

## WFA Wine & Social Responsibility Strategy 2011-2014

### Introduction

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia has developed and begun implementing a new Health & Social Responsibility Strategy for the wine industry.

It acknowledges public concern about alcohol abuse and the need for wine companies to support genuine attempts to address the problem, while also making it clear that wine, when consumed in moderation, is accepted as part of a healthy Australian lifestyle for those who choose it.

Irrespective of the causes and nature of this dangerous consumption, all producers of alcohol products have a responsibility to initiate and support policies, programs and strategies that seek to address the problem.

WFA's commitment is to targeted programs that address anti-social behaviour and problem drinking based on evidence of real outcomes rather than the broad, high profile band-aid approach promulgated by some sectors.

We are concerned that current research is almost exclusively directed towards alcohol harms and that community debate is being distorted, particularly where research results are presented selectively.

The new strategy was developed by WFA's Wine and Social Responsibility Committee to:

- contribute to the development of healthier patterns of wine consumption,
- enhance the social responsibility of our sector and highlight the many measures we take to ensure wine is always enjoyed in moderation
- provide a level of balance to alcohol policy debate.

This is an ambitious and necessary strategy that will require support from across the wine sector. Achieving its goals will ensure we have much of which to be proud.

### Objectives

The stated aim of the strategy is: *For wine to be recognised as having a legitimate and sustainable place in society when consumed responsibly.* The following is a summary of its five objectives.

**Objective 1: Provide and encourage leadership in, and knowledge of, research that assesses and reviews the benefits and harms of alcohol, particularly wine.**

Strengthen and expand wine industry research networks to ensure we are asking the right questions and generating evidence-backed findings that support our public statements and activities and can be used by all industry stakeholders.

Work with the National Alcohol Beverage Industries Council (NABIC) to develop and resource a professional capability to respond to biased anti-alcohol rhetoric on behalf of alcohol beverage producers.

Work with NABIC and the Grape & Wine Research & Development Corporation (GWRDC) to identify the true social costs and benefits of alcohol consumption, from a sociological and economic perspective.

Identify funding streams to support this research – including advocating for industry R&D funding to be allocated to this area – and work with NABIC to lobby Government to ensure there is no bias in the allocation of funding for research into alcohol.

Collate evidence on the effectiveness of policies and strategies that specifically target individuals and groups displaying hazardous drinking patterns (as opposed to generic strategies that adversely affect all consumers) and highlight this information to Government.

**Objective 2: Provide balanced, factual information about the benefits and risks of wine consumption to empower informed decision making by the Australian consumer.**

Work with retailers, in partnership with NABIC and DrinkWise, to develop point-of-sale material and investigate the use of quick response barcodes for information provision.

Create cellar door material that provides information about recommended moderate drinking levels and highlights the wine industry's commitment to social responsibility.

Develop a WFA social responsibility website that makes all relevant material publicly accessible.

Advocate for wine companies to adopt a standard pregnancy message and appropriate packaging information regarding standard drinks.

Support DrinkWise's educational campaigns.

**Objective 3: For winemaking businesses to make and communicate a commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) through their practices and their reporting frameworks**

Develop a comprehensive wine industry *Commitment to Community*, based on international CSR standards, that provides a framework for individual winemakers and the broader industry to set and meet performance standards.

Encourage WFA member engagements with DrinkWise.

Expand the role and value of the National Wine Foundation as a conduit for wine businesses to support relevant projects with a CSR focus.

**Objective 4: Work to ensure that government and public health policies and programs are based on sound research evidence.**

Develop a stronger practical partnership between Government and the alcohol industry in relation to regulation, policy and social responsibility initiatives.

Identify the obligations on the Australian Government as defined by the World Health Organisation and ensure all relevant industry initiatives are consistent with these obligations.

**Objective 5: Develop the broader framework to achieve our objectives, communicate our commitment and activities, and respond to pressure from those who seek a more regulatory approach to controlling alcohol consumption.**

Work with other sectors of the alcohol industry on issues of mutual interest and priority based on a mutual recognition of the industry's social responsibility obligations and agreed understanding of the social costs and benefits of alcohol consumption.

Ensure wine industry goals complement Government's international obligations and good international practice and that the Government, in turn, is aware of the positive corporate social responsibility CSR activities being undertaken by the wine industry, DrinkWise and NABIC.

Engage with retailers to develop materials that support educated consumer decision making.