

**INQUIRY INTO BIOSECURITY AND QUARANTINE ARRANGEMENTS  
SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS**

5 August 2010

**Submission of the Victorian Wine Industry Association (VWIA)**

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe  
Committee Secretary  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
By email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

**Terms of Reference**

The scope of the review is broad with the Terms of Reference for the inquiry by the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs being:

- a) The adequacy of current biosecurity and quarantine arrangements, including resourcing;
- b) Projected demand and resourcing requirements;
- c) Progress toward achievement of reform of Australian Quarantine and Inspection service export fees and charges;
- d) Progress in implementation of the “Beale Review” recommendations and their place in meeting projected biosecurity demand and resourcing; and
- e) Any related issues.

**BACKGROUND**

The Victorian Wine Industry Association (“VWIA”) represents the winegrape growing and winemaking industry in Victoria. The Victorian wine industry includes ~800 wineries who also operate their own vineyards and ~1000 growers who produce wine grapes for sale.

**Biosecurity and the Victorian Wine Industry**

The VWIA has a communications role associated with biosecurity, risk management and the outbreak of pests and disease. Phylloxera, an endemic pest specific to grapevines, is an ongoing biosecurity risk. More recently, fruit fly and locusts have presented biosecurity risks, with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) advising that the threat from locusts has the potential to be the worst in 40 years. The VWIA will partner with the DPI in communicating with the wine industry regarding the locust threat.

The VWIA takes an active role in biosecurity issues in the wine industry and is a member of the Victorian Viticulture Biosecurity Committee (“VVBC”), a partnership between the Victorian Department of Primary Industries and key stakeholders within the viticulture industries, including winegrapes, table grape, dried fruit, nursery and vine improvement. The VVBC seeks to:

1. Minimize the impact of outbreaks of major pests and diseases.
2. Provide leadership in the coordination of biosecurity management strategies.
3. Increase stakeholder awareness of major pest and disease issues.

**Victorian Wine Industry Association – Level 1, 270 Lorimer Street, Port Melbourne, VICTORIA 3207**

Ph: 03 9261 1830

Fax: 03 9261 1894

W: [www.winesofvictoria.com.au](http://www.winesofvictoria.com.au)

The VVBC has been an effective example of government and industry collaborating on biosecurity issues and has led to the development of a strategic plan for biosecurity for the viticulture industry in Victoria. It is important that successful initiatives such as the VVBC are maintained.

#### **THE BEALE REVIEW**

The VWIA made a submission (dated April 9, 2008) to the Beale Review (see attached).

#### **SUBMISSION** (as at 5/08/2010)

##### **Exotic pest and disease incursions**

Like all agricultural based industries, the wine industry is vulnerable to exotic pest and disease incursions. It is essential that new risks to grapevines, such as Pierce's disease and vectors such as the Glassy Winged Sharpshooter, are not introduced in Australia. Pierce's disease has the potential to cause significant economic loss to the wine industry. This is an example where good pre-border intelligence is essential to managing risk, as it is known that the Glassy Winged Sharpshooter is gradually moving across the Pacific Ocean.

##### **Import Risk Assessments**

Biosecurity Australia uses Import Risk Assessments ("IRA") to assist in the development of policy in relation to quarantine for the import of plants and related products such as fresh produce. There is currently an IRA underway for the import of table grapes from China. During the consultation phase, Biosecurity Australia did not seek comment on the draft risk assessment report from a broad range of industry stakeholders. It is important that Biosecurity Australia consults broadly across industry when undertaking an IRA to ensure that its consultation process is representative. In the case of the importation of table grapes, there are a range of viticulturally based industries that may be impacted including wine, dried fruit, nurseries, vine improvement as well as the table grape industry itself.

##### **Market access issues**

There are discrepancies in how states deal with phylloxera host material movements between Phylloxera Exclusion zones (PEZ) within Australia. For example, cuttings and rootlings of grapevines are permitted from an interstate PEZ to Victoria without requirements, whereas NSW requires hot water treatment and a Plant Health Certificate. Issues of harmonization may be referred to the Domestic Quarantine and Market Access Working Group (DQMAWG) with the National Vine Health Steering Committee no longer operating. This has been a cause of delay.

The VWIA is interested in remaining informed regarding the Senate inquiry into biosecurity and quarantine arrangements. For further information, please contact:

Joanne Butterworth-Gray  
Chief Executive  
**Victoria Wine Industry Association**  
T: (03) 9261 1830

**Victorian Wine Industry Association – Level 1, 270 Lorimer Street, Port Melbourne, VICTORIA 3207**  
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QUARANTINE & BIOSECURITY REVIEW

Submission from the Victorian Wine Industry Association

April 9, 2008

To: Chair of the Review Panel, Mr. Roger Beale AO

The Victorian Wine Industry Association (VWIA) is the peak body that represents the winegrape growing and winemaking industry across the state of Victoria. This representation takes the form of membership (accounting for 90% of the state's crush) and through the structure of the Association, whereby each region (21) and the major grapegrowing organization in inland Victoria (the Murray Valley Grape Growers Association) each have a seat on the VWIA Council.

Biosecurity is of significant importance to the Victorian wine industry (and hence the national wine industry). It is a matter of enabling assurance of biosecurity for production and marketing purposes. The Victorian wine industry accounts for 22% of export sales – as further market growth is anticipated.

This paper is divided into the following sections:

- Issues of concern to the VWIA as they relate to Quarantine and Biosecurity practice
- Rationale for adequate biosecurity measures:
  - to promote viable production of wine grapes in Victoria
  - to support the marketing image of Victorian wine production
- resources that VWIA has identified as necessary for adequate Quarantine and Biosecurity measures

**Issues of concern to the VWIA as they relate to Quarantine and Biosecurity practice**

1. Quarantine
  - a. The VWIA is concerned about how the national phylloxera protocols fit within the jurisdiction of quarantine – is there a consultative approach with the National Vine Health Steering Committee?
  - b. Is there an awareness on behalf of AQUIS about the national phylloxera protocols and the requirements within the system?
2. Phylloxera
  - b. The Victorian wine industry was decimated by the spread of the phylloxera pest in the 1900's, and has taken over 30 years to recover – both in production and market position. Recent detection of phylloxera on 3 properties within Victoria over 3 years has raised considerable concern within the industry as to whether the national phylloxera protocols are recognized and adhered to.
  - c. The VWIA adopts a collaborative educative approach with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, however, as an industry organisation, we accept that the industry is under threat again if the issue is not recognized as an issue of national importance.
3. Threat of incursion of major pests
  - d. Adequate and state-of-the-art quarantine measures are essential for minimize the risk of incursion of pests such as Glassy winged leafhopper, and diseases such as Pierce's disease.
  - e. If these threats were to be realized, the Australian wine industry would be decimated.
4. Management of disposal of quarantined product by AQUIS
  - f. Is the Review Panel aware that quarantined product – removed at Tullamarine Airport, and disposed of at Sunbury, may then sit for 2 days before being buried? Such product, collected by birds, has the potential to introduce significant risk to wine producers in the Sunbury region (as well as other agricultural pursuits).

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**Rationale for adequate biosecurity measures:**

1. To promote viable production of wine grapes in Victoria
  - a. The Victorian wine industry is worth in excess of \$1B to the Victorian economy through domestic and export sales, plus the economic contribution of winery tourism, employment, support of the service industries, etc.
  - b. The Victorian wine industry has collaborated on vine health, biosecurity, knowledge development and market development to achieve this outcome.
  - c. The Victorian wine industry works to minimize biosecurity risk to the sector to ensure it remains viable and prosperous.
2. To support the marketing image of Victorian wine production
  - d. The Victorian wine industry has undertaken considerable education on sustainable practices
  - e. Victorian wine has a 'clean, green image'.
  - f. The VWIA has undertaken a significant project (funded by DAFF) to develop tools that will promote further adoption of sustainable business practices in the vineyard and the winery.
  - g. Resources are necessary to ensure that consumer awareness is raised about the difference between an outbreak of a pest (e.g. phylloxera) and a disease outbreak (such as Mad Cow's disease).
  - h. Sustaining and evidencing this image can only be supported by adequate biosecurity measures driven at a national level in collaboration with the states.

**Resources that VWIA has identified as necessary for adequate Quarantine and Biosecurity measures**

1. The VWIA wishes to emphasise the need for appropriate resourcing to support Quarantine and Biosecurity measures. The programs and identification of resources can be delivered at a national level, in partnership with the state governments, and industry groups.
2. When a pest incursion does occur, it is essential that clean, certified rootstocks are available to assist producers to recover – this will require resources in planning and infrastructure at a national level

The Victorian Wine Industry Association is an active organization that promotes industry education, innovation and ownership. The VWIA does not seek to have government assume this role, however, at a national and state level, there is great capacity for governments to facilitate resources into technology, knowledge development, consumer awareness programs, development of suitable industry protocols, and infrastructure that support the maintenance of strict quarantine and biosecurity measures.

For further information, please contact:

Joanne Butterworth-Gray  
Chief Executive

Victorian Wine Industry Association, Level 14, 123 Queen Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000  
Ph: 03 9642 2505 Fax: 03 9642 2506 M: 0412 703 014 E: [joanne@vwia.org](mailto:joanne@vwia.org)