



# MEDIA RELEASE

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*For immediate release*

## **PLEA TO GRAPE GROWERS FOR SAFE ROADS**

Some local grapegrowers have lightened their loads on the way to wineries and created traffic issues along the way.

Local stakeholders have issued a plea to grape growers and contract grape cartage operators to help keep local roads safe.

Council and the Wine Grapes Marketing Board are united in their quest to minimise the spillage of wine grapes this vintage.

Mr Brian Simpson, CEO Wine Grapes Marketing Board said that it was important that the industry does the right thing and work to prevent spillage this season. Growers should be speaking with truck drivers as they have a duty to ensure that all care is taken in the delivery process.

"The cost to the grower in spilt grapes, the cost to the community, the risk to motorists and the negative image it displays of the wine grape industry can be prevented if transport vehicles are always within their load limits and are driven in a manner that reduces the risk of spillage," said Mr Simpson.

Council's Group Manager Operations, Mr Dallas Bibby said some of the recent spillages could have been quite serious with spillages possibly causing vehicles to lose control on the slippery road surface.

"Fortunately no accidents have been reported this season, however operators if identified could be heavily fined under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997." said Mr Bibby.

"Consideration could also be given to passing on the cleanup costs to the operator."

Council's Road Safety Officer Greg Balind said farmers and cartage contractors have a duty of care to other road users to be certain that overloading does not occur and that loads are carried correctly and within the confines of the load restrictions.

"Council would like to remind drivers to proceed with caution when approaching intersections to ensure accidents are avoided and that heavy vehicles are not cut off," said Mr Balind.

Reported call outs to Council where the spilt grapes required removal exceeds 20 for this harvest so far. Drivers are at an increased risk on local roads during the vintage period and to reduce these possible dangers, farmers and contract carriers must take every precaution to avoid spillage.

NSW Police and the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) will be in force during harvest to ensure that transport vehicles comply with restrictions and that loads are secure.

Council encourages members of the public to report any incidences of spillage to 6962 8100.

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