



Key stakeholder meeting on the future of vine improvement and germplasm collections in Australia

Tuesday 12 November, 2013

12.30pm – 3.30pm

Hackney Hotel, Adelaide

Attendees

| Name | Organisation |
|-------------------------|--|
| Lawrie Stanford (Chair) | WGGA |
| Andy Gordon | VINA |
| Brian Englefield | MVW |
| Mardi Longbottom | Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) |
| David Coleman | AHVI, Langhorne Creek Vine Improvement |
| David Nitschke | Riverland Vine Improvement Committee (RVIC) |
| Gary Thomas | VAMVIA |
| Graeme Wellman | Barossa Vine Improvement |
| Hilary Davis | AVIA, Victorian & Murray Valley Vine Improvement Association (VAMVIA) |
| Kym Ludvigsen | Australian Vine Improvement Association (AVIA) |
| Libby Tassie | GWRDC author |
| Liz Waters | GWRDC |
| Mark McKenzie | MVW |
| Mark Thomas | CSIRO |
| Mick Sewell | Riverland Vine Improvement Committee |
| Mike McCarthy | SARDI |
| Paul Petrie | ASVO |
| Paul Wright | Vine Industry Nursery Association (VINA) |
| Pauline Mooney | SA Research and Development Institute (SARDI) |
| Peter Dry | AWRI |
| Peter Hackworth | Wine Grape Council of SA (WGCSA) |
| Peter Hayes | Australian Vine Quality Standards Scheme (AVQSS) |
| Prue Henschke | AVIA, Adelaide Hills Vine Improvement (AHVI) |
| Prue McMichael | GWRDC author |
| Rachel Barratt | WGGA |
| Richard Hamilton | GWRDC author |
| Rob Walker | CSIRO |
| Robin Nettelbeck | Yalumba |
| Russell Johnstone | Co-author of previous germplasm reports with Richard Hamilton |
| Steve Guy | Wine Australia |
| Stuart Thomson | GWRDC |

Welcome and apologies

Lawrie Stanford welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that it was very well attended – indicating the substantial passion and commitment for the topic among industry stakeholders.

Apologies were received from:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Andreas Clark | Wine Australia |
| Jim Campbell-Clause | Western Australia Vine Improvement Association (WAVIA) |
| John Lloyd | HAL |
| Paul Evans | Winemakers' Federation of Australia |
| Phil Chidgzey | ADFA |
| Mark Walpole | Victoria |

Lawrie Stanford reported that in a conversation with HAL about their attendance at the meeting, it was resolved that from HAL's point-of-view, the CSIRO attendee could represent the issues that HAL would comment on.

Overview of meeting purpose and agenda

Mr Stanford indicated that the objective of the meeting from WGGA's perspective was to reach an agreement on a process that would lead ultimately to an industry decision on the long-term management of germplasm collections in Australia. He noted that this issue has been ongoing for a long time with nothing being resolved and that WGGA and the Winemakers' Federation of Australia were keen to facilitate a process for reaching a resolution.

He suggested that a major part of the process would be to form an expert working group to write a detailed and coherent business case to put before industry decision-makers and a funding provider to enable the desired outcome to be achieved – but that this process needed to be endorsed by the group at today's meeting.

Presentation on GWR1112 Grapevine Germplasm Collections in Australia

A brief presentation was given by the authors of a GWRDC-funded project to determine the status of current germplasm collections in Australia and identify best practice management of collections overseas. The authors were: P McMichael, R Hamilton and L Tassie.

The authors illustrated the updated germplasm register that was prepared as part of the project. New fields were added including virus testing status and identity verification status. Issues identified with the register were listed – e.g. naming inconsistencies, lack of standards for health testing and for dealing with vines based on virus tested results and lack of standards for determining identity – as well as a list of requirements needed for a reliable database. It was noted that the full details of this database remains confidential as a condition of the research study.

The authors described the historical resourcing of collections – whether funded by government, vine improvement or private sources. It was noted that government funding for state collections is under pressure and that resources have reduced from 25 FTE staff working on collections in 1986 to 4.5 in 2011.

Sales of cuttings have also declined from a peak of 3.5 million in 2000 to 0.5 million in 2011. Revenue from cutting sales used to support maintenance of collections.

By contrast, up to 100% of international collections are government funded. Income comes from services as well as cutting sales. All have a clear and declared purpose (or purposes). Access is generally open and most have alliances with research institutions and industry. There is generally an absence of private competitive collections. The challenges for international collections include: technology, timeliness, regulations, resilience (climate change, biodiversity), space (too many clones to maintain – or physical lack of space) and funding.

The authors presented the options considered in their report for future management:

- 1) do nothing
- 2) secure government funding
- 3) rationalise – i.e. choose selected collections to support or create a consolidated collection.

It was resolved to circulate the presentation to attendees – subject to GWRDC approval for it to be distributed (R Hamilton to check).

A question was raised about the value of the database (germplasm register) if it is confidential. The researchers noted that it was a condition of the research that the information provided by the collection owners would be kept confidential.

There was considerable discussion on this topic. It was noted that industry would be likely to be resistant to signing off on a plan for germplasm management without knowing what is in the collections and therefore what their value is.

It was agreed that the working group would need to deal with this issue as it would have to have access to the register to make progress.

Agreement on proposed decision-making process and timeline

Lawrie Stanford tabled a proposed decision-making process and timeline. The suggested steps were:

- 1) Form an Expert Working Group
- 2) Prepare draft business case
- 3) Circulate business case to the present key stakeholder group for comment – assimilate feedback
- 4) Reconvene key stakeholder group - finalise business case and sign-off
- 5) Refer business case to the Joint Policy Forum
- 6) Joint Policy Forum recommends business case to respective boards of WGGGA and WFA
- 7) Business case submitted to funding agency and/or service provider
- 8) Business case implemented

It was suggested that there should be preliminary consultation with grass-roots industry members as part of the process, because they would be the ones likely to fund any future management plan through the research levies. L Stanford noted that when the expert working group was formed and met, its first task would need to be to devise its mode of operations and he envisaged this step could or would be included.

It was agreed to insert a step for industry consultation into the process. It was also agreed to include communication back to the stakeholder group once the group has established and confirmed its timeframe and tasks.

The meeting supported the process as presented – with the above additions.

There was some discussion regarding whether the scope of the project could extend to private collections. It was noted that the industry cannot impose a management system on private collections over which it has no control.

On the other hand, it was argued that the registration of names and virus status etc. will apply to private collections as well if they are to be national standards. It was suggested that the

development of national standards, nomenclature etc. (policy decisions) is a separate body of work to the physical management of germplasm collection.

The timeline was considered. It was noted that this extends to February 2015, allowing six months for the development of the business case by the working group.

It was suggested that it would be possible to reduce the time allowed for consideration of the business case by the Joint Policy Forum – if meetings can be scheduled to coincide with the appropriate milestones of the project.

It was agreed that this is a reasonable estimate of a timeline (draft) subject to input from the working group.

Working group membership

It was noted that there is no funding for the working group. The working group will have to start by determining what resources are required and where to get them from.

The suggested composition of the working group prepared by WGGA was tabled for comment. The following structure was agreed to:

- Seven members
- Representation as suggested by WGGA except for the inclusion of an economic member.
The membership agreed was as follows.
 - Viticulture – research
 - Viticulture – vine improvement
 - Viticulture – commercial
 - Industry
 - Government
- External expertise to be sought regularly during the process for economic modelling, budgeting etc rather than including someone with this expertise on the working group– which can lead to pressure on the person to generate a particular outcome.
- Independent chair to keep the group on track but not have a direct involvement

The following nominations were received and accepted:

- Prue Henschke Vine Improvement
- David Nitschke Vine Improvement
- John Power Government (DAFF)
- Kym Ludvigsen Viticulture commercial
- Mike McCarthy Research
- Lawrie Stanford or Tony Battaglene (to be decided between them)
 Industry

In addition the following people agreed to participate in an expert advisory role:

- Rob Walker (CSIRO)
- Richard Hamilton (Hamilton Viticulture)
- Nick Dry (via Robin Nettelbeck – Yalumba nursery)

It was agreed that:

In addition to the above,

- Mardi Longbottom will consult with WGGGA's Decision Support Network on a next-generation member for the expert working group
- Kym Ludvigsen will contact ADFA and ATGA and discuss representation on the working group

It was suggested that the working group members consider a mechanism for substitutes because of the workload requirement and their other responsibilities.

It was agreed that the membership structure and nominees as presented be supported.

Open discussion – issues for the working group to consider

The meeting was opened up for general discussion to allow ideas to be raised for the working group to take into account in developing its business case. Points raised for working group consideration were:

- Whether distribution of improved planting material should be included as part of this exercise.
- Alternative models for importation and distribution of new material – eg as used by Adelaide Hills Vine Improvement.
- Whether the collection needs to be all 900 varieties or a source block of the most likely to be required varieties in case of an incursion of a pest.
- Definition of germplasm versus a “collection” and the different purposes of a collection - deciding what are industry's requirements into the future and how they can be best served by germplasm – hence what kind of germplasm collection is required.
- Resolving issues of confidentiality for the germplasm register.
- Need to restrict focus to public collections – not how private collections are managed.
- Possible need to educate industry on how private collections fit into national vine management and why the need for confidentiality – including how PBR arrangements work.
- Intellectual property issues relating to public domain germplasm material – possible need to seek advice on these issues.
- Working on broader industry engagement and looking to models in other horticultural industries which have educated their members on the importance of collections and secured central sustainable funding.
- Options for funding apart from external levy-based funding – ie possible contribution of a user-pays model.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.