

Green Industries SA

Submission in response to *Turning the tide on single-use plastic products; A discussion paper.*



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

SUBMISSION OF: SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY
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SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION

The South Australian Wine Industry Association Incorporated (SAWIA) appreciates the opportunity to respond with our views on “*Turning the tide on single-use plastic products; A discussion paper*” (the ‘Discussion Paper’).

The South Australian wine sector is not a large user of single-use plastics and does not make a significant contribution to the problems caused by them. SAWIA agrees that efforts to combat the environmental impacts of single use plastics should be targeted to where they have the most benefit.

SAWIA is concerned by the observation made in the Discussion Paper that the Australian Packaging Covenant may have failed to drive reductions in waste emanating from the “supermarket aisle” and SAWIA urges Green Industries SA to lead appropriate response actions.

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

SAWIA is an industry employer association representing the interests of wine grape growers and wine producers throughout the state of South Australia.

SAWIA is a not for profit incorporated association, funded by voluntary member subscriptions, grants and fee for service activities, whose mission is to provide leadership to South Australian grape and wine industry businesses so they achieve great things that they couldn’t by themselves.

SAWIA membership represents approximately 96% of the grapes crushed in South Australia and about 40% of the land under viticulture. Each major wine region within South Australia is represented on the board governing our activities.

SAWIA has a strong track record as an industry leader and innovator in many areas. SAWIA pro-actively represents members and the greater wine industry with government and related agencies in a wide variety of aspects of business in the wine sector.

SUBMISSION

The South Australian Wine Industry Association (SAWIA) is pleased to be able to comment on “*Turning the tide on single-use plastic products; A discussion paper*” (the ‘Discussion Paper’) that was published on the South Australian government’s YourSAy [website](#).

About the South Australian wine industry

The South Australian wine industry is worth about \$2.15B to the state’s economy.

South Australia has 18 distinctly named wine regions with at least three having international recognition.

South Australia has 75,566 hectares under wine grapes, representing about 56% of Australia’s vineyards with 61% red wine grape varieties and 39% white varieties.

The total wine grape crush in 2018 in South Australia was 747,361 tonnes, 42% of Australia’s crush. For South Australia, this was a decrease of 13% when compared with the above-average 2017 crush. The 2018 tonnes crushed was just above the 10-year average.

South Australian wine regions are responsible for producing about 530 million litres of wine – about 45% of Australia’s wine production.

South Australia is a premium wine producer using viticultural practices leading to higher quality and lower than average yields.

In the twelve months to December 2018, South Australia exported 411 million litres for a value of \$1.758B (about 62% of Australia’s total). South Australia’s major export markets are China, USA, UK and Canada which also happen to be Australia’s major markets.

South Australia exports about 52% in bottled format, comprising 87% of the value.

Wine is currently South Australia’s largest single export sector.

South Australian wine businesses export to over 100 countries.

Domestically, Australians drink \$740m worth of South Australian wine per annum.

In South Australia there are approximately 695 wineries^[1] (593 processing facilities, 342 cellar doors) and 3,326 lands title vineyard owners^[2] who directly employ 8,440 persons. Taking into account other occupations, the numbers employed in connection with the wine industry would add many thousands of job occupations.

Within the 2016 Census, these persons identified themselves as having an occupation in grape growing or wine making. Considering the best estimates, the South Australian wine industry workforce employs males and females in the ratio of 68%:32%.

General comments

SAWIA makes some general comments on the Discussion Paper.

SAWIA recognises the government’s stated position in the Discussion Paper that “it’s important to target our efforts where it has the greatest benefit” (p. 8). SAWIA supports the

^[1] The Australian and New Zealand Wine Industry Directory

^[2] Vinehealth Australia 2018 SA Winegrape Crush Survey, page 4

government's stated position that in considering development of policy to address problems created by single-use plastics, "Negative impacts on state-based businesses that support South Australian jobs should be avoided or minimised where possible. Similarly, increased cost pressures facing the community are to be avoided or minimised." (p. 35)

SAWIA notes that the European Union (EU) has provided leadership to date on measures to address the environmental impacts of single-use plastics, and it is assumed that the EU's experience and learnings have informed the Discussion Paper and will also guide any proposed subsequent policy development.

We also agree with the view in the Discussion Paper that "There aren't large 'step' changes left to be made in the industrial sectors". In particular, we note that there are minimal further steps that could be taken to materially reduce the use of single-use plastics within the wine sector, because wine producers already routinely make use of recycling collection contractors for any recyclable waste they generate, such as the packaging materials that are used for the ingredients and dry goods used in production processes.

The South Australian wine sector is not a large supplier of single-use plastics into the market, as its product packaging for nearly 90% of its domestic sales is packaged in glass bottle format¹, and therefore the sector does not make a significant material contribution to environmental problems caused by single-use plastics.

Clearly then, it is our submission that future policy and legislative effort should be focused on those materials that have the most impact on the environment as outlined in the Discussion Paper. In that regard, we would also urge prioritising of mechanisms that could be utilised to address the most numerous litter item, which is cigarette butts – we understand that they represent 37% by number although only 0.03% by volume to South Australian litter².

Many of the wine businesses in South Australia are signatories to the Australian Packaging Covenant (APC) and actively seek the most sustainable packaging options through working closely with their packaging suppliers. In fact, it is highly likely that the wine sector as a whole is already close to, or even exceeds, the targets set by the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) for 2025 (p. 15). For example, most glass wine bottles currently contain around 30% recycled content and SAWIA understands that local bottle producers would ideally like to increase this to 50%³. As already explained, almost 90% of the wine sector's products are packaged using 100% recyclable materials.

That being said, there is a view in the wine industry that APCO has to date had a disproportionate focus on wine producers, as compared to the producers of food and other household product. This view appears to be supported by the statement in the Discussion Paper that suggests that the "overall impact [of the APC] on the supermarket aisle is not significant for most people, and for some their recycling bin is often full to overflowing" (p. 13). In order to ensure the maximum environmental benefit for the effort, the focus of APC should be directed as a priority to address packaging (and particularly single-use plastics) in the supermarket aisle, and we would urge Green Industries SA to lead any appropriate response actions.

End of submission

¹ Wine Australia, pers. comm. 20 February 2019

² KESAB Litter Strategy Monitoring Wave 75 – May 2018 Report, pp. 31-37.

³ Orora, glass manufacturer, pers. comm. 19 February 2019