

Wine Australia



Media release

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Australian grape and wine tech receives \$9 million partnership boost

Wine Australia and the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre (NWGIC) have signed a \$9 million co-investment research, development and extension (RD&E) agreement to develop new technologies and provide practical information to growers and winemakers to increase profitability and competitiveness, as well as improve environmental sustainability.

The NWGIC, is an alliance between Charles Sturt University (CSU), the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the NSW Wine Industry Association.

The strategic partnership agreement will fund research projects that align with Wine Australia's Strategic Plan and RD&E priorities and have been developed in consultation with the wine sector in New South Wales and north-eastern Victoria and with the NSW DPI.

Wine Australia will contribute \$2.5 million, Charles Sturt University (CSU) will contribute \$4.1 million (cash and in-kind) and NSW DPI \$2.4 million over the next five years. The projects will:

- determine the thresholds for botrytis and other bunch rot contamination of grapes, and conduct a feasibility assessment of the most appropriate practices to manage faults in wine when bunch rot thresholds are exceeded
- develop a decision support tool and a field-tested smartphone app for assessing fruit volume and predicting optimal harvest date
- develop a smartphone app for on-the-spot nutrient assessments and diagnosis of nutritional disorders in the vineyard
- explore the potential for controlling berry acidity in the vineyard through the addition of minerals such as calcium and magnesium in fertiliser to decrease additional intervention in managing acidity when making wine, and
- develop recommendations on how to tailor sulfur dioxide and ascorbic acid use based on wine compositional parameters.

Wine Australia Chief Executive Officer Andreas Clark said, 'We are delighted to partner with the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre to deliver some outstanding practical tools and outcomes for our sector over the next five years.'

'This agreement with the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre reflects our united commitment to finding effective solutions to improving the competitiveness of Australia's grape and wine community. We would like to thank all of those who participated in the development of these projects to help us ensure the timely delivery of relevant and valuable outcomes for our sector.'

NWGIC Director, Professor Leigh Schmidtke said, 'This research is based on meeting the needs of industry and aims to deliver practical information and innovation to make Australia's wine industry more profitable and sustainable to support thriving rural communities.'

This agreement is the fourth in a series of bilateral partnerships between Wine Australia and major research institutions under a new research and development funding framework that aims to allow the Australian grape and wine community's research partners to be better able to make strategic investments and plan for the future, maintain technical capabilities in key areas, and have greater flexibility to pursue promising research results within an overall agreed framework.

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For further information please contact:

Hannah Bentley – Wine Australia
Communications Manager
Phone: 08 8228 2027 / 0428 930 865
Email: Hannah.bentley@wineaustralia.com

Twitter: [@WineAustralia](https://twitter.com/WineAustralia)
Instagram: [@WineAustralia](https://www.instagram.com/WineAustralia)
Facebook: [WineAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/WineAustralia)
Website: www.wineaustralia.com

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For interviews with NWGIC Director Professor Leigh Schmidtke please contact:
Emily Malone- NWGIC
Communications officer
Phone 0439 552 385
Email emalone@csu.edu.au

About Wine Australia

Wine Australia supports a competitive wine sector by investing in research, development and extension (RD&E), growing domestic and international markets, protecting the reputation of Australian wine and administering the Export and Regional Wine Support Package.

Wine Australia is an Australian Commonwealth Government statutory authority, established under the Wine Australia Act 2013, and funded by grape growers and winemakers through levies and user-pays charges and the Australian Government, which provides matching funding for RD&E investments.