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Australia Delays Mandatory Winegrape Code Until July 1, 2027

Officials said growers and winemakers sought more time to prepare for trading rules meant to improve transparency and fairness

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Australia will delay the start of its mandatory Winegrape Purchases Code of Conduct by six months to July 1, 2027, after consultations with growers, winemakers and industry advisers showed that businesses wanted more time to prepare for the new rules.

The announcement came on Friday, November 27, from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Agriculture Minister Julie Collins. The code had been due to begin on January 1, 2027. The government said the revised date reflects feedback from across the industry and is intended to give both grape growers and wine producers more time to understand their legal rights and obligations before the rules take effect.

The mandatory code is meant to set clearer standards for commercial dealings between growers and winemakers. According to the government, it is designed to improve transparency, fairness and confidence across the winegrape supply chain, an area that has been under strain as Australia’s wine sector faces weak demand and oversupply.

The six-month delay is significant for the beverage industry because it pushes back the timetable for new trading protections that many grape growers had been expecting at the start of 2027. It also gives wineries more time to review contracts, internal processes and disclosure practices before the code becomes enforceable. For a sector already adjusting to difficult market conditions, that changes the compliance calendar across a large part of Australia’s wine business.

The government said it will use the extra time to work with industry organizations and the ACCC to develop education and guidance materials, including frequently asked questions and practical scenarios. Those materials are intended to help businesses understand how the code will apply in day-to-day transactions, not just in principle.

Collins said the government’s commitment to the code had not changed and that the delay was aimed at making sure the protections work properly from the first day of operation. She said the government had listened carefully to growers and winemakers during public consultation and through advice from the Winegrape Purchases Code of Conduct Advisory Group.

Earlier in 2026, the government sought feedback on an exposure draft of the code. The consultation included public submissions and direct meetings with growers, winemakers and other industry representatives. Officials also visited the Riverland, Riverina and Murray Valley wine regions, where grape supply issues have been especially important to local businesses and communities.

The government said that process showed broad support for the aims of a mandatory code, but it also highlighted concern about implementation. Industry participants, according to the government, wanted practical guidance and a smoother transition so that the rules would be understood by both sides of the market before they became binding.

The code is part of the Albanese government’s response to recommendations from an independent review of the wine and grape sector. That review came as the industry faced a combination of pressure points, including global oversupply, weaker wine consumption in some markets and shifts in consumer demand. The government said those pressures have been particularly severe in some inland wine regions.

Australia’s wine and grape sector has been dealing with a mismatch between supply and demand for several years, with some growers reporting limited bargaining power and uncertainty over pricing and contract terms. The new code is intended to address those commercial relationships rather than broader market conditions, but officials have presented it as one part of a wider strategy to stabilize the sector.

The government said it has committed $114 million to support Australia’s grape and wine industry since taking office. That funding, it said, is aimed at helping the sector respond to market challenges and improve its resilience over time.

For growers, the delay means that any formal protections under the code will begin on July 1, 2027, not at the start of the year. For winemakers, it means more time to adjust purchasing systems and prepare for new transparency requirements. That could ease short-term compliance pressure, but it also extends the period before the new framework begins to govern commercial negotiations.

The government has framed the change as a practical adjustment rather than a policy retreat. Collins said the aim is to ensure growers receive greater fairness and transparency in their dealings with buyers while also giving businesses enough time to be ready for the new regime. The department said more information on the code and related guidance will be published through its wine policy channels as the start date approaches.