



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## New Executive Director for Wine Grape Growers Australia

After five years at the helm of Wine Grape Growers Australia, Executive Director Lawrie Stanford has decided it's time to hand over the reins.

"This is the right decision for me and for the organisation", Mr Stanford said. "Renewal is important for any organisation and it's time for me to pursue some of my own personal challenges."

Nevertheless, Mr Stanford leaves with some regrets. "This is an exciting time for the industry", he notes. "I've been personally committed to improving the trading and operating conditions for growers for five years, and we are finally starting to see some recognition in government and in the winemaking community that action is needed to improve national biosecurity preparedness and industry commercial practices in particular."

Lawrie's association with the Australian wine sector spans 20 years, commencing in 1994 at the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics, where he worked in wine, and then joining the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (now a part of the Australian Grape and Wine Authority) as manager of information and analysis in 1997. His appointment to the position of Executive Director–Wine Grape Growers Australia, represented a career shift from analysis to agri-politics, but his background in wine sector analysis provided a strong foundation for the work.

Mr Vic Patrick, current Chair of WGGA who is retiring in November, said "Lawrie has made the WGGA Board a place where real policy can be discussed and formed. His strategic thinking and analytical mind has helped us to really grapple with some problems." He added "I have worked with a number of dedicated people in my time in the Industry, and Lawrie ranks highly amongst them."

Mr Justin Jarrett, deputy chair of WGGA and chair of the selection panel to appoint his replacement, said that Mr Stanford would be a hard act to follow. "It has been a pleasure as a grower to have somebody in our corner that was prepared to state our case and work so hard with such limited resources to make the wine industry a better place."

The main challenge for the new Executive Director will be to participate in a collaborative process with the Winemakers' Federation of Australia to develop a new model for combined representation of grapegrowers and winemakers at a national level, as well as delivering on WGGA's core programs: biosecurity, improved market access for wine grapes and reform in commercial practices.

“I am excited about the next 12 months” Mr Jarrett said. “Lawrie has put WGGGA in a great position where it can play a major role in the revitalisation of the industry and has done the ground work for a more streamlined national organisation.”

Mr Stanford will be leaving the organisation in mid-December. His first challenge after that will be to negotiate a five year Strategic Plan with his wife that will include a well-earned rest.

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For more information on the Executive Director position, visit [www.wgga.com.au](http://www.wgga.com.au)