



Wines not Mines in Margaret River

Over the past few weeks the Association has closely watched developments with the proposed Vasse Coal Project at Osmington, Margaret River; in that time it has also taken the opportunity to meet with the Department of State Development officers and LD Operations Pty Ltd staff as well as attending the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council meeting on the 11th August 2010.

As a key stakeholder in the region the Association, as a voluntary not-for-profit organisation, has under its Constitution a duty of care to its members and the greater Margaret River wine industry to protect, develop and market the Margaret River wine brand and all that it represents. The Association's Board met this week and unanimously passed the following resolution:

'The Association firmly believes that development of coal mining in the Margaret River region will have a detrimental impact upon the wine industry and impinge greatly upon our collective wine brand. Our Margaret River wine brand has been built in a little over 40 years by a clear and unrelenting focus on quality within a largely pristine geographically isolated environment; in doing so it has grown to be world renowned as a home of truly fine wines.'

'While the Association understands and supports due process being accorded to the coal mining proponents on their respective applications assessing possible adverse environmental impacts in this instance there is a need for still greater level of review.'

'Margaret River stands as a national and international pinnacle not only as a true home of fine wine but as a tourist destination; anything that may impact adversely on our wine brand and tourism must also be assessed at a higher level openly and in full public transparency. One only has to look to Florida and the BP oil rig disaster to see what costs and damage can be done to the environment and the brand associated with it for communities and Government's alike.'

Association President Nigel Gallop, Fraser Gallop Estate, said today, "It was extremely important for the regional wine industry to have a declared position on coal mining within Margaret River so there were no ambiguities on the Association's stance and we will work within all frameworks and parameters possible to express our opinion. Our region is famous for many things of course our fine wines and rugged natural coastline, abundant forests and undulating farm lands plus lifestyle."

"Grape growing and wine production, followed by general agriculture and then tourism in that order are the key regional economic drivers and while we all acknowledge wine and tourism in Margaret River region and greater South West is growing more slowly due to the global financial crisis it would be completely detrimental to the Margaret River wine brand should an event occur or be perceived to occur that spoils our image as a clean and pristine environment and all that this encompasses."

ENDS – Dated 20th August 2010

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.