

Minister Leon Bignell

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

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Pest and disease protection for winegrape growers

The State Government has thrown its weight behind the Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of SA's five-year Strategic Plan which aims to expand its support for Australia's \$4.2 billion wine industry and to help secure SA's phylloxera-free status.

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister, Leon Bignell said the Plan was an important way to reduce the risk of pest and disease incursions into SA's premium wine regions and promote the State's clean credentials to export markets.

"South Australia has been a world leader in preventing phylloxera from devastating the wine industry," he said.

"One of the very first Acts of the South Australian Parliament was the *Vines Protection Act* of 1874, which gave the Governor power to prohibit vine cuttings or rooted vines from countries affected by phylloxera entering the colony.

"A further Act was passed in 1878 prohibiting vine leaves from entering South Australia. These Acts were passed at a time when phylloxera was devastating vineyards across Europe and the United States.

"The foresight of our state's wine industry pioneers has left a phylloxera-free legacy, with a wine industry boasting vines that are among the oldest anywhere in the world."

The Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board's five-year goals include expanding best practice in phylloxera pest management practices and containment and eradication of other pests and diseases to all grape and wine-growing regions throughout Australia.

These goals include mapping all wine-producing areas of Australia for phylloxera by 2019 to support vineyard managers and mitigate the risk of the disease spreading.

Board Chief Executive Alan Nankivell said the five year goals would be achieved by working collaboratively with individual and corporate wine producers and growers, together with South Australian and national industry associations and biosecurity organisations.

"The launch of our 2014-19 Strategic Plan will spearhead the board's commitment to expand its influence, add value and produce positive outcomes for the industry," Mr Nankivell said.

"We have a bold plan to create a national framework of phylloxera risk zones to identify its presence or not, and to inform industry of how to manage the pest and mitigate the risk of it spreading and affecting the quality of our wine.

"This will help to keep South Australia phylloxera free, as well as informing any affected vineyard owners and managers of the best way to tackle the infestation and prevent possible spread."

An Aphid-like insect, phylloxera causes production losses and death of grapevines. In Australia, the disease is present in parts of New South Wales and Victoria.

Vineyards in infested regions have reported there can be a cost impost of up to 20 per cent to manage production in a phylloxera infested zone.

The Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of SA is funded by a levy from registered owners of vineyards. The South Australian Research and Development Institute is currently working with the board and national plant biosecurity groups to develop a cost efficient and accurate rapid DNA-based test to detect phylloxera in vineyard soil.

Producing and exporting premium food and wine in a clean environment is a strategic priority of the State Government.

The Plan is being launched at an industry function tonight.