

MR JOHN GIOVANNI MARCELLO CASELLA

Citation for Conferral of Doctor of Business (*honoris causa*)

John Giovanni Marcello Casella is the son of Filippo and Maria Casella, Sicilian immigrants who settled in Yenda following World War II. Casella Wines was established by Filippo and Maria in 1969 as a family wine company in the Riverina region.

The eldest of the Casella family, John commenced the Bachelor of Applied Science (Wine Science) course at Charles Sturt University, then the Riverina College of Advanced Education, in 1979.

In 1983, he commenced as winemaker/manager at Riverina Estate Wines, a position he held until 1995. During his tenure at Riverina Estate Wines, John increased production from 4,000 tonnes in 1983 to 25,000 tonnes in 1995. Commitment to management activities at Riverina Estate Wines meant John had to withdraw from his studies at Charles Sturt University.

In 1994, John returned to the family business of Casella Wines as winemaker and assumed the role of Managing Director in 1996. He continues in this position today. Following on from his expansion success at Riverina Estate Wines, John oversaw the increased production at Casella Wines from 2,000 tonnes in 1994 to 150,000 tonnes plus 10,000 tonnes purchased as juice or wine in 2005.

The remarkable achievement of John and his team has been the creation of **[yellow tail]**.

[yellow tail] was launched into the US market in June 2001. By the end of the year, case sales amounted to 57,000. This increased to just under one million cases in 2002, expanding rapidly to 7.5million cases in 2005. This massive expansion in exports, amounting to between 40 and 52 shipping containers leaving the Yenda site each day, required an immense expansion in infrastructure. This in turn has benefited the economy of the Riverina region. Storage tanks, each holding 1.1 million litres, have been and continue to be installed: 48 in place at present with a total of 72 planned. A new bottling line capable of handling 10 bottles per second became operational in 2006. Support industries of graphic design, business management, information technology as well as viticulture and wine production have all benefited from the success of the **[yellow tail]** concept.

In their book *Blue Ocean Strategy*, Kim and Mauborgne argue that **[yellow tail]** created the concept of 'a social drink accessible to everyone'; **[yellow tail]** redefined the market by presenting a wine that was uncomplicated and instantly appealing to consumers, irrespective of their background. The **[yellow tail]** success is even more remarkable when considered against the downturn in export markets facing the Australian wine industry at the time. Mr Stephen Strachan, CEO of the Winemakers' Federation of Australia, commented in a presentation to Charles Sturt University students in 2004 that the Australian wine industry would be in a perilous position without the success of **[yellow tail]**.

John is a great supporter of Charles Sturt University. He is committed to developing the skills and capacity of young people in the Riverina region and sees study as an ideal means to achieve the development of young people. He sponsors scholarships for school leavers to study wine science or viticulture at Charles Sturt University, and supports the wine science and viticulture undergraduate programs at the University. John advertises widely that he

studied at Charles Sturt University, and proudly mentions that other members of the Casella family are graduates of this University.

Chancellor, I present to you, for conferral of the award Doctor of Business (*honoris causa*), successful wine grower and exporter, and strong supporter of wine education and research programs at Charles Sturt University and the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre, John Giovanni Marcello Casella.

Dated this Eleventh day of April Two Thousand and Eight