

leadership

strategy

advocacy

support

wfa

Winemakers'  
Federation of  
Australia

WFA is the national industry body for Australia's winemakers.

We represent and protect their interests, speak on their behalf and help them to maximise opportunities and avoid risks so we can build sustainable businesses and an even stronger wine sector.

Our aim is to provide leadership, strategy, advocacy and support. Our members set our agenda, fund our activities and directly benefit from the results.

## Our achievements

Over two decades WFA has:

- Helped protect the industry from billions of dollars in taxation, unfair trade imposts, restrictions in market access, excessive labelling requirements, external regulation of advertising, and vine disease threats.
- Lobbied for better funding of wine sector R&D and responded to political, technological, environmental, regulatory and market-driven changes that affect wine, wine making and wine packaging.
- Driven and supported an industry commitment to meet modern values and expectations around environmental custodianship and social responsibility.
- Highlighted the wine sector's achievements to politicians, the media and the public.

## About the Federation

WFA is an independent, not-for-profit organisation funded voluntarily by wine businesses that understand the value of a united and coordinated approach to dealing with industry issues and are willing to help make that a reality.

They range greatly in size, history and geographical location but have shared objectives and a common purpose. Between them they produce more than 90% of Australia's wine.

We advise and collaborate with the Australian Government statutory authorities Wine Australia and the Grape & Wine Research & Development Corporation, but we are a distinct entity and receive none of the compulsory levies wine businesses pay to support these two bodies.

We also work closely with State and regional wine industry organisations both to avoid duplication and to ensure a coordinated approach to issues and policy. All six State associations are represented on our small winemakers' committee.

WFA membership is open to all Australian wine producers according to three categories: small, medium and large. Each category has its own committee, and each committee is equally represented on the WFA Board.

## Core activities

### Setting Directions

WFA is the one national body that can speak on the industry's behalf, be accountable for its actions and develop and promote strategies that warrant support. In the current environment there is a particular focus on taxation, advertising, alcohol's role in society and industry planning.

We were a joint partner in developing the *Wine Australia: Directions to 2025 strategy* released in 2007 and the lead partner in the development and delivery of the subsequent Wine Restructuring Action Agenda (WRAA).



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## Government Relations

We established a Canberra office in December 2002 to allow for frequent formal and informal contact with politicians and political associates, both to raise issues on behalf of our members and to provide input to policy development.

We meet regularly with Ministers, MPs and officials to highlight the sector's achievements and challenges, make regular submissions to Parliamentary, Government and departmental enquiries and present a major policy statement prior to each Federal Budget.

## Trade and Market Access

WFA works with Wine Australia to reduce international trade barriers and assist the industry with market access issues.

We aim to: ensure Australia's competitiveness and the integrity of its wine are not compromised by inappropriate government policy and/or regulation; promote free trade without subsidies; ensure international standards are set on the basis of sound science and not used as an impediment to trade; and maintain the integrity of the current multilateral trade agreements under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation.

## Health and Social Responsibility

It is WFA's policy that wine has a legitimate place in modern society but should be enjoyed in moderation. We have developed a strategy to enhance industry practices and established a skills-based Wine & Social Responsibility Committee, which includes experts on the clinical and social effects of wine consumption.

We also worked with other stakeholders to promote Standard Drinks Labelling, develop an Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code and establish DrinkWise Australia, which works to encourage a more responsible drinking culture.

## Business Development

WFA helps winemakers build profitable and sustainable businesses that can survive changing economic conditions by working with professional partners to provide a range of resources.

Our major initiative is the national WineSkills program, which offers practical solutions across key operational areas. We also have developed a Gross Margin Ready Reckoner to help businesses to test their profitability and, in partnership with Deloitte, a benchmarking survey that provides them with a snapshot of their sales and marketing performance.

## Wine Tourism Development

WFA plays the lead role in developing sustainable wine tourism at an industry and individual winery level, including skills development of cellar door and hospitality staff. We drove the creation of the National Wine Tourism Strategy through a major Government-backed project that included the creation of templates to help wineries develop genuine tourism experiences.

We also represent the industry on the National Tourism Alliance and contribute to the development of a Wine Tourism Training Package through Tourism Training Australia.

## Environmental Sustainability

WFA leads the industry's commitment to continually improve its environmental performance by assisting wineries to optimise their operations, measure and evaluate performance and meet community expectations. A major initiative is the ongoing management of Entwine Australia, a voluntary environmental certification scheme tailored to the needs of the wine industry.

We also played a key role in developing the Global Wine Sector Environmental Sustainability Principles and an international Wine Carbon Calculator, and represent the industry in major international initiatives.

## Research & Development

WFA believes strongly that effective research and development is vital to the wine industry's future success. With Wine Grape Growers' Australia we coordinate an Innovation Policy Committee to address issues such as funding and resource allocation for research.

We work to: provide clear advice to the Government on R&D issues; ensure the industry's research priorities are clearly stated and meet national and regional needs; and foster a cooperative approach between industry, researchers, funding bodies and government.

## Biosecurity & Vine Health

To ensure Australia has the capacity to respond to serious pest incursions that could threaten the industry, WFA and Wine Grape Growers' Australia established a National Viticulture Biosecurity Committee and affiliated National Vinehealth Technical Committee.

These committees establish policy and propose strategies on biosecurity, advise Plant Health Australia on categorisation of exotic pests and diseases, and work to ensure the industry's obligations are met around training and awareness, specialist resources and capacity, and implementation of the Industry Biosecurity Plan.

## Packaging

WFA works to identify and manage packaging issues and assist the industry to respond to changes in packaging for wine and wine products.

We maintain Wine Packaging Guidelines to assist small to medium wineries and new entrants to the industry and established a Packaging Committee to provide a forum for direct discussion among stakeholders.



## History and Structure

WFA was created in 1989 as the Federation of Australian Winemaker Associations through the merger of three bodies: the Australian Wine & Brandy Producers' Association, the Australian Winemakers' Forum, and the Wine & Brandy Co-operative Producers' Association of Australia.

The name changed to the Winemakers' Federation of Australia in 1990, but the rationale for its existence remained the same. The three antecedent organisations recognised that, no matter how well they represented their constituencies, there was greater advantage in a single and united voice.

In 2006, members adopted a new Constitution and a new organisational structure based around three membership categories:

- Small - below 2,000 tonnes
- Medium - 2,000 to 100,000 tonnes
- Large - above 100,000 tonnes

Each Committee nominates representatives to the Board, which is responsible for making WFA policy and overseeing its implementation. The Board is chaired by the President.

Membership is open to all Australia wineries and small and medium category membership also is offered to contract grape and wine processors.

## WFA's role

- We coordinate campaigns and advocacy work around issues such as tax, retail consolidation, the anti-alcohol lobby or labelling requirements, and are the first point of contact when Government wishes to engage with the wine industry.
- We represent the industry at major international forums such as the OIV, build relationships with regulators in key markets, and work to change laws and attitudes that unfairly impinge on market access for Australian wine.
- Our committees provide input on wine production to Food Standards Australia New Zealand and manage packaging issues that could damage the industry's reputation by creating problems related to trade regulations, standards, costs or education.
- We work closely with Wine Grape Growers' Australia to ensure the wine industry's interests are understood when national decisions are made around biosecurity and vine health.
- We attract significant Government funding to coordinate training and development initiatives in areas such as environmental performance, business skills, wine tourism and industry analysis.



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