

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

21 April 2017

### **Wine sector wants science not spin to drive health policy**

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) is again frustrated that calls supporting graphic health advertising about alcohol consumption are based on selective quoting of publicly unavailable 'research'. Also of concern is the extended link to draconian plain packaging and graphic labelling on wine bottles.

Tony Battaglione, WFA Chief Executive, today called on all Governments to avoid knee jerk reactions to scaremongering campaigns which do not provide the public with accurate, evidenced-based information about alcohol consumption.

"These ads might be lauded in the advertising world but, like most paid advertisements, they do not provide consumers with accurate, evidenced-based information" said Mr Battaglione.

"We all need to ensure that health policy, particularly in relation to alcohol harm, is supported by science, not spin.

"Australians are drinking less alcohol overall than any time in the previous 50 years – and that comes directly from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The hard-drinking myths perpetuated by the temperance movement in this country are simply not true and belong in a different century. In modern Australia, the very large majority of Australians drink alcohol in a responsible and balanced manner", said Mr Battaglione.

"We acknowledge that there are tragic incidences of alcohol harm and misuse, but the picture of the harm, and the most effective ways to address it, is complex. Governments already have strategically targeted policies in place to address these harms, and we support those policies.

"The Australian wine industry has a proud tradition of providing accurate, evidence-based information for consumers about standard drinks and warnings about drinking while pregnant.

"None of us want to see our iconic Australian wine brands on tables at restaurants, or in our homes, in plain packaging with graphic images. Any move towards that would be devastating to Australia's 2,600 winemakers and would not be effective in changing behaviours of problem drinkers."

-ENDS-

**MEDIA NOTE: Available for interview - WFA Chief Executive Tony Battaglione – 0413 014 807**

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