



**Riverland  
Wine Industry  
Development  
Council Inc.**



**rwga**

riverland winegrape growers association  
incorporated



**riverland  
wine**

Dear Premier Malinauskas,

The Riverland Wine Industry is seeking an urgent government-led crisis meeting with industry, banks, peak bodies and representatives of growers and wineries, within the region, by the end of January.

While this may sound like a familiar call for help, please understand that the risk of your inaction is now catastrophic. Right now, the Riverland (South Australia's largest wine-producing area) is breaking.

Over the past five years, wine grape purchase prices in South Australia's warm inland regions have fallen to historically low levels. For example, Shiraz in the Riverland dropped from up to \$700 per tonne before Chinese tariffs to an average price of \$204.00 per tonne last year. Alarmingly the current early price indicators for Shiraz for the upcoming vintage are significantly lower again - at only \$80-\$120 per tonne. White prices have also declined dramatically with price indications for this vintage also lower than last year's pricing.

At the same time, water costs have surged dramatically, with current water lease prices in the lower Murray sitting at around \$300 per megalitre (ML) for temporary allocation trades in the 2024/25 season. This is a 50% increase on temporary water prices on last season due to the ongoing drought and water uncertainty creating a significant burden for a region entirely reliant on irrigation. According to Rural Business Support, we also have more than 50% of Riverland growers (approximately 450) receiving Farm Household Allowance, highlighting the severity of financial distress and the urgent need for government intervention. Unfortunately, our circumstances are now even more catastrophic due to the high costs to produce wine grapes in the Riverland - at over \$350 per tonne.

The toll on mental health is escalating. We are seeing exhaustion, hopelessness, and in too many cases, silence from people who feel unseen and unheard. When farmers stop believing they have a future, whole towns suffer. Schools, local businesses, sporting clubs, and service organisations all feel the shockwaves.

South Australia is proudly the wine state, and the Riverland is its engine room, producing the majority of the state's crush. The prosperity of this region is directly tied to the State's reputation, employment, and export performance.

We are calling for:

1. A government-led crisis meeting with industry, banks, peak bodies and representatives of growers and wineries, within the region by the end of January.
2. An immediate and structured support package for those who want to adapt and continue to farm.
3. Transitional support for those exiting the industry to address vineyard abandonment, biosecurity threats, and long-term land devaluation (in line with the [AGW-2025-26-Pre-Budget-Submission FINAL.pdf](#)).
4. Investment in a regionally specific export market package - focussed on commercial/popular, bottled and unpackaged wines to increase global market presence and reduce oversupply.

Premier, time is not on our side. The emotional and financial damage is compounding with every passing day.

The Riverland Wine industry stands ready to work with your government to find practical, compassionate solutions that protect livelihoods and dignity.

Our members deserve to know that their State has not turned away from them during this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Markeas  
Chair RWIDC

and

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