

# CANBERRA INTERNATIONAL RIESLING CHALLENGE

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## Media Release

18 June 2026

### Canberra International Riesling Challenge - the End of an Era

The Committee of the Canberra International Riesling Challenge has made the difficult decision to wind up the Challenge.

The Canberra International Riesling Challenge was founded in 2000, and between 2000 and 2025 24 Challenges were held. The peak number of entries in any year was 567 (2018) and the peak number of countries entering was nine countries (2019). From its origin as the first single variety wine show in Australia, to its peak achievement of being the largest single variety wine show in the Southern Hemisphere, the Challenge has been an exemplar wine show.

“Regrettably the increase in international airfreight and challenging economic conditions in the international and Australian wine industries post-COVID have significantly impacted entry levels, and despite our best efforts we have been unable to return to operating a revenue positive event. Accordingly, the Committee has agreed that ending the Challenge is the only appropriate course available” said James Service AM, Chairman Canberra International Riesling Challenge.

“From the outset, the Challenge has benefited from well qualified and skilled judges, a strong and enthusiastic steward cohort, a professional management team, the support of the diplomatic community and generous and steadfast sponsors.”

“With the support of the entrant wineries we have been highly successful in our stated aim of improving the quality of Riesling available to consumers, and increasing consumer’s appreciation and understanding of Riesling,” he said. “The restoration of the reputation of Riesling with consumers and the premium position that it currently occupies in the market is, at least in part, attributable to the success of the Challenge and the people that made it happen.”

“The successes of the Challenge were achieved by the hard work and professionalism of everyone involved, and the Committee takes this opportunity to thank them all for their significant part in the journey of the Challenge,” said Mr Service.

“In particular we acknowledge all of our sponsors through the years with particular thanks for support from the ACT Government and the Chief Minister as Patron, Toyota Material Handling and Vinarchy Wines, RSN Australia (Riedel), and past support from the Wolf Blass Foundation and Treasury Wines.”

Mr Service also acknowledged the many years of effort from the Challenge Committee, thanking each for their diligence and commitment.

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