

AGM 2017 -Chair LCGWC.

GENERAL

Vintage 2017 saw total crush for the Limestone Coast being up at 127,000 tonnes, the largest harvest for some time, however due to cooler weather conditions some fruit was not harvested, notably shiraz and especially in cooler vineyard sites. Its not possible to know exactly how much was not picked but it appears to be 20-30,000 tonnes across the whole region. Having attended the post vintage tastings I was very pleased at the quality of wines submitted.

Demand for bulkwines into China and demand for higher quality wine from leading export companies has seen continued improvement in trading conditions with China our leading export destination by \$\$. The most recent Wine Australia figures: greater China is at \$853 million of sales, with USA at \$461 and the UK at \$349, with total exports up to \$2.44 billion. China was at \$300 million this time last year, an increase of over \$500 million. Although a lot of this wine is from irrigated areas at lower price points, the \$30 and above categories all saw significant increases in volume. This has been undoubtedly good for the Limestone Coast and we can only hope the dollar continues to stay low, so we can build on these exports.

The other looming readjustment looking forward is the WET tax reform. This will be challenging for most producers in the coming year, depending on how the ATO decides to manage rebates.

Also of note this year is the Australian Research Council funding of a large research project at the Naracoorte Caves in Wrattenbully. This project will examine the 500,000 year fossil record in the caves and use up to date techniques to more precisely date these strata, document climate change over this period, and more precisely map the caves. This project is worth just under \$2 million dollars and there are over 40 senior scientists and their students involved in this project. A world-heritage listed tourist attraction into mega-fauna will be a welcome reason for more tourists to come to the Limestone Coast.

On the 4th of November however the region received wide spread late frosts , when of course the vines are most sensitive and vulnerable. Again it is difficult to estimate the losses until harvest, but it appears frosts plus reduced bunch

numbers could see a 50% reduction on a typical crop. Padthaway ,Wrattonbully and Coonawarra and Mt Benson have seen significant losses, Mundulla some and Mount Gambier and Robe appear to have escaped significant damage. This is the worst frost event since 2006. Added to that, heavy rains during flowering , will also have an effect on set. The start of the 2018 season looks a lot like France in 2017, this will be a difficult year.

Council Activities this year.

Tech Committee.

The Tech committee chaired by Kerry de Garis, has secured regional funding for 2017-2018 projects. Including contributing to funding winemaking for the Coonawarra Cabernet rootstock trial, an Alternative varieties study for Coonawarra and Wrattenbully, a Technology for vineyards project, a grapevine nutrition workshop and the recently conducted snail /earwig seminar.

The Tech committee has also secured funding from Wine Australia for an Incubator project into Berry Shrivels in Cabernet Sauvignon in the Limestone Coast that will be conducted by Vinay Pagay at the University of Adelaide valued at \$68,000.

We are also continuing to fund Eutypa research spore traps with SARDI. This year we have reached \$7500 in total funding of the \$17500 commitment.

Ben Harris also managed to gain funds from PIRSA to make our Unearthing Viticulture online document more user friendly for downloading individual regional information and improving regional soil maps. This work is due for completion shortly.

Getting projects up for funding continues to be a challenge with continual changes within Wine Australia and Kerry and Ulrich Grey Smith have both given significant time to get these across the line, thank-you to them.

Fracking

The SA Parliamentary Inquiry into unconventional gas handed down its report in November 2016, recommending unconventional gas exploration not proceed in the SE due to lack of social licence and questions around well integrity over time, and management of accidental spills. The Weatherill government however

has continued to advocate for gas exploration by releasing 5 new PELs surrounding Coonawarra and going across to Robe.

Beach Energy has received \$6 million of govt funding to use conventional drilling techniques on the Haselgrove-3 well currently being drilled. Total royalties received by the govt for gas in the last 100 years in the SE is \$11 million , so half of this income has been returned to industry for one well.

The council with Fracking committee chair Stuart Sharman continues to co-operate with SAWIA, AWRI, Primary Producers SA, Potatoe growers, Horticulture and other community group representatives to advocate against the use of Fracking in the Limestone Coast.

During the Year :

I met with The Hon Tom Koutsantonis MP, Treasurer, Minister of Finance, Minister for State Development and Minister for Resources and Energy for SA, David Ridgeway MLC Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Shadow minister for Tourism, Primary Industries, Food and Wine and Mark Parnell MLC, together with SELGA rep and LCPA members, to gauge the reaction to the Parliamentary inquiry findings.

Stuart and I along with PPSA, and other group representatives met with Mark Butler MP , Shadow minister for Climate Change and Energy in the Federal Parliament, to discuss gas development in Australia and renewables.

I also met with Nick Xenophon MP, to discuss Fracking and gas issues and Stuart and I met with Hon Steven Marshall Leader of the Opposition in SA to discuss the Liberals commitment to a moratorium on Unconventional gas in the SE if elected.

Limestone Coast Wineshow

This year was the 17th Limestone Coast Wineshow, with Jane Faulkner returning as chair of judges and Sarah Ahmed The Wine Detective from the UK our international Judge for 2017 and 4 new judges Julian Langworthy- Deep Woods, Wendy Cameron MW consultant winemaker, Emma Norbiato -Calabria Family Wines, and Jeremy Prideaux from the City Wineshop in Melbourne.

I would like to thank the Sponsors who support the show and make it possible and also I would like to acknowledge all the volunteers effort to bring the wineshow to fruition and bring the Limestone Coast wine community together for a celebration of the wines from our regions, and in particular the committee members and their employers who work all year to make the show work.

This years committee was: Sarah Pidgeon –Wynns, Angela Pomery –Wynns, Trent Nankivell- Hollicks, Tony Lees –Fabal, Susie Harris- Grindstone Vineyard and Land of Tomorrow Wines, Bruce Gregory – Majella, Ulrich Grey-Smith – Freelance winemaker and Council exec officer. With help from Stella Scanlon Majella with records and Lauren Hansen Media.

Limestone Coast Community

I would also like to pay tribute to several members of our community who passed away this year.

Colin Kidd. Colin was a Patron of Coonawarra, who started in Coonawarra in 1965 both running the vineyards and in 1968-1972 the Rouge Homme winery as well. Colin oversaw the establishment of the now famous Limestone Ridge and St George vineyards as well as a large vineyard area in Padthaway, and latterly in his career new trial sites in Mount Benson and Kongerong. Colin continued to live in Penola , when National vineyard manager for Lindemans, retiring to Adelaide.

Wayne Stehbens. Wayne started as Katnook winemaker in 1979, after several years at Charles Sturt University studying Oenology. Wayne has made the last 37 vintages of Katnook wine , a remarkable record. These included 2 Jimmy Watson trophies and many other international and National awards.

Robert Miles. Robert was a local architect and artist who along with Guy Detot designed and makes the LCWS trophies. Constructed of lasar cut wood, limestone and stainless steel, our trophies are instantly recognisable and unique.

I would like to thank producers who through their regional levies contribute to the ongoing running of the council. The council has over the years not charged levies when we had reserve funds and interest to cover running costs, and until last year we have not increased levies. However it is now time we, look at increasing our levies, which are still modest by comparison with other industry organisations, in order to cover costs and not reduce our reserve funds. This will be an agenda item at this years AGM.

Lastly again thanks to all the volunteers who donate time to the councils activities and to Ulrich Grey Smith who is our industry officer.

Pete Bissell

Chair Limestone Coast Grape and Wine Council. November2017.