

## President's Report

**It is difficult to reflect on the 2019-20 financial year without allowing COVID 19 to dominate the narrative. The impact of it cannot be ignored and all businesses have been affected to some degree.** This is true for WoWA as well. As our remit is to ensure the best operational environment for WA producers, restrictions on movement and business operations arising from COVID 19 related restrictions have been significant. While WA has largely returned to normal internally, there remain challenges which WoWA continues to address on behalf of WA producers. As the saying goes, never waste a good crisis . One strong positive to come out of the previous 8 months is a much stronger link to all state government departments. WoWA engaged consistently with state government both directly and through participation in industry round tables, ensuring the interests of WA producers were clearly understood.

We must also reflect on the work plan that WoWA established for 2019 -20. Despite the requirement to focus strongly on COVID 19 issues for much of 2020, we still addressed our key strategic areas of focus. These are highlighted below.

### National Advocacy

#### Health

At a commonwealth level this past 2019 - 20 year WoWA engaged with the major political parties focusing on workable alcohol related health policy. Issues such as mandatory pregnancy labelling and other broad population-based initiatives, while primarily a national issue, must also be addressed at state and regional level.

The intent is unquestioned however, unintended consequences of proposed measures must be clearly understood before policy and legislation is implemented. WoWA will continue to work with Australian Grape and Wine (AGW) to advocate a consistent policy position on this issue.

Working with AGW and Drinkwise, WoWA and Regional Associations have developed responses to policy discussion papers on various health related issues, ensuring that both WA federal and relevant state members understand our position on these issues. Additionally, we have facilitated workshops and forums to inform producers on these issues and to promote proactive programs, such as the Drinkwise cellar door tasting collateral for consumers.

#### Tax

The tax working group continued into its third year finalising a tax policy position that was reviewed by all WA producers for ratification. Our focus is a simpler and fairer structure into the future that will support the premium end of the market while addressing some of the concerns around health in a more effective and balanced way.

The WoWA Board then facilitated a formal consultation process with industry which included a series of regional workshops and opportunities for regions to directly feed into the process.

The results of this process were incorporated into a final draft position paper that was ratified by industry in February 2020.

Subsequently, the WoWA Board has approved an advocacy strategy to be implemented by WoWA executive. CEO Larry Jorgensen has begun work on this through engagement with regions and states nationally.

#### COVID 19

While much of the required advocacy at national level was undertaken by Australian Grape and Wine (AGW) WoWA provided

support as required and engaged with WA federal members to ensure the industry's position was clearly understood. In some cases, this required ensuring that federal policy was followed through to state level. An example of this is ensuring wine production was included as an essential industry and allowed to continue operations during the early stage lockdown in March and April

### State Advocacy

#### *Legislation and Regulation*

Much of the legislation and regulation that has day to day impact on producers and growers is set at state level. WoWA works with Regional Associations to ensure state government and all local members are aware of the specific issues at state level that are important to WA wine growers and producers.

The key legislative/regulatory issues addressed this year were related to COVID 19 restrictions. Sales restrictions imposed on wine producers in March would have been disastrous for producers. WoWA worked with Regions and producers to have this quickly resolved. AS the state moved through various levels of restrictions on movement, WoWA worked closely with the Department of Health and Racing, Gaming and Liquor to ensure producers were able to operate as freely as possible. WoWA ensured producers understood clearly what their obligation were so that they could comply while operating their businesses.

Additionally, we continue to work across state and local government to ensure smoke taint events related to prescribed burning programs do not impact on WA wine growers and producers, It is a delicate balance and we understand the importance of risk mitigation activities. A constant and well-informed conversation with all who implement prescribed burning is imperative to this.

### Export Market Development and Wine Tourism

In 2019 – 20, WoWA focused on gaining state government funding support for our Export Growth Partnership strategy (EGP).

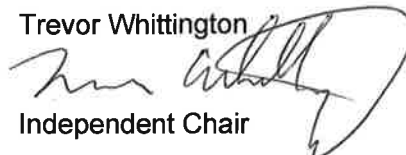
It is an ambitious program that is seeking a partnership between industry, state and federal government for funding for a 5-year program to grow our export value. The aims of the partnership are to double the aggregated value of WA wine exports, increase the average price per litre to at least \$12 and increase the number of WA producers who are profitably and sustainably exporting. In late June, WoWA and the state government agreed to fund an Export Development Officer to manage the EGP. A business case supporting the request for funding was also submitted for approval. We expect a response early in the new financial year.

WoWA continues to work with Regional Associations to implement a program to increase visitation and spend by international wine tourists in WA's fine wine regions. Funded by the federal International Wine Tourism Grant (IWTG), the program is currently building capacity and improving service and wine tourism product offerings. The next phase to be implemented over the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 are attraction and promotion tactics aimed at increasing visitation and spend. This will involve working with Australia's South West, Destination Perth and Tourism WA to support Regional Associations and producers in marketing their wine tourism products to international visitors. The legacy of this program will carry forward as the increased capacity to provide and market wine tourism products will continue to grow as Regions and producers more fully understand the potential of this market channel.

I would like to thank Larry and Robin for their tireless work for WoWA on behalf of all State producers.

Pippa Nielsen will also step down as Treasurer and Geographe representative. Her contribution in both roles has been significant. We wish her the best as looks to focus more on her business.

Trevor Whittington



Independent Chair