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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Australian Grape & Wine Welcomes Government Response to Emerson Review – But More Action Needed

Australian Grape & Wine (AGW) welcomes the Albanese Government's response to the *Review of Regulatory Options for the Wine and Grape Sector* and its decision to progress a mandatory Code of Conduct for Winegrape Purchases.

AGW Chief Executive, Mr Lee McLean, said the Government's response seeks to address several longstanding concerns about transparency and the conduct of commercial negotiations in the winegrape sector.

"A mandatory code has the potential to provide a clearer framework for how growers and winemakers engage commercially, and we welcome progress on an issue many in the industry have been calling for," Mr McLean said.

"But we also need to be realistic: a code alone will not improve winegrape prices or resolve the deep structural pressures facing our sector."

Mr McLean said it is critical that the Government undertakes genuine, thorough consultation to ensure the code is practical, workable, and avoids unintended consequences for either growers or winemakers.

The Government has agreed, or agreed-in-principle, to the majority of Dr Emerson's recommendations, including earlier price offers, clearer assessment standards, strengthened protections against retribution, and the establishment of an implementation working group.

"Given the practical implications for day-to-day commercial relationships, grower and winemaker representation on the implementation working group is essential," Mr McLean said.

"This cannot be a process designed solely by agencies without lived industry experience."

AGW also noted that while the Review highlights concerns raised by growers, there are also significant pressures on winemakers characterised by tightening margins, reduced global demand for wine and fixed costs that are increasing every month.

"A mandatory code must support fair dealing across the whole supply chain - including recognising the commercial realities and payment pressures faced by winemakers," Mr McLean said.



With growers less than two months from vintage and many regions under acute financial strain, AGW stressed that the code will not, in itself, address current market conditions.

"Growers are facing the most difficult operating environment in decades. The code is one piece of the puzzle, but it will not fix oversupply or lift prices," Mr McLean said.

"That is why we again urge the Government to act on the measures outlined in our Pre-Budget Submission, including a targeted Grower Transition & Regional Resilience Package, and an Export Market Re-Engagement Fund. These are essential to stabilising the sector and supporting regional communities."

Mr McLean said that while AGW will work constructively with the Government on the code, more substantial support is needed.

"We recognise the Government wants to demonstrate action by progressing a mandatory code. But meaningful recovery for growers and winemakers will require more than regulatory reform," he said. "Australian Grape & Wine stands ready to work with the Government on the code's implementation, while continuing to advocate for the broader structural support the sector urgently needs."

**ENDS**

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**About Australian Grape and Wine Inc**

Australian Grape and Wine Inc is the national association of grape and wine producers. We address issues across the supply-chain that impact on the profitability and sustainability of the sector.

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