked and linked to this proposal. We implore FSANZ to give further consideration to the implications of this work as they relate to this proposal. Sugar in alcoholic beverages is an immensely complex issue as has been acknowledged by FSANZ.

FSANZ has also identified some relevant international references regarding sugar and definitions of added sugar through these proposals. However, the majority of these are not relevant or applicable to wine. We also refer FSANZ to the proposed work of Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL). In particular the agreement by all members at CCFL47² on future work that:

"CCFL47:

....

ii. Agreed that Costa Rica would prepare a discussion paper on the **definition for added sugars (emphasis added)** and that:

a. The discussion paper would take into account the need for including sugar on the nutrient declaration list; and

b. A CL would be issued to request for information to support the development of the discussion paper...."

Codex Australia is currently seeking input on definitions of added sugar from industry sections, and it would be illogical to progress work ahead of consideration of international work underway at Codex.

With this entirely relevant and pivotal piece of work underway at Codex, we strongly recommend that FSANZ considers this work before implementing changes which could then prove to be inconsistent with the work of Codex CCFL.

² [REPORT OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING](#)

Conclusion

Australian Grape & Wine is supportive of the provision of clear and transparent information to consumers about the products we produce. It is vital however that the cost of changes be weighed against the potential to provide genuine benefit to the outcome they are seeking to achieve. In this instance it is clear that there is potential for significant cost to the sector but there is no clear objective evidence which supports the genuine benefit which will result from these changes.

In addition, we believe that there are a number of changes that could be made to the current preferred option that would not only simplify the information for better consumer understanding but would lessens the cost and administrative burden places on the sector for such a significant change.

Further consideration needs to be given to the rapidly changing regulatory environment and international efforts in this space as without efforts to coordinate our standards Australian wine and our regulations will be left behind.

We believe that our compromised solution of some aspects being required on an optional, voluntary basis presents a genuine opportunity to reach an outcome which meets the objectives of food Minister and FSANZ while also addressing the feedback raised by stakeholders. We ask FSANZ to consider further direct engagement with Australian Grape & Wine and New Zealand Winegrowers to ensure that these views are given genuine consideration before recommendations are made.

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