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Program to educate vineyard visitors

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 Skillogalee Wines owner Diana Palmer said visitors to their cellar door often wandered off to take selfies amongst their vines.

Skillogalee wines are home to some of the most photographed vines in the Clare Valley.

Now the Sevenhill winemakers are taking extra precautions to protect their 50-year-old vines from pests such as phylloxera.

Skillogalee wines are one of six cellar doors across South Australia that will house Cellar Door Kits as part of a new program set to launch next week

The Wine Tourism Biosecurity Program is a state-wide training program for every cellar door in South Australia 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 28 per cent of male visitors expected to take photographs among vines in 2017.

Skillogalee owner Diana Palmer said visitors to their cellar door often wandered off to take photos amongst the picturesque vineyards.

“People just get their glass of wine and wander off down into the vines to take a photo,” Mrs Palmer said.

“...they have no idea that they might be bringing in phylloxera.”

Mrs Palmer said that there was potential to create a designated photo area amongst the vineyards down the track.

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

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

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

South Australia is free of pests and diseases such as phylloxera which have ravaged vineyards across the globe. The six 'best-practice' cellar doors will also feature purpose-designed tourist signage.