



Mr Josh Wilson MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
C/o of the Committee Secretariat

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Dear Mr Wilson

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties as it contemplates the Australia – India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA) on Thursday 13 October 2022.

During the hearing, Senator O'Neill asked the following pertinent question, which I took on notice, relating to the treatment of workers in the Australian grape and wine sector:

"What is the industry's commitment to the people of India that in bringing a workforce to Australia, which is really important for our industry, there will be the development of proper processes to ensure fair and equal pay, with the same pay for the same work, for Indian nationals who come and help us generate this long-term sustainable trade in wine with our Quad partner?"

The AI-ECTA agreement presents a range of mutual benefits to Australia and India. While Australian Grape & Wine's focus has been on tariff relief, building industry relationships and regulatory cooperation, we note there are also potential benefits in the context of labour. While Australian Grape & Wine does not have a formal position on labour issues in the context of the AI-ECTA, I'd like to provide the committee with the following points:

1. Australian Grape & Wine is committed to working with its members to ensure all workers are treated in accordance with Australian law, regardless of their nationality or background. We have:
 - a. provided information to members relating to the work of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) through our newsletter;
 - b. facilitated a session at the Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference in June 2022 focused on the treatment of vineyard workers; and
 - c. raised the importance of complying with Australian workplace laws issue on multiple occasions in member briefings and other settings.

We note, however, that the grape and wine sector is one of many in Australia that has more work to do in terms of education about the laws, compliance, and how best to interact with third parties such as labour hire

FOR INDUSTRY,
BY INDUSTRY

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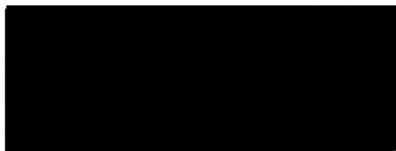


companies. Australian Grape & Wine will continue to raise these issues with members in the months and years ahead.

2. We have not explored to what extent AI-ECTA may assist in alleviating the acute labour challenges facing our sector. However, the principle of treating workers in accordance with the law should determine how grape and wine businesses bring any Indian people in to work in their teams.
3. Australian Grape & Wine has contemplated the potential mutual benefits of working with India's wine sector to utilize Australia's world-leading education and training in viticulture, winemaking and other aspects of wine production, research and development and wine business. There is enormous opportunity for our universities, TAFE colleges and research institutions to grow their offering to by attracting Indian students to study in Australia. This would have a significant benefit to India's wine industry too in terms of building capacity in the sector and driving improvements in quality, yields and techniques.
4. In broader terms, Australian Grape & Wine is working to strengthen diversity, equality and inclusion in the sector. The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter is the bedrock of this effort with a broad range of industry participants signing the Charter, which encompasses issues such as respect, fair and equal pay for equal work, maintaining a safe work environment, and promoting a culture that values diversity. Again, from an industry association perspective, we are mindful that cultural change does not happen overnight, and that meaningful positive change will require a process of continuous improvement.

I thank the Committee again for the opportunity to provide evidence to its hearing. I also thank Senator O'Neill for her question. I trust this information is useful to the committee.

Kind regards



Lee McLean

Chief Executive (Designate)

21 October 2022