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MEDIA RELEASE



WINEFOODTOURISM



North East Wine Zone Strategic Research Project Now Released

Surrounded by vines in the dining room of Lindenwarrah at Milawa, the North East Strategic Research Project outcomes were released last night to an audience of around 50 grape growers, winemakers and government representatives. The report, commissioned by the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum Inc. (AAVAF), was presented to the forum by Delyse Graham, a principal of Wine Food Tourism Strategies, the company engaged to conduct the research.

Peter Long, Chair of the AAVAF introduced Ms Graham and described the role of the Agribusiness Forum as one of facilitating the growth and sustainability for the agricultural sector. The AAVAF believes that by providing a detailed analysis of the five wine regions of the zone; Alpine Valleys, Beechworth, Glenrowan, King Valley and Rutherglen, future business and investment decisions can be made on the basis of hard evidence.

In revealing the outcomes of the study, Ms Graham described the industry as a very significant contributor, adding to the economic health and vibrancy of many small communities across the zone. Some 690 people are employed directly into the industry, which pays \$19 million dollars in salaries each year. The majority of the 30,000 tonnes of grapes produced each year are retained within the zone for processing and generate 16.3 million litres of wine with a retail value of \$206 million. Almost half of this value is sold to export with a further \$33 million sold direct from the winery through cellar door or mail order. All of this results in a total economic contribution of the wine industry to the North East zone of \$244.6 million.

The report reveals an industry in good shape, although not without challenges. With just over 50 percent of the vines planted in the last five years, there is a degree of settling and maturing to occur.

The prospects for a bright future are encouraging. With a focus on increasing the level of business and marketing skills and attention to building strong brands and sustainable markets, the North East has potential to rival some of Australia's pre-eminent regions. The ingredients are there to achieve this positioning in terms of premium wine production, product profile and as a leading visitor destination.

The fundamental success factor will be the industry's commitment to working together to overcome challenges and maximise opportunities and thereby drive the North East Wine Industry toward an increasingly successful future.

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