

Western Australian Vine Improvement Association

Chairman's Report: Feb 2017 to Jan 2018

Jim Campbell-Clause

WAVIA has had a busy year with increased orders for propagation material, more R&D work and some reorganisation of collection and delivery of propagation material.

WAVIA continues to rely on a very small team of dedicated volunteers and assistance from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. I would especially like to thank those on the committee from industry and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Chris Harding as secretary has been especially busy reviewing the procedures and protocols for ordering and delivering propagation material, reviewing the Harvey Agriculture School Source Block and maintaining the website www.wavia.org.au (please check the website for alternative variety information and the WAVIA order form). Many thanks also to Colleen Gillespie for managing the association's finances, organising another successful audit of the Association's finances and an amazing job of collecting, labelling, bundling and storing an enormous number of cuttings. Colleen has also carried out the difficult role of organising the receipt and remittance of funds for research projects. I would also like to thank Patrick Bertola for his help as Vice Chairman and taking on the task of reviewing the association's Constitution, and also to Stephen Kirby for his contribution to the management committee. We are disappointed to say goodbye to Anne Mitchell and thank her for her role as a regional representative for Manjimup.

We are very grateful to Di Fisher from the DPIRD and her staff for their support and assistance. Particular thanks are due to Richard Fennessy of DPIRD for all his help with vine improvement and especially for the research work that the Department has carried out and that he has reported. Many thanks 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. Special gratitude to Alan Jacob for managing the day to day care of the Germplasm collection, and for assistance with cutting collection and distribution.

Orders in 2017 were higher with almost 20000 cuttings distributed. Orders this year were of improved clones of traditional varieties including Pinot Noir, Riesling, Cabernet, Merlot, Shiraz, Malbec, Gamay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris and Meunier. WAVIA had many orders for alternative varieties as well, including; Montepulciano, Grüner Veltliner, Arneis, Barbera, Sciacarello, Cinsaut, Barbera, Touriga, Nebbiolo, Pignoletto, Vermentino, and Mataro. WAVIA received orders for rootstocks including 1103 Paulsen, 110 Richter, 5C Teleki and 5BB Kober. The MHRI Germplasm collection and MHRI Alternative Variety Trial block continue to play a vital role in WAVIA's ability to supply material to the industry of these emerging varieties and clones. Source blocks were able to be used to supply some material, and a special thank you to Vineyard 28 for their continued support in supplying material from their source block. Alan Jacobs and Colleen Gillespie did an amazing job of collecting, packing and dispatching all the material for the orders. Interstate customers were again important, but at times delivering material interstate was challenging, which has resulted in a review and modification to the ordering process for interstate customers.

To supply reasonable quantities of propagation material requires Source Block growers. We are keen to continue to work with growers to develop new source blocks. If you are planting new clones or varieties and are interested in planting a source block to help generate some revenue, please discuss with a WAVIA representative. Viticlone Nursery has in the past been an important top-up source of class A propagation material. Unfortunately, this resource no longer is available, but we were able to source some vines of Sangiovese Brunelle di Montalcino from the Viticlone nursery for a new source block. Unfortunately, WAVIA has been unable to import Assyritiko. The Harvey Agricultural High School at Wokalup is a very important resource and Chris and Colleen, with help from Richard Fennessy reviewed and virus tested the collection.

The Genomic basis of Clonal Variation in Cabernet Sauvignon Wine Grape project, managed by Dr Michael Considine of DPIRD & UWA is nearing completion. The project determined the genomic basis of 10 clones of elite Cabernet Sauvignon via whole genome sequencing using markers to distinguish between them. In addition to identity, the genomic research began to identify DNA variation in genes known to determine some of the sensory characters. We look forward to receiving a final report and understanding how we can help the industry benefit from the project.

WAVIA has been proactive in advocating for R&D in vine improvement. WAVIA submitted its development priorities to WoWA before the Association reviewed R&D priorities which resulted in support for three vine improvement projects. The alternative variety trial at the Harvey Agricultural College at Wokalup will continue and will develop to include more winemaking and regional forums for industry and wine marketers. A new project to identify and understand potential superior clones suited to Western Australian conditions will be started with a desktop review to produce information which will be demonstrated to industry via a forum. We acknowledge the great work and continued support carried out by the Department in maintaining the important variety collection. We look forward to working with the Department to make these projects successful.

We look forward to the continued use of high-quality propagation material of improved clones and varieties. I see this as the most proactive step producers can use to make yield and quality improvements in their vineyards to keep Western Australia producing better wine than our competitors. WAVIA will continue to help with sourcing, propagating and distributing improved propagation material.