

30 November, 2011

Winemakers welcome labelling decisions

Winemakers today welcomed the Government's decision not to require specific warning messages on alcohol labels.

The chief executive of the Winemakers' Federation of Australia, Stephen Strachan, said this was a sensible, considered and evidence-based response to the recommendations of the Blewett Review.

"The Australian Government has obviously taken into account the wine industry's international labelling obligations, as well as our existing strong commitment to addressing alcohol abuse," he said.

"Mandating specific placement of warning messages would create additional costs in having to adapt labels to suit some export markets.

"A voluntary system provides greater flexibility and puts the focus on providing consumer information, not just warnings."

Mr Strachan said the wine industry also welcomed the Government's decision to allow industry to further expand coverage of its existing voluntary commitment to have an on-label message warning against drinking while pregnant.

"It is our expectation that we will be able to demonstrate strong industry support thereby nullifying any need for further government regulation," he said.

WFA encourages winemakers to use the "pregnant lady" pictogram on labels and also has a strong commitment to DrinkWise, which had created a range of on-label messages as part of a comprehensive consumer information campaign.

In addition, most wine casks now included a consumer information panel explaining the concept of a standard drink and the National Wine Foundation provided funding for initiatives designed to address alcohol abuse and support indigenous communities.

"The wine sector is committed to dealing with the abuse of alcohol and strongly supports efforts to ensure consumers are assisted to make informed decisions," he said.

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