

Western Australian Vine Improvement Association

Chairperson's Report: Feb 2018 to Jan 2019

Jim Campbell-Clause

WAVIA has had a busy year with increased demand for propagation material, consolidating source blocks, adjusting our constitution, and improving ordering procedures.

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 like to thank those on the Committee from industry and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. I would especially like to thank Patrick Bertola (Deputy Chairperson) for his role of reviewing the association's Constitution to comply with new legislation. It was an involved process, but now WAVIA complies with the legislation and has a useful set of rules for the future. Chris Harding as Secretary has also been busy with the new rules, ordering procedures and keeping the website up to date 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, and for an amazing job of collecting, labelling, bundling and sorting an enormous number of cuttings. Thanks to Stephen Kirby (Margaret River Region) for his contribution to the Management Committee, and we welcome Lyn Metcalf (Blackwood Valley WIA) and Lee Haselgrove (Great Southern Region) to the Committee.

We are very grateful to Richard Fennesy from the DPIRD and staff for their continued support and assistance. Richard has done a great job supporting WAVIA, helping at meetings and with research and extension. Many thanks to Ian Guthridge, Manager of the Horticulture Research Institute for his team's work with the Germplasm collection in Manjimup, and with assistance with cutting and distribution of propagation material. We appreciate all the work that Alan Jacob has done with managing the day to day care of the Germplasm collection, and for assistance with cutting collection and distribution, and wish him well in his future endeavours and look forward to working with Lisa Starkie and team.

Orders in 2018 were higher with 24,310 cuttings ordered and filled from source blocks and from the Germplasm block. Orders this year were of improved clones of traditional varieties including Pinot Noir, Shiraz, Gamay, Malbec, Chardonnay, Cabernet, Merlot and Meunier. WAVIA had orders for many alternative varieties, including; Montepulciano, Grüner Veltliner, Barbera, Cinsaut, Touriga, Nebbiolo, Pignoletto, Brachetto, Harslevelu, Durif, Fiano, Furmint, Dolcetto, Sangiovese Brunello di Montalcino, Vermentino and Scheurebe. WAVIA received orders for rootstocks including Ramsey, 1103 Paulsen, 110 Richter, and Schwartzmann WA5. 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. Colleen Gillespie did a great job of collecting, packing and dispatching all the material for the orders. Interstate customers were again important, and the new ordering process for interstate customers made this more efficient. Thanks to Jock Riddell for his assistance with the shipment of WAVIA interstate orders.

Source Blocks continue to be important sources of propagation material, and WAVIA is 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 this with a WAVIA representative. The Harvey Agricultural College at Wokalup is a very important resource, and a significant amount of work has been in progress this season reviewing the collection, virus testing parts of the collection, and putting in place procedures to ensure high-quality propagation material can continue to be collected from the site. The WA Grape Germplasm Collection and Alternative Variety Block at Manjimup Horticulture Research Institute continues to be well managed by the staff at DPIRD with help from WAVIA.

Research and development continue to be an important activity of the association, and we are pleased to report on some projects promoting vine improvement. The Alternative Variety Block at the Harvey Agricultural College at Wokalup continues to be an important resource as a source of propagation material, a site for grape growers and winemakers to view the varieties with Richard Fennesy hosting a field day on January 30th for interested parties, and a source of grapes for trial wines. Richard made 22 wines from the block in 2018 and entered these to the Geographe Wine Show with excellent results and feedback, winning gold medals for Lagrain, Scheurebe, Arneis and Harslevelu. A forum organised by DPIRD on clones was held in Margaret River in June and was well attended. Clones of Chardonnay, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Merlot were discussed and tasted. A publication *A Review of five wine grape variety clones in WA*, is available from DPIRD and on the WAVIA website. An alternative variety forum hosted by DPIRD was conducted to explore trends, opportunities and barriers concerning alternative varieties in the Australian market place. This forum included gatekeepers crucial to the success and adoption of alternative varieties in the marketplace such as vignerons, winemakers, distributors, sales representatives, retailers, sommeliers and restaurateurs.

The wine and grape industries look to have a positive outlook, and WAVIA is keen to help by providing high quality true to type propagation material of new clones and varieties. As I have said before, I see this as the most proactive step producers can use to improve yield, quality and profitability, and to keep Western Australia producing better wine than our competitors. WAVIA will continue to look at importing new and improved varieties and clones demanded by industry.