CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2000/2001

The MVWIDC is undergoing considerable change to adjust to new legislative requirements and the changing structure and demands of the wine grape industry.

Since its inception in 1994 the MVWIDC was closely linked to the day-to-day operations of the Victorian and Murray Valley Wine Grape Growers Council (VMVWGGC) mainly through sharing the one Executive Officer, Grieg Greenwood. Following a consultant's review and recommendations the two organisations separated their operations. Last year as a transition arrangement the VMVWGGC undertook to manage all of the projects funded by the growers by the compulsory levy. In the 2000/2001 year the MVWIDC resumed full responsibility for managing collection and use of compulsory (or statutory) levy funds.

With emphasis from growers on increasing pressure to improve quality many of the projects funded were related to the improvement of grape quality. The levy for the 2000/2001 was increased from $0.90 (1999/200) to $0.95 cents per tonne for 321,017 tonnes and total levy funds of $304,966. The resulting projects funded were:

Projects Funded	Total Project Cost $	MVWIDC Contribution $
Grower Leadership Training	20,000	20,000
Market Information & Statistics	61,700	61,700
Rootstock Trial	19,261	19,261
Technology Diffusion Program	822,810	119,615
Wine Grape Production Career Awareness	60,000	50,444
Wine Quality Awareness	3,000	3,000
CD Rom Project	405,000	8,000

In February 2001 another series of changes were initiated as a result of new legislation, which requires approval of projects by a direct vote of growers. The Committee has been planning the detail of how this might work and have come up with the following steps leading to a grower vote in December 2001:

- August 2001 — Call for projects requiring funding to be submitted
- August to November 2001 — Growers made aware of new project voting system
- October 2001 — Public notice of the vote
- November 2001 — Growers receive voting papers
- 3 December 2001 — Growers vote for projects to be funded – by attending a public meeting or by sending proxy vote
- December 2001 — Growers notified of vote result
- July 2002 — Levy collected and approved projects commence

It is hoped that the benefits of a more democratic process will flow on to growers over the next few years. It is expected that once the voting system settles in growers will take an increasingly active interest in projects. Growers are encouraged to make greater use of projects where possible and to monitor results or value from projects funded.

MAX TOLSON
CHAIRMAN
MURRAY VALLEY WINE GRAPE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE