

Vineyards pop the corks

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China is about to lift the crushing tariffs on Aussie wine

The Australian wine industry is one step closer to reclaiming access to the China market and more than \$1.2bn in annual wine sales after the powerful Chinese Ministry of Commerce released an interim draft determination that proposed a lifting on crippling tariffs on Australian wine imports.

Late on Tuesday the news began to spread through the wine sector that the end could soon be in sight for the frozen trade relationship between

China and Australia. That saw the imposition of 200 per cent-plus tariffs on Australian wine during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, destroying the biggest and most important export market for Australia's winemakers.

The tariffs, imposed in November 2021, forced many Australian winemakers to look elsewhere to sell their product.

It also left many Australian winemakers with excess stock as warehouses and cellars full

of wine destined for China needed to find a new home.

Australian winemakers, part of a \$45bn Australian wine sector, saw their exports to China crushed and almost collapse to zero as the massive tariffs made it uneconomic to sell into China.

This saw Australian wine exit China and its place on restaurant menus and banquet tables was seized by rival wine exporters from Italy, France, Argentina and Chile.

The tariffs were seen at the time as payback for the then Morrison government announcing it would seek an international investigation into the origins of Covid-19, which China saw as an attack and that saw it retaliate by imposing tariffs and trade blocks on a number of Australian exports also including coal, timber and seafood.

Now it looks like Australian wine could be back on the menu. On Tuesday night, Treasury

Wine Estates, the giant local winemaker whose labels include Penfolds, Pepperjack and Wolf Blass, said it had been advised that the Chinese Ministry of Commerce had released an interim draft determination outlining a proposed removal of the current tariffs on Australian wine imports into China.

The interim draft determination was not a final determination and was subject to change by the ministry, the winemaker said.

Treasury Wine Estates is one of the largest exporters of Australian wine to China and it would have good intelligence as to the possible lifting of the crushing wine tariffs that has kept its wines, such as Penfolds Grange, as well as that of other local winemakers out of the country for over two years.

In September Beijing proposed a "package" deal to end its crippling tariff on Australian wine, as senior figures in China's government indicated the industry could "expect" to be granted re-entry into the lucrative market.



Westside Grovely FC juniors Freya Thickett, 7, Lily Gregory, 10, Ruby Fitzgerald, 11, and Lucy McDougall, 10. Picture: Nigel Hallett

Club grant dedicated to girls' league

Isabella Holland

The Matildas' meteoric rise is being felt at the grassroots level in Queensland, and nowhere more so than at Westside Grovely Football Club in Brisbane's Keperra.

Two years ago, the club had just one junior girls' team; this season it has five.

The club has dedicated its recently received government grant to its girls development program.

Grovely FC junior co-ordinator Shane Gregory said the club wanted to use the grant to deck out the girls with a new kit and equipment.

"The grant we received allowed us to buy new training equipment, balls,

bibs, cones and uniforms and we wanted to be able to dedicate it to the female development squad," Mr Gregory said.

"The Matildas have definitely helped with the uptake with girls in football, especially for us, definitely."

The junior girls' teams will kick off their season next month.

'Tight': Queensland's GST share cut

Queensland will be the biggest loser from the latest GST carve-up among the states and territories, the Commonwealth Grants Commission has revealed.

In its latest report on Tuesday, the commission revealed Queensland's share of GST in 2024-25 would be cut by nearly \$500m on last year's figure, to \$17.46bn, while NSW would lose \$310m.

Victoria would receive a

whopping \$3.7bn increase, while Western Australia would receive \$838m more.

South Australia would receive \$457m more, the NT \$256m, Tasmania \$219m and the ACT \$111m.

"(The change) reflects the application of the 0.75 GST relativity floor, which increases the GST distributed to WA and reduces the GST distribution to all other states," the report said.

Queensland Treasurer Cameron Dick said on Tuesday night at first glance it would cost the state \$380m.

"That's going to make things tight for our budget," he said. "But we'll be focused on delivering cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders."

"This shows why it is so important that the federal government comes to the table to fairly fund Queensland infrastructure."



US actor Leighton Meester.

Bad Cop good for us

Isabella Pesch

Queensland will get a new taste of Hollywood, with two shows to be produced in the Sunshine State this year.

Comedy-drama, Good Cop/Bad Cop, secured by Screen Queensland through the state government's Production Attraction Strategy, will be filmed in the Scenic Rim in late March.

South East Queensland will double for the US state of

Washington during the eight-part series.

The show, written by Will & Grace writer John Quaintance, will feature a star-studded cast with Gossip Girl's Leighton Meester, Dexter: New Blood's Clancy Brown and Chilling Adventures of Sabrina's Luke Cook.

Also, the second season of Black Snow, featuring Travis Fimmel, is set to begin production on the Gold Coast.