

Comments from the Victorian Departments of Health and Human Services, and Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

Due date of submission: 10 August 2016

The Victorian Departments of Health and Human Services and Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (the departments) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Application A1119, Addition of water to facilitate wine fermentation.

From the FSANZ assessment report it is understood that:

- The Winemakers Federation of Australia is seeking permission for the addition of water to high sugar musts to aid fermentation in the production of wine, sparkling wine and fortified wine.
- The Code (Standard 4.5.1, Australia only standard) contains strict permissions on when wineries may add water during wine production. The addition of water to assist in the fermentation of high sugar harvests is not currently permitted.
- The phenomenon of slow, sluggish ("stuck") fermentations occurs when the growing season experiences high temperatures and little rain, resulting in high sugar levels in the grapes. It is anticipated that such seasons will become more common due to climate change.
- The dilution of the must down to a minimum sugar concentration of 15 Baume (27 Brix) will overcome the issue of "stuck" fermentations. This is the level sought by the applicant.
- US wine regulations currently allow for dilution of must down to 12.2 Baume (22 Brix) to address the problem.
- European regulation allows for the addition of water to must during legitimate technical processes ("technical necessity").

On the basis of the information provided, the departments support progression of Application A1119.