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MEDIA RELEASE

'Pop' an Aussie Prosecco on ice this New Year

The festive season has begun and the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) suggests Australian consumers choose Aussie *Prosecco* to enjoy in moderation with family and friends during celebrations these holidays.

WFA Chief Executive Tony Battaglione explained the variety has been growing in popularity since the first vines were planted here some 20-plus years ago.

"It's a global phenomenon, gaining a loyal following from those who appreciate its crispness. It works very well with food and our climate, and is a standout choice for those looking for a celebratory toast," Mr Battaglione said.

There's also a more pressing need for people to become familiar with and support Australian producers of the *Prosecco* variety.

Mr Battaglione said Australian *Prosecco* was on the European Union's hit list for the next round of Free Trade Agreement negotiations, and the Italians are using it as a way to try and stop Aussies using this and other grape variety names on our Australian wine products.

"This is just the start," he explained. "If the EU wins the fight to stop Aussies using *Prosecco* then we will see other grape varieties fall. They are also targeting Nero d'Avola, Dolcetto, Montepulciano, Barbera, Brachetto, Dolcetto, Fiano, Greco di Tufo, and the list goes on.

"They tried this before in 2013 but we stopped them through the courts. It wasn't an easy battle, and we are getting ready to roll up our sleeves and again go into bat for Aussie producers.

"Now our Prosecco Road producers in Victoria and others around the country are rallying together again to support the WFA campaign. We have been working with the Australian Government and highlighting how dangerous such a move by the Europeans would be in terms of impinging on our rights, the cost to the Australian economy and livelihoods of our producers.

"WFA fiercely defends the rights of Australian producers to use *Prosecco* and we are getting ready for the fight of our lives. We want Australian consumers to get behind us too and that's why enjoying an Aussie *Prosecco* during the holidays would be a great show of support."

Australian *Prosecco* producer and WFA member Ross Brown, Executive Director of iconic family brand Brown Brothers, said we cannot give up the fight and hand Italy the rights to the variety.

"For our Australian producers to be denied the right to use the name *Prosecco* would be akin to losing Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc," Mr Brown said.

"Aussies know their favourite wines by the grape variety and we produce great *Prosecco* which we are rightly proud of.

“So we say to Australians: ‘Select Australian *Prosecco* these holidays and help us show our competitors that we mean business.’”

In the King Valley the Dal Zotto Family planted Australia’s first commercial *Prosecco* vines almost 20 years ago. The variety now accounts for 50% of its production, with plans in place for a major expansion in 2018 to meet the growing demand.

“Any move now to ban the use of *Prosecco* would be devastating to our business and to Australia’s growing reputation for producing outstanding varietals,” said WFA member Michael Dal Zotto, who co-owns with brother Christian the vineyards his father first planted.

“This is a strategic move by the Italians, through the EU, to prevent other countries sharing in the huge growth opportunities emerging for *Prosecco* in both domestic and international markets and it’s unfair and not on.”

Notes: Australian *Prosecco* is currently worth an estimated \$60 million. Growth projections estimate it could rise as high as \$200 million in the next few years.

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