

Chalari Wines  
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Treasury,

The current WET review is particularly concerning to me as a young winemaker and new to the industry.

I have almost finished a six year degree in Wine Science at Charles Sturt University, and have started up my very small batch wine label (Chalari Wines), to start producing commercial wines. This is where exciting and interesting wines are produced, not in large scale production wineries that export in cartons or sell as unbranded wine to the big liquor barns.

The changes to rules around winery ownership are particularly worrying. I have some small batch processing equipment, but will be relying on other contracts to finish production and bottling etc. Having to own a winery immediately puts me out of eligibility for the WET rebate, therefore making it financially unviable to make my small batch wine. In addition, the 5 ton limit is too high. Many of the most interesting wines on the market at the moment are made in 2 ton batches. Having to process 5 tons of fruit is a large burden on small batch winemakers and unviable.

Traditional production methods are being challenged and that should be seen as a positive for the industry. Despite the first families of wine and the big retailers feeling threatened by this, it should be fostered and not stopped by a clunky change to WET rules.

I believe this will put a big dent on innovation in the wine industry and set us back years. This will further grease the palms of the big wine producers and liquor barns, and stomp on the hopes and dreams of young aspiring winemakers.

Laws need to be tightened around large retailers creating brands and claiming multiple rebates. This alone will provide the cost savings the government are after whilst still retaining innovation and promoting growth in the industry.

Regards,

Alexi Christidis