

WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD

For the City of Griffith and the local government areas of
Leeton, Carrathool and Murrumbidgee



MEDIA RELEASE

17 February 2010

Independent Experts Wanted for Wine Industry Code

The Wine Grapes Marketing Board is calling on local viticulturists that wish to act as Independent Experts in the region when disputes arise in relation to the Wine Industry Code of Conduct. In the Riverina approximately 10% of grape growers' fruit is subject to the current Code of Conduct that has been adopted by industry. Growers in the region do not have a list of independent experts that they can contact to act in disputes on grape prices and quality assessments.

The national Wine Industry Code of Conduct is now in its second vintage of operation and the industry believes that it will play a vital role in the development of the industry in terms of business relationship between growers and wineries. The aim of the voluntary Code of Conduct is two-fold: firstly to establish a common Australian wine grape supply contract framework and secondly, to provide a dispute resolution system to manage disagreements which exist over price or quality assessments.

The Board is seeking interested persons to contact the Board office for further information on the Code of Conduct and to determine if they wish to put their name forward to become an independent expert. The independent experts list will be made available for disputes. These positions are paid on a per case basis depending on the matter at hand.

"As the industry moves into the Code of Conduct there will be increasing demand in the Riverina for independent experts that can make decisions on disputes regarding the quality and grading assessments made by wineries in the vineyard, the price offers made and even the final pricing at the weighbridge," Mr Simpson Chief Executive Officer of the Board advised. "The grower sector believes that this Code of Conduct will become best business practice and wineries that have adopted it will be preferred purchasers of winegrapes."

"The code now in its second year of operation is slowly gaining momentum across industry. The wine industry set a realistic target of 75% of the total crush adoption in the first year and 85% of production in the second year. While the industry is a long way from these targets at only 37% of the crush it may assist the grower sector to pursue to have the code made mandatory in the near future." Mr Simpson concluded.

END

ENQUIRIES:

Brian Simpson Chief Executive Officer 0438 388 828 or 69 62 3944 (during office hours)