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National win for SA grapegrowers

South Australian vineyard owners have been recognised on a national stage for their commitment to wine industry biosecurity.

Vinehealth Australia (formerly the Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of SA) received a 2017 Australian Biosecurity Industry Award in Canberra on Tuesday night, presented by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

The award recognised significant contribution to maintaining Australia's wine industry biosecurity integrity.

"It's a fantastic win for Vinehealth Australia, but really this is a win for South Australian vineyard owners," said Inca Pearce, Vinehealth Australia CEO, who accepted the award in Canberra.

"The award celebrates the commitment and vision of growers in South Australia to establish the Phylloxera Act under which we operate. And it demonstrates their continued commitment to supporting it 117 years later.

"However, this award also serves as a timely reminder that we must not be complacent – we all need to play our part to prevent an incursion, especially in light of the increasingly complex biosecurity landscape."

Linda Bowes, chair of Barossa Grape & Wine Association, nominated Vinehealth Australia for the award. She said Vinehealth Australia has provided immeasurable value to the wine industry with an unbroken 117-year focus on vine biosecurity.

"Vinehealth Australia has been a silent achiever and protector of viticulture in South Australia since 1899 and has played a most significant role in the enviable high health reputation of Australian viticulture," Bowes said.

"Of course, a key achievement of Vinehealth Australia is that South Australia continues to be free of phylloxera. Today, free trade economics allows greater import freedom and increasing numbers of travellers are visiting Australian regions. The risk of pest and disease incursion is heightened across all agricultural sectors.

"Vinehealth Australia continues the vital role of specifically protecting the wine industry's biosecurity interests through a range of important projects such as up-to-date vineyard register data and mapping, industry education, actionable vigilance and emergency response preparedness."

Roseanne Healy, Vinehealth Australia chair, said the organisation has a proud history in South Australia.

"Vinehealth Australia's stability through industry funding and leadership and its 'ownership' by vineyard owners mean that it will continue to provide an important focus on vine health, biosecurity and awareness of threats to the Australian wine industry, which contributes \$40.2 billion in gross output to the Australian economy," Healy said.

"The award is also an acknowledgement of the positive difference made by South Australian growers who have funded Vinehealth Australia over many years and those who have given their time and expertise to serve on its board."

Vinehealth Australia is committed to minimising the risk of pests and diseases (particularly phylloxera) in South Australian vineyards.

Vinehealth Australia is an active creator, enabler and promoter of grape and wine biosecurity projects and activities, including:

- The national DNA project for early phylloxera detection: <http://www.vinehealth.com.au/projects/dna-testing-early-accurate-detection/>
- Project Boundary Rider, which places a virtual fence around vineyards: <http://www.vinehealth.com.au/projects/project-boundary-rider/>
- The State Quarantine Legislation Tool: <http://www.vinehealth.com.au/biosecurity-in-practice/tools/winegrape-biosecurity-quarantine-legislation-tool/>
- The South Australian Vineyard Register: <http://www.vinehealth.com.au/services/vineyard-register/>
- The Naracoorte Heat Shed for sterilisation of machinery: <http://www.vinehealth.com.au/services/naracoorte-heatshed/>
- Vineyard mapping and aerial surveillance (e.g., aerial mapping to monitor for vine decline): <http://www.vinehealth.com.au/services/mapping-gis/>