

## Western Australian Vine Improvement Association

Chairman's Report : Feb 2016 to Jan 2017

Jim Campbell-Clause

WAVIA has had another productive year. Orders for propagation material have increased, and industry has advanced the introduction of new clones and varieties to their vineyards, especially with vineyard redevelopments and grafting. WAVIA continues to be busy filling orders, managing the collection, setting up new source blocks, and supporting research bodies.

WAVIA relies on a small team of volunteers and assistance from the Department of Agriculture and Food. I would especially like to thank those on the committee from industry and from the Department of Agriculture and Food. Chris Harding as secretary has been especially busy maintaining the new web site [www.wavia.org.au](http://www.wavia.org.au) (please check the web site for alternative variety information and for the WAVIA order form), submitting R&D funding applications and maintaining the running of the association. Many thanks also to Colleen Gillespie for managing the association's finances, and organising the receipt and remitting of funding for research projects. Also, special thank you to Colleen for all her work over winter collecting and distributing propagation material. I would also like to thank Patrick Bertola for his help as vice Chairman, and also to Stephen Kirby and Anne Mitchell for their contributions to the management committee.

We are very grateful to Glynn Ward from the Department of Agriculture and Food and his staff for their support and assistance. Particular thanks are due to Richard Fennessy and Di Fisher of DAFWA for all their help with many aspects of vine improvement, and to Ian Guthridge, Manager of the Horticulture Research Institute for his team's work with the Germplasm collection, and with assistance with cutting and distribution of propagation material. Many thanks also to Alan Jacob for managing the day to day care of the Germplasm collection, and for assistance with cutting collection and distribution, long may that last.

Orders in 2016 were higher with 10,042 cuttings distributed. The majority of orders in 2016 were for alternative varieties including; Aligote, Arneis, Biancone, Barbera, Montepulciano, Carignan, Furmint, Harslevelu, Grüner Veltliner, Lagrein, Kardarka, Sciacarello, and Saperavi. Also orders for Nebbiolo, Durif, Pinot Noir, Petit Verdot, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Shiraz. The MHRI Germplasm collection and MHRI Alternative Variety Trial block continue to play a vital role in WAVIA's ability to supply material to industry of these emerging varieties and clones. Alan Jacobs and Colleen Gillespie did a great job of collecting, packing and dispatching all the material for the orders. Again interstate customers were able to find clones and varieties that they have been unable to source from anywhere in Victoria or South Australia. Cuttings from the source blocks in Western Australian grape growing regions were dispatched by WAVIA regional representatives with help from Alan Jacobs of MHRI.

An important role of WAVIA is to source new and improved varieties and clones and to set up source blocks to provide a supply of material for industry. We are pleased to report that several new source blocks have been set up including; Saperavi I11V10, Montepulciano FSAC and Vermentino H62-1LN. The Germplasm collection was boosted with the introduction of Flora (a hybrid of Gewürztraminer and Semillon developed in California by Olmo which produces a full bodied aromatic wine) with thanks to Patrick Bertola who has donated this variety to the collection. WAVIA are working on importing Assyritiko.

The Genomic basis of Clonal Variation in Cabernet Sauvignon Wine Grape project, managed by Dr Michael Considine of DAFWA & UWA is progressing. The goals of the project are to determine the genomic basis of clonal identity of elite Cabernet Sauvignon clones via whole genome sequencing of 12 clones, from which markers will be designed to distinguish between them. A further goal is to explore whether molecular differences exist between clones in relation to biosynthesis of known wine flavour and aroma precursors. Progress has been good with 10 clones' genomic data being analysed. The progress made so far points to significant variation within a vine. Work is now concentrating on sequencing several shoots of one vine only, and use this to look at DNA, RNA and epigenetic variation. This has clear implications for variation seen within a vineyard (or even panel). We look forward to hearing of further developments at the Cabernet Hang -Time Forum in Margaret River.

Unfortunately, the WAVIA Expression of Interest submission to the Grower Group Research and Development (R&D) Grants Program for a 'Warm Climate Alternative Wine Grape Variety Trial – Meeting the Needs of the Future' was unsuccessful, however, we are pleased to say that this work is being carried out by Richard Fennessy of DAFWA using Regional Program funds from Wine Australia. Furthermore, this work and assessing new varieties is seen as a high priority by the Western Australian Wine Industry. The aims of this renewed project is to determine alternative wine grape varieties suitable for growing in WA regional areas from viticulture and wine making to the market place. We are using the vines in the alternative variety trial at the Harvey Agricultural College at Wokalup, which is also an important resource, to carry out this work.

WAVIA continues to support Di Fisher of DAFWA with progressing the CSIRO project to establish a Database of DNA tested Germplasm collections nationally. The database will include information on; the variety, clone, accession code, dna confirmation, history, virus status etc and will eventually be available for online access.

WAVIA submitted opposition to the proposed changes to Biosecurity Australia from a State based system to a National based system. WAVIA believe that a change to a National based system will leave the viticultural industry in Western Australia more prone to importation of pests and disease. WAVIA continues to support AVIA.

Richard Fennessy hosted a field day, with WAVIA committee members assisting, at the Harvey Ag College in the Wokalup Alternative Variety Trial block. The field day was aimed at allowing members of the WA wine industry to view the growth habits and bunch characteristics of the 22 varieties within the block. Growers were then able to discuss the varieties, their potential and the availability and access to propagation material from WAVIA.

I foresee continued use of improved clones and varieties in Western Australia and look forward to seeing the improved quality, productivity and profitability of this adoption. WAVIA will continue to help with sourcing, propagating and distributing improved propagation material.