

Viticultural and Oenology Committee (VOC)

MINUTES – VOC MEETING

Thursday 24th February 2022

2.00 pm

Brands Laira Estate

ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES

Present: Hans Loder (HL), Sally Macleod (SCM) by phone, Martin Wirper (MW), Ockert Le Roux (OLR)

Apologies: None

Minutes: Sally Macleod (SM)

MINUTES OF THE VOC MEETING HELD 11th November 2021

- The Minutes are available on the website: <https://coonawarra.org/cgwi/>. Read and approved.

BUSINESS ARISING:

- Coonawarra Root stock Trial**

There will be an all-day Rootstock workshop held at the Coonawarra Hall on April 5th 2022. Root profiles of the different rootstocks will be observed in soil pits, David Hansen from Hansen Consulting will discuss root growth patterns and soil characteristics and their influence on vineyard management, Nick Dry will talk on the factors to consider when choosing a specific rootstock and there will be a panel discussion at the end involving local well known winemakers and growers.

- External Education and training/Coonawarra Rail Siding Project**

Cate Paul's PhD highlights the importance of the tree species chosen in building beneficial insect populations for adjoining vineyards. This is significant as the rail trail project continues and landscaping etc. gets underway. HL has provided Pete Weinberg with the tree lists from Mary Retallack. Pete will use these to help with Casella's selection of plants. He will also meet with council and advise them on which species to plant in the area adjoining Casella's native insectary area.

- Weather Stations/STEM project**

The draft agreement with Tim Powell has been sent and he will hopefully peruse it ASAP.

ACTION: MW to make contact with Tim and remind him to get the weather data transfer to Bushlinks completed.

The STEM project is proceeding well. It's an interesting journey for the students as they experience and learn about many aspects of data collection and validation. HL has not been able to visit the high school so all the organisation has been done virtually.

ACTION: There is a need for a field trip to show the students the sensors – this will happen as soon as possible.

- Smoke taint**

A network of six smoke sensors have been installed across the Limestone Coast. Monitoring began last week. There is one site in Coonawarra at Penley Estate. Other sites are in the Robe, Padthaway, Mount Gambier and there are two in the Wrattenbully Wine regions. There needs to be communication between the LCWIC and Wattle Range Council as they are not aware that the sensors have been installed. It is also important that the Wattle Range Council stagger the issuing of permits to reduce the amount of smoke in any given day.

PRIORITY PROJECTS:

- Cabernet Characterisation Project**

This project is complete. However, results have not been submitted to individual wine businesses involved in the project.

24.2.22 - This has still not been addressed. Data needs to be customised for each winery.

ACTION: OLR to follow this up with Dimi emphasizing the importance of the information for individual wine businesses who submitted samples.

- Irrigation Optimisation Project (Proximal Sensing Thermography)**
 Project nearing completion with the commercialisation of thermographic towers through Athena. No further funding being provided by CV. Going forward, the adoption of this technology will be linked to the berry shrivel project providing ARC funding is allocated – see below. Through the P250 grants program, CV is applying for \$20,000 to fund the purchase of up to 15 towers for member growers. These towers will come with a dashboard that growers can access. The time line for the purchase and installation of these towers is short as they need to be in place for this year's irrigation season. Adoption of this technology is the key outcome from all the work conducted in this project.
 24.2.22 – The P250 grant application was successful and all 15 sensors have been purchased and are now installed in 15 CV member vineyards. Weekly half hour Zoom sessions are providing participants with a platform to discuss results and gain valuable insight in to the workings of the sensors and the plant water status of vines and what it all means in relation to vine water requirements.
ACTIONS: Proposal to hold a field day after vintage at the beginning of May – date and venue to be confirmed.
The project needs to be finalised by June 30. OL to prepare a feedback sheet for all participants – need to understand key learnings from growers. Information to be collated and included in final report ready for submission in mid-June.
- Berry Shrivell Project**
 All ARC projects need further funding after June 2022. Applications for this funding have been submitted and this project is in a holding pattern until these funds are approved. To further the project, many thousands of dollars are required to fund a PhD student for 4 years. CV have committed \$15,000 to this project over 5 years. Assuming ARC funding is approved, this money is to be used to purchase towers for the three sites in Coonawarra. A tangible outcome relating water deficit information to ethanol levels in berries to predict if berry shrivel will occur is the aim.
 24.2.22 – Steve Tierman unable to get here this year to collect samples. HL met with PB and they have agreed to provide resources to collect samples this season enabling continuity with the project. Sample collection needs to be timed with a visit by Vinay so he can test them for shrivel. This will allow for continuous records over the past four years. ARC funding will be announced in May – if successful the project will be proceed in 2023.
- Coonawarra Biodiversity Enhancement Project:**
 Project fully funded with no further input from CV. Landscape Board funded a further 6 growers for the 21/22 season. This round will end in June 2023. CV now has 9 growers involved.
 The project is to go national – Mary Retallack has put an application in with Wine Australia to support the national program. CV asked to be involved, and has given verbal support, but will not have any growers signing up as there was no interest. Re-visit after June 2023.
 24.2.22 – nothing to report.

ONGOING COMMITMENTS:

- Water Allocation Plan:**
 Revision of water allocation plan set for 2023. CV representatives recently met with Steven Marshall. He will lobby through the national Drought fund and endorse a grant application for further work looking into the confined aquifer in order to make more water available for the Lower Southeast.
 24.2.22 – Grant application was unsuccessful. Further lobbying through the state government being pursued and encouraged especially with the state election looming.
- VOC sponsorship – Endeavour drinks.**
 24.2.22- Finally a reply and they will not be sponsoring any further VOC projects at this stage.
- Coonawarra Cabernet Symposium**
 Delayed until 2023. Ulrich preparing submission for Wine Australia to re-allocate the funds (\$27,500) for the following projects: Under-vine weed control trial at Padthaway, Literature review (Pete Bissell), Porter's Smoke Detectors and a series of short videos spruiking the area.
- Climate change and the effect on weather.**

BOARD UPDATE:

- Kate Palm has been appointed as the new Events and Marketing Officer effective 1st February 2022.
- Vignerons Cup did not go ahead. Grant application submitted to cover the \$9,700 loss. Application not successful as the event did not meet all the criteria. Further lobbying underway.
- The Board has decided to carry on with all planned events in 2022 as there appears to be more confidence surrounding Covid. Roadshow will be held in 5 major cities (not Canberra or Hobart).
- Upcoming virtual Tasting event in UK through \$8000 sponsorship from the Wine Connect program. 6 Coonawarra wineries involved. The program seeks to promote Australian wines in the UK.
- Budgeting time is looming. There will be pressure to tighten spending as finances have been affected, particularly with no Coonawarra Cup being held.

FINANCE:

- The VOC budget was set in place 12 months ago. Currently in a holding pattern until the ARC funding is announced. Once announced, a 5 year projection and plan will be established.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Water sampling for salinity testing - details to be provided to OLR for circulation to members. Will be an ongoing service. Samples need to be taken pre irrigation season then after the season is finished.
24.2.22 – SCM to email Neil Power to see how many water samples have been sent in.
- Mesonet weather network to be rolled out over the state. South East will be included. Great opportunity to set up a “mini” network in the this area linking data from Mesonet towers, frost fan sensors and current weather stations – collect all data on a platform such as Pairee. Grants of up to \$20,000 through the Agri Producers Tech Update Program would be suitable for this project.
24.2.22 – Rollout of the sensors definitely proceeding. State government looking at various ways of funding the network.
- VOC needs more members. Hard to understand what the whole CV community needs if there is not broader representation. Lobby for 2-3 more members preferably from non-viticultural background – i.e. wine makers.
24.2.22 – OL to include a footnote on the weekly communication promoting the VOC and seeking new members.

Next Meeting: 8.30 am Thursday 19th of May 2022 at Brands Laira

Meeting closed at 2.55 pm

Date	THESE MINUTES WERE ACCEPTED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING DESCRIBED AND THE CHAIRPERSON OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVE WAS DULY AUTHORISED TO SIGN THEM AS SUCH	
	Name	
	Signature	