

## Riverina 2019 Vintage Report

A good growing season with minimal incidences of rain led to a sound clean crop of quality fruit being harvested in the Riverina in 2019. Good canopies and open bunches allowed for ideal airflow and spray penetration. Incidences of high heat throughout the growing season did not lead to any major issues of sun burn damage in older plantings, only young underdeveloped canopies proved problematic with many growers applying sunscreens to good effect.

Despite a lengthy heatwave in the Riverina in January and the first part of February with maximum temperature recorded on the NSW DPI Weather Station network of up to 46.8 degrees Celsius and average air temperatures at 30.7 for the month of January the season was pleasing for most growers. Initial reports of a far lighter than average winegrape crop, across the region were dispelled for many anxious growers as crops started to be harvested.

Maturation times increased this season in direct response to the heatwave affecting the physiology of the wine grapes. Growers reported baume slow to move and targets being met mostly through dehydration. These anecdotes were mirrored by the maturity testing undertaken at the Riverina Winegrape Growers laboratory. Should wine grapes have been harvested at optimal levels the yields in the region would likely have been much higher than reported.

Wine grape prices lifted slightly but on average terms the total farm gate value is likely to be similar to the 2018 crush due to the slightly suppressed yields evident. Demand remains strong for varietal red wine grapes and is still quite positive for whites. Competition in the region is high with uncontracted growers having a number of buyers available to discuss their options. 2020 is likely to see this competition continue as local wineries remain positive about the outlook which is buoyed by consistent growth in China.

Preliminary tonnage figures available indicate that the white crush is slightly down from previous season by around 8% with the varieties most impacted being Chardonnay, Semillon and Pinot Grigio. Sauvignon Blanc was up based on a number of new plantings coming into production this season.

The overall crush figures for the vintage was 323KT in 2019 down from 329KT in 2018.

Kind Regards

Brian Simpson – Chief Executive Officer

Riverina Winegrape Growers