

Wine Australia

Media Release

1 July 2021

Australia increases consumer protection for its wine brands

Australia today launches a world first system to provide product assurance for all of its branded wine exports.

From 1 July 2021, every labelled wine approved for export by Wine Australia will have the label recorded in its online Export Label Image Search System (ELISS), allowing importers, distributors, retailers and consumers to check when, where and who exported the wine from Australia.

Wine Australia General Manager Corporate Affairs and Regulation Rachel Triggs said the ELISS system would protect overseas consumers and the Australian wine sector's reputation by allowing labels to be checked against export records very simply.

"All it will take is a device to capture a digital image and access the ELISS website and wary consumers or retailers will be able to compare a bottle label against Australian export records.

"This is the first time any nation has been able to offer an across the board verification of exported labels," Ms Triggs said.

The ELISS system will also allow searches by brand, key words or phrases.

Development of this public-facing online directory was supported by the Australian Government's \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package (the \$50m Package).

Brand owners can search ELISS to identify potential breaches of their intellectual property rights.

Australian Grape & Wine, Australia's peak grape and wine advocacy organisation, identified the need to establish a Wine Export Label Directory as a key step in strengthening protection for Australian wine labels against fraudulent activity.

Ms Triggs said the system would make it easy for consumers and distributors to identify genuine Australian wines, with about 25,000 labels per year eventually expected to be listed across 111 different destinations.

"This is something the sector, through Australian Grape & Wine, lobbied very hard to introduce and ensure the protections were legislated. Wine Australia is now stepping up to make that protection a reality."

Ms Triggs said the searchable images would be low resolution and watermarked, but they would allow people to establish who exported the wine, when and the destination market.

"The software allows search using text or images so that potential trademark or copyright breaches can be easily identified. This will deter the production of copycat brands that seek to leverage from the well-established reputation of Australian wine brands."

Ms Triggs said changes to the export approval process would be minimal. Wine Australia's existing export software system, WALAS, had been adapted to make the inclusion of labels an integral part of export approval, while ELISS derived the labels and export information from WALAS.

The ELISS search system can be accessed at eliss.wineaustralia.com/eliss/search. The system allows jpg, png and tiff images (including those from mobile phones) to be uploaded and searched.

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About Wine Australia

Wine Australia supports a competitive wine sector by investing in research, development and adoption (RD&A), growing domestic and international markets and protecting the reputation of Australian wine.

Wine Australia is an Australian Commonwealth Government statutory authority, established under the *Wine Australia Act 2013*, and funded by grape growers and winemakers through levies and user-pays charges and the Australian Government, which provides matching funding for RD&A investments.