



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **DIY vineyard records online from January**

Grapegrowers and vineyard owners will soon be able to comply with phylloxera and grape disease control obligations – and manage their own vineyard records – using a new web-based tool.

The Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board (PGIBSA) has developed a new password-protected vineyard register that can be accessed and updated at any time.

It contains electronic versions of individual vineyard maps, as well as details of plantings, varieties, rootstocks, locations and ownership.

“We’ve digitised all the most recent information provided by growers and owners to the Board on paper put it into what we’re calling the ‘Grape Industry Kiosk’,” PGIBSA CEO, Alan Nankivell, explained.

“The tools that sit within that kiosk will enable growers to update their planting records as they occur, rather than doing so when we ask them once a year, or within three months of notifiable changes.

“From 2014, all information entered into each vineyard record will be archived. It’s easy to see how rich and valuable that information will become over time.”

The Board will begin emailing or posting information about the new system to all levy payers in early January.

Mr Nankivell said an accurate database was essential for the Board’s effective control of an outbreak of the Phylloxera insect or any other exotic pests or diseases.

“If we have an incursion, we must know exactly where all vines are, and how to contact the right people, so we can effectively control its spread,” he said.

One hundred and fifty growers from all wine regions around the State tested the kiosk during the development phase. Feedback concluded that it was easy to use and had potential as a business support tool.

The Board wants to expand the system’s functionality and the information it contains for the benefit not just of growers but the wider industry as well.

“We are now working on collecting levy payments online and developing a reporting system that will allow individual growers to compare their information with their region’s and the State’s.

“There’s plenty of scope for additions such as yield data, water use and economic return per hectare. But first we want to hear what the growers want and need.”

*Further information: Alan Nankivell, CEO, Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia, office telephone 08 8362 0488, mobile 0428 260 430.*

## BACKGROUND

### Phylloxera in South Australia

In the late 19th century, a Phylloxera epidemic destroyed most of the wine grape vineyards in Europe, most notably in France, and also reached Australia through the importation of potted vines.

A group of far-sighted grapegrowers encouraged the then State Government to introduce legislation to regularly survey the State's vineyards so they could be managed and protected in the event of a further outbreak.

The original *Vine Protection Act* of 1874 became the *Phylloxera Act* in 1899 and the essence of that law has been in place ever since.

In South Australia, grapegrowers are required under the *Phylloxera and Grape Industry Act (1995)* to inform the Board of any changes to their vineyards or plantings within three months of them taking place. Changes include removing or topworking existing vines, and planting new ones.