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Campaign launched to protect vineyards from disease

[Brendan Simpkins](#)



📍 South Australia is free of pests and diseases such as phylloxera which have ravaged vineyards across the globe.

Six cellar doors across South Australia will house Cellar Door Kits to protect vineyards from biosecurity risks as part of a new program launching this week.

The Wine Tourism Biosecurity Program is a state-wide training program for every cellar door in SA in an aim to protect vineyards from pests and diseases.

It comes after SA received a tourism boost last year with a record-breaking 442,000 international visitors to the state.

With an increase in tourists to the state, the risk of the spread of pests, diseases and weeds on visitors' vehicles, tyres, equipment, clothing and shoes also increased.

Research from Vinehealth Australia found that 44 per cent of female visitors and 28pc of male visitors expected to take photographs among vines in 2017.

Cellar door and tourism staff will be given the kits to protect vines from devastating pests such as phylloxera.

The kits will include footwear disinfection equipment, shoe covers, rubber boots and educational materials.

Vinehealth and Primary Industries and Regions SA formed a partnership to provide funding for the program, while the South Australian Wine Industry Association has provided additional support.

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Vinehealth Australia chief executive officer Inca Pearce said there was a risk of diseases being picked up from infested vineyards interstate.

“Tourists could walk through a phylloxera infested vineyard and, unknowingly, pick up the tiny insect on their shoes or clothing, then be in a phylloxera-free vineyard in another region or state the same day.

“The best way to avoid the spread of pests, diseases and weeds is to keep tourists away from vines, or to ensure their footwear and clothing is safe before entering vine rows.”

The six ‘best-practice’ cellar doors will also feature purpose-designed tourist signage.