

# Wine Australia

## Media release

Monday 16 January 2017

### **\$5.3 million to understand and refine the expression of Australian Shiraz terroir**

Australia's unique terroirs and how they influence wine style and quality is the centrepiece of a six-year, \$5.3 million investment in new research and development (R&D) projects announced today by Wine Australia.

Dr Brian Croser AO, Deputy Chair of Wine Australia, said, 'Australia makes wines of exceptional quality and finesse that reflect their provenance and terroir, but they don't currently receive the international recognition they merit.

'It is these wines that will most quickly elevate the image and reputation of all wines we produce. We are focused on building international recognition for our wines to increase demand and the price paid for all Australian wines.

'We already know that unique Australian terroirs exist and that climate, topography, soil chemistry and soil physical properties are the most important factors contributing to the differences between wines from different sites.

'What these projects seek to do is to understand how these environmental signals translate into physiological changes in grapevines that result in changes in berry composition and in turn result in the expression of terroir in wines.

'When we understand how these environmental signals work, we can then understand how winegrowers can refine the expression of terroir and uniqueness in their vineyards, so that they can produce wines that express their unique terroir with greater confidence and obtain the premium such wines warrant.

'We have focused on Shiraz because this is the variety that predominates in Australia. Shiraz is the most planted variety, with 26 per cent of Australia's vineyard area; we have the oldest Shiraz vines in the world; and 40 per cent of Australia's exports valued at more than \$10 per litre FOB are Shiraz.

Finally, Dr Croser said, 'This is the most exciting and insightful research project I have seen undertaken in the Australian wine community in my 40-year involvement'.

This collaborative suite of research projects will be undertaken by a world-leading group of research institutions, the University of Adelaide, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, National Wine and Grape Industry Centre (NWGIC), South Australian Research and Development Institute and the Australian Wine Research Institute.

Dr Leigh Schmidtke from Charles Sturt University at the NWGIC will lead the sensory-focused benchmarking project looking for correlations between the sensory properties of a relatively large and diverse set of Australian Shiraz wines, their chemical profiles and the climatic regions from which the grapes were sourced.

Associate Professor Cassandra Collins at the University of Adelaide will lead the vineyard terroir project that will determine marker compounds and chemical profiles for unique Australian Shiraz wines and to understand how vines respond to express terroir.

An international expert perspective will be added through the top sommeliers Wine Australia is hosting as part of The World's 50 Best Restaurants in April. They will help classify a subset of Australian Shiraz wines and selected international Shiraz wines through a blind tasting.

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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 and protecting the reputation of Australian wine.

Wine Australia is funded by grapgrowers and winemakers through levies and user-pays charges and the Australian Government, which provides matching funding for RD&E investments.

Wine Australia is the trading name of the Australian Grape and Wine Authority, a Commonwealth statutory authority established under the *Australian Grape and Wine Authority Act 2013*.