



MARGARET RIVER WINE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Coal Mining in Margaret River REJECTED!

Yesterday's decision to **REJECT** the proposed Vasse Coal Project at Osmington, just 15 kilometres from Margaret River, as being environmentally unacceptable was welcomed with relief not only by the wine industry but the whole regional community.

The EPA, Western Australia's statutory environmental authority brought down a finding that it assessed the coal mining proposal as being environmentally unacceptable. A number of grounds were cited for their decision which rested primarily on water protection with environment values, social impacts and health grounds all playing a part.

Association President, Nigel Gallop, Fraser Gallop Estate said today "The whole Margaret River wine industry applauds the EPA decision; it clearly recognised the absolute dangers involved in developing an extractive industry in a largely pristine environment and one that would be in direct and ongoing conflict with its present economic drivers of premium grape growing and fine wine production, general agriculture and of course tourism."

Throughout the assessment period the Association has been a strong advocate against the proposed coal mine and has actively lobbied the State Government and supported the No Coalition community group.

Not only is this a victory for common sense it is a victory for the Margaret River community who fought long and hard against this proposal and puts all who live, work and play in Margaret River a mile in front especially as the only action that could reverse the EPA's finding is if the Minister for the Environment were to over rule the decision. While this is still technically possible the overwhelming evidence presented to the EPA in more than 700 submissions along with public statements by the Premier Colin Barnett when he said, "I had expressed as Premier that I thought that was a very doubtful prospect to have an underground coal mine in the prime wine growing area of Western Australia" suggests this would be unlikely.

"The Board's public position on the need for further protection for this region has not changed. Legislation to protect the future of viticulture and wine making in the Margaret River region is clearly required." said Mr Gallop.

ENDS – Dated 22nd March 2011

For further information contact Nigel Gallop – President or Nick Power - CEO of the Margaret River Wine Industry Association on 9757 9330 or 0400 516 555.