

I am the Director of Leabrook Estate Wines in South Australia and have been operating for close to 10 years. I heard on the news today that Mike Rann is making a statement strongly supporting the continuation of the WET Tax rebate.

My submission relates to the fact that I cannot believe that anyone would waste time even considering the issue of removal of that rebate.

Without that rebate you would be sounding the death knell on every small independent winery in Australia, and any tourism associated with it. The industry has such low profitability that it is only people who subsidise the business through other means, or have a particularly profitable niche market, or, as with the large companies, appear to be able to withstand the wrath of their shareholders as they rack up their huge losses, that will continue for the foreseeable future..

I am imagining that it is probably these large companies that would be trying this ploy to wipe out opposition. By the time you meet, I am predicting many small independent companies will have already gone to the wall in this recession, and so you won't have to do their bidding to any great degree to achieve what they are trying for, if my suspicions are correct.

In my marketing role, I hear of huge discounts that the large companies are offering to keep market share. Just as their Lemmings sales people have chased Coles and Woolworths, they are now extending this to Restaurants with 15 to the dozen deals. I had one such group threaten a restaurant I supply with taking away their subsidised menus and uniforms if my wines were not taken off the list.

Hoping that you don't deliver the coup de grace to the Australian wine industry