

Submission
No 32

INQUIRY INTO WINE GRAPE MARKET AND PRICES

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 24/09/2010

Partially Confidential

I have been growing grapes for 44 years in the Riverina and would like to make a submission into the wine grape inquiry. I have held a contract with my current winery for 25 years.

In recent vintages, clauses have been added to the contract that significantly changed the delivery and quality control requirements. These clauses required major capital expenditure in order to comply. The winery has made additional expectations with documentation and grower qualifications that have increased the office workload.

If I didn't comply with these changes I would not have been able to deliver my grapes.

I have been misled by my winery indicating that they would like me to change varieties in the vineyard. When I make the changes and the fruit is nearing harvest time I was told that I would not have a home for that variety even though I planted it on their instruction.

I have made numerous alterations to my farm under great expense to comply with the requirements of the winery, yet when rolling contracts end I am told that I no longer have a home for my grapes. I could not do any more to meet their needs as a grower, yet I was not treated with fairness, particularly in recent years.

The industry should have a mandatory code of conduct so farmers can get a fair go for their perishable commodity. We have a very small window of opportunity to sell a quality product and the code enables the grower to have some power to negotiate.

The Wine Grapes Marketing Board needs to keep its Terms of Payment to ensure growers are not taken advantage of.

Thankyou for conducting this inquiry and I hope some good outcomes can be met for our industry.