

Wine Australia

Media Statement

09 August 2019

Wine Australia acts to protect export reputation

Following an investigation, Wine Australia has cancelled the export licence held by Growers Wine Group Pty Ltd.

Wine Australia's investigation found that Growers Wine Group did not keep proper records and that it sold and exported wine with incorrect vintage and Geographical Indication (GI) claims.

Specifically, Growers Wine Group:

- kept records that incorrectly recorded grapes sourced from Langhorne Creek as being sourced from the Barossa Valley, and subsequently exported and sold wine labelled as Barossa Valley that was not entitled to that GI claim, and
- exported and sold Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc (respectively) with incorrect vintage claims.

The licence cancellation reflects Wine Australia's commitment to ensuring that consumers worldwide can be confident that wine label claims about vintage, variety and GI are correct.

Importantly, there are no concerns about health or safety for consumers of the wine.

However, GI and vintage claims strongly influence people's purchasing decisions and it is important that consumers can be confident that a label claim reflects what is in the bottle.

Wine Australia is confident that all recipients of the misrepresented wine have been informed and that there is no wine on the market with incorrect description.

As the matter is subject to an ongoing investigation, Wine Australia is not able to comment further.

Growers Wine Group may make an application to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for review of Wine Australia's decision in accordance with the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1995*. The prescribed time for making an application under the Act is 28 days from notification of the licence cancellation.

[Ends]

Fast facts

- Wine Australia protects the reputation of Australian wine by regulating the export of wine, conducting audits of wine producers and ensuring the truthfulness of claims made on Australian wine labels in both the domestic and export markets.
- Wine cannot be exported from Australia without an export licence issued by Wine Australia, which has the power to suspend or cancel licences when necessary.
- There is a strong culture of compliance in the Australian grape and wine sector. Wine Australia has only suspended or cancelled five licences in the past four years. To put that in context, there are more than 3000 active licence holders.
- Australian wine regulations specify that more than 85 per cent of grapes must come from a particular region (Geographical Indication) for a wine to be entitled to carry that single regional descriptor. If there are blends of regions, this must be indicated on the label with the dominant region named first and other regions in descending order.
- More information on labelling rules can be found at: www.wineaustralia.com/labelling.
- Suspected breaches of Australian wine regulations can be reported anonymously at Wine Watch www.wineaustralia.com/wine-watch.

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About Wine Australia

Wine Australia supports a competitive wine sector by investing in research, development and extension (RD&E), growing domestic and international markets, protecting the reputation of Australian wine and administering the Export and Regional Wine Support Package.

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&E investments.