



Introducing Affinity Labs – a new identity for the AWRI's commercial activities

By **Eric Wilkes** and **Mark Krstic**

The Australian Wine Research Institute has offered commercial services to grapegrowers and winemakers for more than 30 years. What started as a small analytical service has grown into a major provider for our industry, delivering a wide variety of specialised services including:

- Routine and export analysis
- Trace analysis of flavours, taints and residues
- Sensory assessments
- Microbiology and molecular biology analysis
- Grapevine virus testing and elimination
- Packaging and microbiological audits
- Shelf-life testing
- Sustainability assessments
- Technical consulting

Since its inception, the AWRI's commercial arm has evolved with the times, constantly tailoring its services to meet changes in industry demand. Now, the business is taking its next evolutionary step, expanding its offering and focusing on improved customer service under a new banner – Affinity Labs.

Affinity Labs will continue providing the same high level of technical support to the Australian grape and wine industry, while developing new services for the food and beverage sector, including for beer and spirits. This expansion will bring benefits to grape and wine producers through improved economies of scale and an increased knowledge base. In addition, this step is considered essential in ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the AWRI's world-class research, development and extension activities, in an environment of constrained R&D funding.

The AWRI will remain focused on the grape and wine industry, delivering the cutting-edge research needed to respond to our industry's challenges and opportunities and providing valued services to grapegrowers and winemakers. AWRI's current services supported by Wine Australia, including the helpdesk, roadshows and library services, will remain free to access for all Australian grape and wine levy payers. It is also important to note that the AWRI's commercial activities have always been independent from levy funding and this will not change. All proceeds

from Affinity Labs will be reinvested in improved services and research.

The creation of Affinity Labs is not just a rebrand. Significant focus has been placed on improving the customer experience for all Affinity Labs customers, through the development of a standalone website with simplified sample submission and reporting. The team is working to ensure seamless and responsive customer support, with products and services tailored to customer needs. Affinity Labs' overarching goal is to be a trusted and dependable partner for all its customers, supporting them to achieve their business goals, while helping further enhance Australia's reputation as a world-class producer of food and beverages.

Affinity Labs was successfully launched at the recent WineTech trade exhibition, with attendees able to try out the new website (affinitylabs.com.au) and speak to members of the team.

Any industry members with questions are encouraged to contact AWRI Managing Director Mark Krstic or Affinity Labs General Manager Eric Wilkes on 08 8313 6600 or enquiries@awri.com.au.

Where science meets... wine



Delivering tailored solutions for grape and wine producers, Affinity Labs is the science supporting your success.

Our expertise

- Grape and wine testing
- Quality assurance
- Sensory assessment
- Export certification
- Grapevine virus testing
- Microbiological testing
- Packaging services
- Shelf-life testing
- Sustainability