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On the Coast, Victor Harbor SA

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# Virtual fence in action

A VIRTUAL fence will be placed around some of McLaren Vale's most valuable vineyards as part of a pilot program being launched to safeguard South Australia's \$1.78 billion wine industry from pests, disease and weeds.

An initiative of Vinehealth Australia and supported by McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association (MVGWTA), the program named Project Boundary Rider uses an app to track the movements of people across a virtual boundary (geofence), via GPS on their smartphones, and records it in real-time.

The grape grower is provided with an immediate and reliable online visitor record book of anyone with the app who has moved across that geofence.

This database of information will be invaluable if a pest or disease outbreak occurs.

About 30 winegrowers located in the McLaren Vale and Barossa are participating in the pilot program, including renowned local grape-growers and winemakers

such as D'Arenberg, Noon Winery, Wright Vineyard

Trust, Wirra Wirra Vineyards, Chapel Hill Winery and Gemtree Wines.

"We are excited to be a part of Project Boundary Rider," said Gemtree Wines viticulturist Melissa Brown.

"Being certified organic and biodynamic, as well as owning a number of different vineyard sites, means having an effective monitoring system for who is entering our vineyard and when is an important tool for managing security and protecting our precious resource."

MVGWTA General Manager Jennifer Lynch says Project Boundary Rider is an innovative pilot program to be supporting.

"South Australia's viticultural origins began in McLaren Vale and it is to home to Sustainable Australia Winegrowing and world-class wines," Jennifer says.

"This geofencing technology can help our winegrowers to protect their valuable vineyards and to track some key data which is critical during an outbreak of pest or disease."

Vinehealth Australia CEO Inca Pearce said it was continually looking at ways to minimise the risk of

pest and diseases, particularly phylloxera, in South Australian vineyards.

"Looking to technology like geofencing, the Project Boundary Rider app is key when considering ways to protect one of our state's biggest assets - our vines," she said.

"Not only does it provide real-time data to growers, but this data can be quickly analysed according to specified parameters and then mapped for predicted pest or disease spread."

The pilot will run until mid-2017 and is funded by Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (Biosecurity SA), as well as supported by Barossa Grape and Wine Association and McLaren Vale Grape and Wine Tourism Association.



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**NEW TECHNOLOGY:** Gemtree viticulturist Melissa Brown is trialling new technology that she hopes will protect "our precious vines".