

Wine Australia

Media Release

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Nuffield scholar to investigate new and emerging irrigation methods for Australian wine

Sarah Keough from Strathalbyn, South Australia, has been awarded a Nuffield Scholarship, supported by Wine Australia, to investigate new and emerging irrigation methods to reduce vineyard crop losses and sustain fruit quality during extreme heat events.

Sarah is a viticulturist at Bleasdale Vineyards in Langhorne Creek and works closely with the region's growers, as well as those in the Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale. She believes her Nuffield research will be a valuable extension to existing work in the sector on reducing the impact of heat in vineyards.

'A gradual increase in the number of days reaching 40 degrees has prompted local growers to look at new approaches, such as mulching and alternative irrigation schemes, to reduce the soil temperature and enable vines to endure prolonged heat stress', said Sarah.

'While growers have seen great success by using vine misters, flipper overhead sprinklers and misting fans, there is a need to look at more water-efficient alternatives. In particular, my research will look to unearth new technologies to better manage and improve irrigation scheduling.'

Sarah's scholarship was announced at the Nuffield Australia National Conference at the EKKA precinct in Brisbane on Tuesday 17 September.

Over the next 12 months, Sarah will meet with water irrigation leaders in Israel, investigate innovative irrigation methods being used in semi-arid climates like Argentina, and visit America's Napa Valley, which is increasingly experiencing higher than average temperatures.

Wine Australia invests \$53,000 annually in the Nuffield Australia program as part of its policy of investing in sector leadership. In the same vein, Wine Australia supports the Future Leaders program, travel bursaries for researchers and post graduate scholarships.



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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.