

# Submission to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity Review Discussion Paper

## Introduction

The Tasmanian wine sector is an important and growing contributor to trade and the economy, regional employment, tourism and the overall Tasmanian brand. The Tasmanian wine region is regarded as one of the strongest in the country, with demand outstripping supply and attracting some of the highest prices for wine grapes and bottled wine.

The sector directly employs 1,400 full time equivalent positions throughout the island's regions, and vineyard area has grown by more than 25% over the past five years, with more planting occurring in 2016/17. This has included expansion by existing wine producers, who are continuing to experience high demand for their premium quality wines, and has also included significant external investments in Tasmania's wine sector. In addition to the significant increase in vineyard plantings, expansion by existing wine producers and new investors has included new processing facilities (winery), packaging / bottling, cellar door, restaurant and tourism infrastructure.

Wine is an integral part of the visitor economy and visitor experience, and a key motivation for visitation to Tasmania. More than 233,000 people visited our cellar doors in the year to March 2016, representing 19% of all visitors. Tourism Tasmania research shows that 56% of the people who have been to Tasmania, or are considering travelling to Tasmania in the next 12 months, believe that the state is known for its great food and beverage offerings - reliant on a healthy and growing agricultural sector. The survey revealed that when talking about Tasmania's food and beverage offering, the state's seafood, cheese and wine were top of mind.

The strong interest in and performance of the Tasmanian wine sector is expected to increase, supporting growth in wine sales, expansion of existing wine businesses, investment by new entrants and resultant employment increases.

## Wine Tasmania Overview

Wine Tasmania is the peak representative body for Tasmanian grape growers and winemakers, working to assist them to be recognised as world leaders in the sustainable production of premium cool climate wine.

Established in 2006 as a public company limited by guarantee, the Wine Tasmania Board is skills based and is chaired by independent director Graeme Lynch. Other directors are Will Adkins (Brown Brothers Tasmania), Rebecca Duffy (Holm Oak Vineyards), Jeremy Dineen (Josef Chromy Wines), Anna Pooley (Pooley Wines), Scott Dawkins (Deloitte - independent) and Guy Taylor (Tourism Tasmania - independent).

Wine Tasmania represents more than 99% of Tasmanian wine production, with 100 state-wide producer members and 55 associated member businesses. All activities undertaken by the wine sector body are designed to generate value for our members. Wine Tasmania's Strategic Plan further outlines details of our role and is available at [www.winetasmania.com.au/about](http://www.winetasmania.com.au/about).

## **Response to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity Review Discussion Paper**

Wine Tasmania, as a founding member of the Primary Industries Biosecurity Action Alliance, is committed to the following:

- Maintaining Tasmania's biosecurity is vital to protect the environment, agribusiness and tourism
- Tasmania reserves the right to manage its own biosecurity risk.
- Tasmanian industry is very happy to be part of a national system of biosecurity
- Tasmanian arguments are always based on robust science.
- We all accept our Biosecurity duty of care.
- The changes to the national system don't need to be rushed; we need to get it right.
- Make changes transparent with proper stakeholder management.

The intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB), which Tasmania has not signed, reflects very strongly a national biosecurity regime with regional differentiation a secondary consideration. Australia is a very diverse landscape – climate, ecology, geography – and this affects the biosecurity issues faced by different communities. There are good natural (but not impregnable) biosecurity defences around and within Australia – our island status, non-uniform population distribution, deserts (particularly for South Australia and Western Australia), and not least Bass Strait for Tasmania. Not all States, Territories or regions within and across them have primary industries that are large enough in scale locally to withstand biosecurity incursions as others may, whilst the communities around them rely on these industries for their sustainability. Regional differentiation must not be a secondary consideration but should form part of the primary consideration when addressing national biosecurity.

Australia's biosecurity has been effective in reducing incursions and facilitating market access for exports. Again, however, the national risk may be incongruous with a specific regional risk. The regional risk and regional differentiation needs to be taken into account.

Improved education and communication of biosecurity risks and benefits for the Australian community is critical in maintaining and improving the management of risk in an increasingly interconnected world. Biosecurity funding, including for research and development, should be at least maintained if not increased for the very same reason.

A successful national biosecurity system reduces the risk of biosecurity incursions at national and regional levels. Looking into the future the system will need to be able to collect large amounts of data and extract information very quickly to reduce the risk of biosecurity incursions in a very efficient global and national transport system.