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MEDIA RELEASE

Get with the crowd for a kilojoule solution

Australian winemakers agree in part with CHOICE – consumers should be comparing options when choosing their festive drinks, especially alcoholic content but also kilojoule information.

But Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) Chief Executive said CHOICE claims a labelling "loophole" was being "exploited" by the alcohol industry about kilojoule information were misleading.

"The wine sector supports the provision of kilojoule information, consistently defined and internationally consistent with verifiable information," Mr Battaglione said.

"Many companies already do this through apps and websites," he said.

"It is not a requirement now to include kilojoule information and for very good reasons.

"For the industry, the key focus of the back label is on the alcoholic content which is a mandatory requirement and an important one, providing very clear and comparable information to support responsible consumption choices.

"There's a danger that trying to squeeze kilojoule information into the mix, without sufficient space for further information which you could get through a website or app, risks confusing the message about alcohol content. Low kilojoule may also get confused with low alcohol strength, which may not always be the case.

"Energy (kilojoule) labelling was posed as an option in 2009 as a way to inform consumers and, since then, technology and the way consumers interact with products has moved on in. There are more dynamic and flexible technologies available today such as websites, social media, calorie calculators and web/smartphone applications that are significantly more effective at informing modern consumers.

"We believe the day of seeking simplistic solutions to complex problems is long-gone and we would instead seek to work with consumer groups such as CHOICE and others to provide appropriate information in a way which will maximise its benefits to consumers and not increase production costs for winemakers.

"A 21st Century world deserves 21st Century solutions so we look forward to working on realistic options with CHOICE, governments and others."

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