

## **Application A1026– MINIMUM ALCOHOL CONTENT FOR WINE**

### **General Procedure**

#### **Summary**

Further information is needed to justify changes to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) and labelling issues needs further exploration.

#### **Specific Issues**

The NSW Food Authority has reviewed A1026 Assessment Report and requests further information regarding the need to lower the minimum alcohol content of wines from 8% to 4.5% and potential labelling impacts that may result from the amendment.

Within the Assessment Report it is stated that the applicant seeks to amend the Code to harmonise with the European Union in order to meet EU export requirements under the 2008 *Agreement between Australia and the European Community for Trade in Wine*. The applicant further states that the amendment would allow locally produced wines to compete with imported low alcohol wines on the domestic market.

From the information presented in the assessment report it would appear that only wine with a protected designation of origin or geographical indication shall have a minimum alcohol content of 4.5%, with all other wines having a minimum alcohol content of 8.5% or 9%. It would appear that wine produced in Australia for export would not fall into the lower alcohol category and as such would need to comply with the higher level which is similar with the current requirements of Standard 4.5.1.

The NSW Food Authority would see merit in considering the development of a standard to permit the production of low alcohol/low kilojoule wine for health and consumer choice reasons, but as currently presented in the assessment report the reasoning appears incomplete.

In assessing this application, there is a need to consider potential impact on the labelling of these products. Clause 4 of Standard 2.7.1 of the Code does not allow alcoholic beverages with more than 1.15% alcohol by volume as being represented as a low alcohol beverage. The same does not apply to low alcoholic beverages being represented as low kilojoules and would suggest that this issue needs further consideration.

#### **ENDS**

**The views expressed in this submission may or may not accord with those of other NSW Government agencies. The NSW Food Authority has a policy which encourages the full range of NSW agency views to be submitted during the standards development stages before final assessment. Other relevant NSW Government agencies are aware of and agree with this policy.**