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MEDIA RELEASE

\$226,000 grant highlights the link between wine and tourism

Wine's present and future contribution to Australian tourism has been recognised through new funding of \$226,000 from the Federal Government.

The TQUAL (formerly the Australian Tourism Development Program) grant will be used to create a new model for designing and delivering visitor programs that build on regional strengths and appeal to a broad range of potential visitors.

The project will be coordinated by the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA), with input from winemakers across the country and tourism organisations.

"This is a significant investment that recognises how important tourism is to the wine industry and how important wineries are to the tourism industry," said WFA's Chief Executive, Stephen Strachan.

"We need to make sure that wineries offer more than just the opportunity to taste and talk about wine and become part of a broad visitor experience that might include anything from food to art, music or local history. In particular there is real potential in providing culinary experiences."

The project will revise and update the National Wine Tourism Strategy to respond to shifts in consumer expectations and behaviour then create templates for themed wine tourism experiences so that operators can customise and deliver additional tourism activities. Wine tourism business support materials and a national workshop program also will be developed.

The TQUAL grant coincides with the re-launch of the Australian Wine Tourism Alliance (AWTA), which brings together state wine organisations to create and guide tourism strategies for the industry.

AWTA Chairman Andrew Margan said wine was a significant contributor to Australian tourism on many levels.

"Not only do we employ thousands of people and contribute to regional development but we also send \$3 billion worth of branded product to sit on overseas dining tables every year," he said. "Every single bottle is a great advertisement for this country and this has been an undervalued contribution to international visitation to Australia."

"The wine industry spends millions of dollars every year engaging people from other countries in the brand proposition that is Australia through its promotions and it is essential to maintain the consistency of this message within the domestic tourism market.

"This requires a co-ordinated approach, with the tourism industry involving the wine industry whenever national, state or regional tourism strategies are being considered."

For media inquiries:

Nick Carne, WFA Manager, Communications
Phone: 08 8222 9255 / 0404 850 859